

An Open Letter To The Taxpayers Of Somerville

As the current and former Mayors of this Borough, we feel compelled to speak out on the issues Pathmark has raised in their letter to our Somerville community.

Pathmark implies that the events leading up to approval of the site plan took place in secret and with no contribution from Pathmark, and Pathmark also states that the plan reduces Pathmark's surface parking by half. If there is one thing we have learned as elected officials, the people of Somerville deserve, and demand, to be presented with the facts.

Here are the facts: Redevelopment of the shopping center in Downtown Somerville was originally proposed to the Somerville Planning Board by the current owner (JSM) in mid-2003. A conceptual plan was presented at a public meeting of the Planning Board. That was the beginning of an unprecedented public process that took almost two years to complete and involved both the Planning Board and the Borough Council.

During that time the Borough put whatever information was available on its website, including draft contracts with the developer. The Planning Board and Borough Council each had numerous public meetings and the development was the subject of many articles in all the local newspapers. During the process some of the other tenants of the shopping center and some of Pathmark's own employees participated. The Redevelopment Plan was drafted and adopted by the Borough Council on February 17, 2004. Again, this was all done with input from the public.

Based on negotiations with Pathmark, the Redevelopment plan was modified in December, 2004 and the site plan was modified accordingly. The change eliminated one building to allow for more Pathmark parking if a post construction parking study shows that the parking is needed. Until that time Pathmark will retain 100% of the currently existing parking in front of the store. JSM's parking analysis never implied or assumed that any of Pathmark's customers would use the parking deck.

We find it distressing that Pathmark, which has been part of Somerville's fabric for 28 years would publish this letter in an attempt to sway public opinion for their corporate gain over that of our Borough. The Planning Board held six public meetings to review this site plan and, after gaining consensus, approved it unanimously. All of those meetings were recorded and televised on Ville TV.

We are asking that those meetings be televised again and that copies of the DVD's be made available at Borough Hall for anyone who wants to borrow them.

We urge all residents to watch those meetings. The facts will speak for themselves.

This project is the beginning of a redevelopment effort that will ultimately include the landfill and bring many millions of dollars in revenue to the taxpayers in the Borough of Somerville. In fact, Pathmark stands to profit from this redevelopment plan as much as anyone. Proposed are 275 new, upscale residential units built on their doorstep-that's over 300 new customers who won't require parking. We believe that these residents, as well as those drawn to the redeveloped site, will want to make Pathmark their supermarket of first choice.

That's why it is far too important to all of us, including Pathmark, to allow this project to be delayed.

Somerville is at a crossroads, and we must act now to ensure its' economic viability. The work done by the Mayors and Councils of the past 20 years has helped set the stage for the growth of our downtown, revitalization of our infrastructure, and on this project alone, \$2.1 million in tax revenue for our citizens. Never before has this ability presented itself to our Borough. As residents, as taxpayers, as former councilmen, and as the Mayors of our proud Borough, we stand united behind this project for all the good it will bring to Somerville.

Brian Gallagher

David Hollod

John Kobiela

Mayor
Borough of Somerville

Former Mayor
Borough of Somerville

Former Mayor
Borough of Somerville