

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Pressure Builds on Starwood as Port Chester Candidates Support CBA to Ensure Development of Hospital Site Meets Village Needs**

### ***Sustainable Port Chester Alliance Forum Highlights Where Candidates Stand on Issues of Responsible Development***

Port Chester, NY – With Village Trustee elections taking place March 15, five candidates attended a forum Thursday, March 10, to discuss where they stand on how to make Starwood Capital's proposed development of the United Hospital site benefit the community.

Hosted by the Sustainable Port Chester Alliance (SPCA), which is advocating for a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), 80 Port Chester residents attended the forum.

Five candidates participated in the forum, Gregory Adams (D), Dan Brakewood (D), Alex Chavarria (independent), Frank Ferrara (R), and Louis Marino (D). Four of them threw their support behind the need for a CBA. There are eight (8) candidates for six (6) Trustee seats. The forum took place at the Knights of Columbus.

A CBA is an enforceable, legally binding document signed by a developer and a community group. The agreement includes real benefits for the community in exchange for the community's support for a development, in this case Starwood Capital. SPCA is pushing for a CBA to include funding for schools, workforce housing, guarantees that construction workers and permanent employees get fair wages and benefits, and more. CBAs have been successfully executed in projects around the country and there is no reason for Port Chester to allow this massive development without securing real gains for the community.

Pressure is mounting on Starwood to come to the table and negotiate a CBA with the SPCA. *The Journal News* picked the same day as the candidate forum to run an editorial in support of such agreements. Headlined, "A new approach asks developers to outline benefits to a community," Westchester's most influential editorial board wrote, "You can't blame Port Chester residents for seeking to protect their and their village's interests. It's disconcerting that Starwood, which

has been doing plenty of marketing of the project, appears to be taking a defensive stance. These requests sound like a fine starting point for talks.”

Starwood has proposed building a more than 1 million square-foot mixed-use private development at the campus of the former United Hospital at 406 Boston Post Road in Port Chester. The \$300 million proposal includes: 730 residential units, 90,000 square feet of retail space, 217,000 square feet of office space, and a 138 room hotel.

In order to build, the developer needs the approval of Village Trustees to rezone the site to allow for a bigger development than is currently permitted.

In exchange for the rezoning, Starwood has proposed entering into a payment in lieu of taxes (“PILOT”) program that would amount to an annual payment of \$2.975 million, of which \$1.19 million is proposed to go to the Village and \$1.785 million is proposed to go to the Port Chester Rye Union Free School District. Over the 20-year life of the PILOT, Starwood predicts it will save \$58.55 million in taxes. That is approximately \$33.88 million in taxes that will be lost to the School District during this period.

The community’s concern is that unless there is a Community Benefits Agreement in place before approval for rezoning is given, the profits of the development would come on the backs of a struggling village with overcrowded schools, old and crumbling housing stock, and worsening traffic conditions.

“This forum was for voters to find out where the candidates stand on making sure that this project meets the needs of this community in terms of jobs and housing, and that our schools, infrastructure, and safety are protected. Dialogue is a healthy thing for a community to engage in. It’s not about putting the kibosh on the project, it’s about making sure that it fits who we are, meets our needs, and benefits us into the future,” said forum moderator Joan Grangenois-Thomas, a Port Chester resident and activist.

***About the Alliance:*** *The Sustainable Port Chester Alliance is a coalition of faith, housing, education, labor and Port Chester resident groups advocating for responsible development at the United Hospital site. Members include the Port Chester Teachers Association; the Council of Community Services of Port Chester, Rye Brook and Rye Town; the Port Chester/Rye Branch of the NAACP; Don Bosco Workers; Human Development Services of Westchester County; All Souls Parish; Metallic Lathers & Reinforcing Iron Workers Local 46; Communication Workers of America Local 1103; Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 21; and the Building and Construction Trades Council of Westchester and Putnam Counties. Supporters include Open Door Family Medical Centers.*

[www.portchesteralliance.org](http://www.portchesteralliance.org)

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