

**Testimony of Perla Zuniga Arellano**  
**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 Perla Zuniga Arellano. I live at 244 S. Regent Street and I'm here tonight standing for responsible development with the Sustainable Port Chester Alliance. I've been in Port Chester since I was 3 years old, as a mother I would like to keep living in Port Chester and be able to keep my family here but with every new development that goes up rents keep getting higher.

We have to make sure that this rezoning does not lead to the massive displacement of working families. The rezoning has to include requirements for the construction of substantial affordable housing and other protections from displacement.

The projects that come out of this rezoning can't be like previous development in downtown Port Chester, where hundreds of luxury apartments have been built with no affordable housing included.

The rents at the buildings recently constructed downtown are outrageous. Two-bedroom apartments at The Mariner start at more than \$3,000 per month. It's even worse at The Castle: over \$3,200 per month.

Compare those rents with the median rent for Port Chester, which is less than half those amounts at \$1,433 per month. Now, imagine what will happen if we build thousands more apartments with rents as high as at the Mariner and Castle and no affordable housing to go with them.

Working families in Port Chester are already struggling. Nearly 66% of renters in Port Chester pay 30% or more of their household income toward rent and are considered "rent burdened." 58% of village residents are either living below the poverty line or are what the United Way calls asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE), meaning they are working but do not earn enough to afford life's basic necessities. Our families can't afford for our rent to increase because of new development. Many of us would end up just having to leave.

We need real affordable housing to come from this rezoning, at rents that working families in Port Chester can actually afford. Rents set for families earning 80% of area median income will be too high. For a family of four in Westchester County, 80% of AMI is set at \$93,650. But median household income in Port Chester is just \$56,524. We need affordable housing priced for families earning 60%, 50% and 30% of AMI.

You, Mr. Mayor and honorable trustees, have a responsibility to make sure our families are not pushed out by this rezoning. That will mean insisting that the rezoning creates real affordable housing. But more immediately, you have a responsibility to make sure we know exactly how this rezoning is likely to impact rents in the surrounding areas. How many of us are likely to be displaced, either directly or indirectly? What amount of affordable housing at what AMI levels is needed to offset this displacement?

As we said repeatedly during the United Hospital approval process, the idea that Port Chester has already "done it's fair share" on affordable housing is based on a flawed comparison. Yes, we have more affordable housing than some of neighboring communities. But that's because,

first, some of our neighbors have abysmal housing records. And second, because we simply need far more affordable housing than our neighbors do – we are a community of working families. Unlike much of Westchester, Port Chester is majority renter. More than 56% of Port Chester residents rent their homes. And you all have a responsibility to make sure development doesn't push us out of our homes.