

From: Briana Clifton <bclifton@gwmail.gwu.edu>

Sent: Friday, May 2, 2025 11:27 AM

To: Assembly <assembly@petersburgak.gov>

Subject: Objection to Assembly Authorized Sale of Borough Owned Lots

To the Members of the Petersburg Borough Assembly:

I am writing to express my objection to the Assembly's direction to the Borough Manager to enter into negotiations with Greg and Heidi Johnson for the sale of 9 borough owned lots.

My objections are twofold:

1. The Assembly's decision was undemocratic. The Assembly should NOT move forward on any such sale without a recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning Commission is there for a reason, and the Assembly's decision to ignore the Planning Commission's recommendation to approve the Mazzella application for purchase contravenes basic tenets of democracy. Decentralized control ensures that all voices are heard and that no individual or small group of individuals can act outside the wishes and best interest of their neighbors. This Assembly's rush to authorize negotiations with the Johnsons and override the recommendation of the Planning Commission is exactly that: a few individuals acting against the wishes and best interest of their neighbors, their community, and democratic institutions.
2. The Assembly's decision was unneighborly. Multiple actual Petersburg residents have expressed a desire to buy the lots in question. Those local families spoke at the Planning Commission meeting that this Assembly chose to ignore. One of those families submitted an application to purchase a lot and the Planning Commission recommended the Assembly approve that family's application. The Assembly's choice to ignore our Petersburg neighbors who have asked to buy these lots is NOT "looking at things objectively." Rather, it is setting a precedent of disregard for the individuals that make up this community. The thing that makes Petersburg a great place to live is the respect we show our neighbors. Rebuffing an offer to purchase from local families in order to sell to an out of state developer who has no ties or interest in this community and is looking only to line their own pockets with value that should stay in Petersburg is NOT the way to treat our neighbors.

In the April 24, 2025 edition of The Pilot, the out of state developer is quoted as saying "I'd be glad to sell the developed lot [to Mr. Mazzella]." To call a spade a spade, this Assembly has authorized negotiations to sell a lot to an out of state developer who will then turn around and re-sell that very same lot to a Petersburg family at a MARKUP, pocket the difference, and take it back out of state with him. Meanwhile, a Petersburg family is left poorer (and no additional "affordable" housing has been added to the

market). The Assembly has voted in favor of a bare-faced cash grab by an out of stater at the expense of Petersburg families. This is NOT the way we should be treating our neighbors or running our town. Honestly, I felt disgust when I read that was how the Assembly intended to treat our own.

As of right now, neither my husband nor I will be voting to re-elect any incumbent member of the Assembly, except Jeigh Stanton Gregor, who cast the lone dissenting vote against this undemocratic and unneighborly move by the Assembly. It is not too late for the Assembly to reconsider its decision and **offer the lots first to the people they were elected to serve**. I would proudly vote for anyone with enough courage to look closely at and reconsider their own actions. We all make mistakes sometimes. The question is, are we willing to course-correct?

Briana Drury