

# VILLAGE OF POTSDAM

Civic Center – Park Street – P.O. Box 5168 – Potsdam, NY 13676  
Phone (315) 265-7480 Fax (315) 265-3149

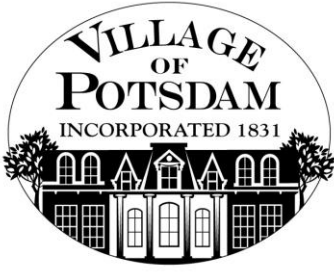
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## **Questions and answers regarding the H1 rezoning request Prepared by Administrator Gregory Thompson**

*#1) Have engineers not affiliated with the hospital evaluated plans, and do they confirm that the added water, sewer and waste generated at a 3 or 4 story bed tower can be handled by the current village drainage system? Have they also assessed the added pressure on the drainage from parking lots runoff?*

These issues will be answered in more detail during the SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review) portion of the Planning Board review. However, I have recently spoken with Barton & Loguidice's Matt Cooper (a licensed engineer), who we worked with during the recent Sewer Plant upgrade. According to Matt, there is enough room for additional flow to accommodate any extra influent created by the hospital. As well, he feels that this additional flow will stabilize the plant during the times of the year in which students are not here, thus making this a positive for the Village. As for the water side of the equation...I am informed that we can handle the additional flow requests which would be placed on our system by the hospital addition. As for stormwater mitigation, this would be addressed by engineers during Planning Board review. However, if the proper on site storm water retention is created, much like we used at the Hampton Inn, this should be no problem.

*#2) Have independent realtors assessed to what extent the property values are likely to fall or rise on Waverly St and in Potsdam? Is it likely that the changes place yet greater pressures on rental properties? Is this added pressure on the housing market desirable?*



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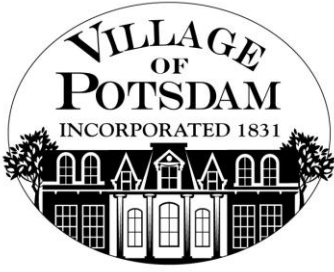
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To date, the Village has not enlisted any private realtors to assess any affects on the local housing market. Local landowners have the ability to market their properties to anyone, including the Hospital. The Hospital has the right to purchase property on the open market and may do so to provide housing for traveling healthcare providers. I truly don't see this as adding an unwanted pressure on the local housing market, as it could be easily seen as an opportunity for those who haven't been able to rent their properties.

*#3) Have CPAs not affiliated with the hospital evaluated to what extent village stakeholders can expect their water and waste billing, their property tax rate, to change?*

Let's look at this as two questions. First, water and sewer billing should not change. We use the EDU method of billing which assigns each single family dwelling 1 EDU, that will not change. We then place a usage charge based on the usage of only that individual property. The hospital's desire to expand will not affect the EDU billing rates for residential dwellings. Second, taxes should see no change whatsoever at this time. We are currently in a contractual agreement with the hospital which clearly states that whether a house is present or not on each of the properties in question, the hospital will pay the agreed-upon PILOT amount for that property. I would also add that as the expansion takes place we will begin to see growth in our local economy (restaurants, hotels, retail, etc.) as people will not be leaving the area for healthcare, but rather will need places to eat, sleep and shop while loved ones are treated right here in Potsdam. Although the hospital may not be taxable, these new establishments would be thus increasing our tax base. Also of note, economic reports have shown the financial multiplier to be for every \$1



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spent the municipality gains \$1.64. Studies have also shown that for every 200 jobs created by a hospital expansion, 128 new jobs are created in the

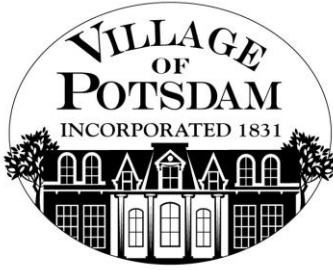
surrounding area. This growth may very well allow us to decrease tax rates as we move forward.

*#4) How will shifting traffic patterns affect the feel of town? Will a large increase in traffic present any added danger to our children at PCS? The expected influx of patients and visitors likely leads to people strolling on and around the high school, middle school and the elementary school as they make use of Stevie's Trail; how does the HS officer rate this matter?*

Traffic patterns, both vehicular and pedestrian, are part of the SEQR review, and will be looked at very closely during Planning Board review. At this time, we have not spoken with the school district to get feedback on their views of the hospital expansion.

*#5) Can you please answer if the R2 properties on Waverly are changed to H1, what happens to the property taxes associated to those homes?*

The rezoning itself wouldn't affect the taxes per se, except to the extent that the hospital may be motivated to purchase additional properties in that area. There is only one property on the block that they do not currently own. If the owners eventually choose to sell their property to the hospital as well, that would come off the tax roll; however, they could choose to sell regardless of the zoning decision. The hospital has a payment in lieu of taxes agreement in place for any property they purchase in the hospital zone. They continue to pay the taxes on the value of the properties at



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acquisition for 20 years. That is the current arrangement which has been in place since 2010, and we bill them every year for any properties fitting this description.

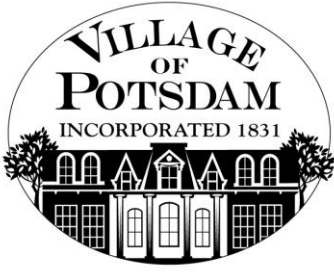
*#6) I see properties on Waverley and Cottage -they pay zero according to tax look up. How much is this payment in lieu that they have agreed to pay? And it's only for 9 more years correct?*

This is correct. They would not be listed as tax payments, because these are PILOT payments. We bill them accordingly. But the properties do come off the tax rolls and after each one has had 20 years of payments, the hospital will pay no taxes for those parcels anymore. Each one has a 20-year clock. So it depends on when each one was acquired. The village, town, school district and library will need to renegotiate our PILOT agreement prior to its expiration in 2030, to determine what happens with such properties after that point.

*#7) How much parking is currently being utilized by employees? How do we know how much parking is actually needed for the facility overall? What is the expected traffic to the facility and are there other ways to accommodate parking during peak hours?*

As one might conclude, there will likely be an increase in traffic, both patient and staff. Please keep in mind that NYS has a formula for the necessary number of parking places for institutions such as hospitals and this will be closely looked at by our Code Enforcement Office and our Planning Board. All NYS requirements will have to be met when this formula is put in place.

*#8) Would a parking structure be a better use of space?*



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Building a parking structure is a very expensive venture. The hospital has made it very clear that 1) such an endeavor would be cost prohibitive and 2) building a multi-level parking structure would take away from the hospital's attempt at keeping neighborhood character.

*#9) How can we ensure that any proposed "screening" is as beautiful and fitting with the neighborhood as possible?*

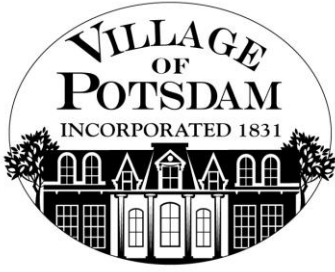
One of the most important facts to remember when it comes to beautification is that such actions are subjective. What one person might see as beautiful may very well be seen as quite the opposite by another. It is the job of the Planning Board, Planning and Development Office and the Code Enforcement Office to see that any attempts at beautification are done with neighborhood character and Village Zoning requirements in mind.

*#10) How can we maintain the neighborhood character of Waverly Street?*

Please See Above

*#11) Why expand here and not elsewhere in the village, or on the outskirts of town, or in Canton?*

In order to maintain funding, expansion must take place within a certain distance from the main hospital campus. Moving the project to any one of the alternative sites listed would place the project outside the allowable distance from the main campus, thus eliminating necessary funding sources for the project to happen at all. One might also consider the fact that creating a "new" campus, as explained by St. Lawrence Health would



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be cost prohibitive to the point that the project would not take place. From the village's standpoint, supporting the growth of the hospital is in our comprehensive plan.

## *#12) How does the hospital give back to the village and the community?*

Separately from taxes, the hospital has offered through other means to assist the village with the impacts of such development... for instance, paying for new crosswalks, streetlights, etc. They have also made major donations to projects like our new Garner Park. I would also mention that I have met with Mr. Acker on several occasions and discussed ways in which the hospital might assist in helping the Village with upgrades, all of which were openly accepted. St. Lawrence Health has, on more than one occasion, been a vocal leader in Village attempts to create a vibrant and more visually appealing municipality. The village comprehensive plan supports the further development of our hospital system, recognizing that the hospital provides much needed care to our residents and serves patients regardless of their ability to pay. I would also add that a key "give back" is that our hospital system brings a positive light to our community. There are so many people who speak highly of Potsdam and many of them will tell you that our hospital makes our community a very special place. This alone is of a value that one truly can't measure.