

Testimony of Joan Grangenois-Thomas
Before the Village of Port Chester Board of Trustees
Regarding the Draft Scoping Document for the Form-Based Rezoning of Port Chester
October 15, 2018

Good evening. My name is Joan Grangenois-Thomas. I'm a Port Chester resident, and I'm here tonight standing for responsible development with Sustainable Port Chester Alliance.

As we consider this downtown rezoning, we need to acknowledge that while rising commercial property values can translate into additional tax revenue, they also lead to increased commercial rents, which can be catastrophic for small business owners.

Look at New York City, where nearly every day brings a new story about an iconic business or shop having to shut down because they can no longer afford the rent. Closer to home, there are already rumblings that small businesses in New Rochelle are being dislocated following the downtown rezoning there. We have to make sure that we build into our rezoning protections for Port Chester's small business owners.

Ironically, we would not even be pondering this rezoning if not for the efforts of downtown Port Chester's small business owners. These men and women, many of them immigrants from Central or South America or the Caribbean, came to Port Chester, took advantage of the American Dream, and rebuilt a now-thriving downtown at a time when Port Chester was being rocked by the loss of manufacturing.

We owe it to these folks to take every measure possible to understand how the rezoning will impact their businesses, and then explore all options for protecting them. The DGEIS should investigate a number of questions, including:

- How much have commercial rents increased downtown in just the time since the village announced it was exploring a rezoning?
- How will passing the rezoning accelerate the increase of downtown commercial rents?
- What will the average increase in commercial rents be and how will it vary across the different areas being rezoned?
- How many small businesses are likely to be displaced by the rezoning?

These questions were given short shrift during the rezoning of United Hospital. We owe it to the people who kept downtown Port Chester thriving to make sure that's not the case this time around.