

Members of the Planning Board,

There is no doubt that New Lebanon needs affordable housing. There is no doubt that the current project in front of the Planning Board is well intentioned. It is surely the most professionally designed plan ever proposed.

But here's the problem: this project is way too large for the current site and it will have a profoundly negative impact on the town. The building will be more than double the size of the next largest building in town. It will be more than 20 times the size of either of its immediate neighbors. It will be butted right up against the road, looming over its neighbors and the town. The garbage bay will be in the front of the building, negatively impacting the streetscape. In order to shoehorn this building into the lot the setback rules were changed. The height regulations were changed. The number of units allowed per lot size will have to be changed. And the number of allowable parking spaces relative to usage will have to be changed.

In addition, there is not enough funding to build a well designed building. The apartments are small and cramped. There is only one elevator for something like 31 apartments – what happens to a senior living on an upper floor when someone else is moving into the building? The emergency generator is insufficient to power the entire building- again what happens to seniors in a power outage? And there's insufficient area for children to play. So who is going to want to live in a cramped apartment butted right up a busy highway? If there is going to be constant turnover because the apartments are unpleasant to live in, how will that impact the maintenance of the building?

There is no doubt that New Lebanon needs affordable workforce housing. But it needs a project more appropriate in scale for the size of the lot that will not be another eyesore in our commercial corridor.