To: Long Island Planning Board
From: Mark Greene, President, Year Round Housing Corp.

Subject: Follow-up summary to October Planning Board Discussion on Cluster Zoning

November 5, 2019

Good Day,

The following is a summary of the essence of cluster zoning, parts of which I have excerpted from Peter Beyer, Director of Smart Growth NY. Hopefully it will clarify a bit more the concept we began to explore at the last meeting. While few remaining large parcels remain on Long Island, giving the *option,* if desired by the owner, to use these properties in a more creative and beneficial way without any change to existing Long Island zoning and density requirements seems worthy of consideration.

While my focus is on a particular piece of Town land being considered for the development of year round, sustainable, workforce, affordable housing or whatever you wish to call it, it is a concept in wide use for communities and developers who wish to move away from the traditional cookie cutter division of land.

Please feel free to bring forth questions you have and hopefully this is an item that the Board will see fit to consider for inclusion in our future land use ordinances. The Town of Arundel Ordinance (previously distributed) is a fair outline that with modifications to fit Long Island needs is a good starting point.

CLUSTER ZONING / CONSERVATION-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Description:
Cluster zoning is a zoning method in which development density is determined for an entire specified area, rather than on a lot-by-lot basis. Within the specified cluster zone, a developer can exercise greater flexibility in designing and placing structures, as long as the total density requirement is met.

Cluster zoning, which is also called conservation-oriented development, allows for the total number of homes in a given piece of land to be clustered or concentrated more densely onto one or more portions of the land; typically, double the density is concentrated on half the acreage. Such a strategy allows for the development of smaller (less expensive) homes on smaller (less expensive) lots, thus providing alternative housing choices for multiple community population groups and providing the opportunity to preserve remaining land for public and neighborhood use.

Developments in cluster-zoned areas often incorporate open, common areas for use by community members and/or the wider public. The landowner and the community decide the use of the preserved open space during the subdivision review process; and uses can include parks, nature/jogging/walking trails, active recreation, and community gardens, among others.

Benefits:

For all residents, including older people, families with children, and younger people with disabilities:
Cluster zoning provides two primary benefits for residents:

Walkable / bikeable residential neighborhoods; and

Access within the neighborhood to green space, trails, parks, gardens, and other amenities in which to walk, exercise, relax, recreate, and socialize.

For the community:

The protected open space can be designated to provide significant green buffers between neighborhoods. Higher density allows smaller, lower-cost housing units to be included within a neighborhood—providing greater housing choices, which is a "livable community" response for the diversity of residents that typically comprise a community.
Greater protected open spaces protect the environment, habitats, natural resources, and ecosystems.

Impediments or barriers to development or implementation:

NIMBY ("not in my backyard" reactions):
Neighbors closest to the cluster development may object to density, fearing overcrowding and infringements on their familiar low-density, large-lot community character.
Education is often needed to counter NIMBY objections and to raise general community awareness of the benefit of cluster zoning for retaining various community members, such as single adults, childless couples, older individuals and couples, and others.