

Hollystone Myths Exposed

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**STOP
THE HOTEL**

ON FIDDLERS CREEK RD

Many interested parties (some that may surprise you) are selling falsehoods to push a commercial variance on the Hollystone property. Don't buy it.

They would like you to believe:

MYTH: The property is dilapidated and needs someone to save it.

FACT: The property is not dilapidated, and it was not abandoned. It's a 100+ yr old house that needs regular maintenance just like any other historic home. The property actually shows quite well. Search online for 29 Fiddlers Creek Rd real estate listings and recent news articles. The photos paint a very different picture than what has been reported. The Hollystone manor house has been a continual owner-occupied single-family residence (and without issue) for decades until right before the property was sold to the present owner in Dec. 2021.

MYTH: The property already has 27 bedrooms so they're not adding to occupancy or intensity of use.

FACT: There are not 27 bedrooms. The developer's own architect confirmed **the entire property has only 19 existing bedrooms**: the main Manor House is a **single-family residence** with 9 bedrooms. The other 10 bedrooms are spread across three cottages (each a single-family dwelling) and two apartments in the barn structure.

As a residence, a family wouldn't necessarily utilize all bedrooms all the time. Residential bedrooms rarely have double-occupancy, especially for a residence of this size. In contrast, a hotel would have a high frequency of double-occupancy, effectively doubling the occupancy intensity.

MYTH: The property was for sale for 10+ years, there were no offers on it, and no one wanted it. So a commercial zoning variance is the only way to make it viable.

FACT: The property was marketed at too high a price. Per the listing agent who marketed the property for those 10+ years, there were many offers (some even went to contract). But none closed for a variety of reasons: The Seller was unwilling to accept offers below the unreasonably high asking price; The Seller was unwilling to remediate leaking underground oil tanks; The Buyers would not agree to other Seller demands.

MYTH: The property will get an "ecological uplift" removing invasive species and "re-wilding" the lawn, thereby justifying a change to commercial zoning.

FACT: The developer plans to bulldoze an entire forest area of mature trees (many non-invasive) to install a 97-space lighted parking lot. True care for ecology would value these resources and not destroy natural habitats. After realizing the bad optics on this, the developer now claims a parking lot half the size is all that's needed (even though the application still asks for 97 spaces, required by ordinance due to the sheer magnitude of the project). Even at a 50-space parking lot, the sizeable forest-clearing required destroys natural and ecological habitats that have sat undisturbed for decades.

The developer's own Planner accidentally acknowledged the impact of their planned parking lot when he testified "so we don't want to put a **big giant parking lot** in the center of this place. We want to put it on the side."

FACT: Any residential owner can accomplish this same "ecological uplift" without the need for commercial zoning or a hotel and restaurant. How long this "ecological uplift" will be maintained and how it will be enforced or policed has never been explained. More importantly, under Municipal Land Use Law, ecological uplift is not an eligible factor for granting a zoning variance.

MYTH: There will be no negative traffic impact to Fiddlers Creek Road.

FACT: A 27-room hotel, minimum 60-seat restaurant, lounge areas, speakeasy bar, spa, café, gift shop, and health club on an already-undersized rural, narrow, non-truck road necessitates an impact to the road and neighbors. Use your own logic here.

MYTH: The maximum seating capacity for the restaurant is 30 indoor/30 outdoor. How bad can that be?

FACT: The developer claims the restaurant can only seat 30 indoors and another 30 outdoors. In reality, outdoor seating is only limited by the capacity of the 10+ acre lot. But no one wants to acknowledge the potential for 100s of guests on any given day outdoors and plenty of room for additional seating and bar space indoors. No traffic calculations account for this potential massive influx of vehicles and guests.

MYTH: Neighbor wells were tested which proved no groundwater impacts from the high water use.

FACT: Per the US Geological Survey expert, the tested wells were NOT properly located to observe detrimental impacts from the high water use, and there is an increased likelihood that Fiddlers Creek flow will decrease with harmful effects to the ecosystem.

MYTH: Most traffic will come from Route 29/River Road and so very few Fiddlers Creek Road and Church Road residents will see any impact.

FACT: The developer touts access and benefits to Hopewell Township residents. Due to its location, the overwhelming majority of residents will travel from the Bear Tavern Rd area using the narrow rural and neighborhood roads. Only guests from PA would utilize Route 29. Using your app of choice, map any destination in the township (and beyond). The preferred and quickest routes never utilize Route 29/River Road, contrary to what the Developer's experts have claimed

MYTH: The septic system for a hotel and restaurant will function without failure, so there will be no environmental concern.

FACT: There is a long history of regular long-term septic system failures at restaurants in Hopewell Township, including most recently the Lakeside Café and the Brick Farm Tavern, with numerous instances of raw sewage on the ground. In fact, after several years of regular septic failures, the Brick Farm Tavern is seeking to connect to the Montgomery Township sewer system. No such option exists for septic system failure on Fiddlers Creek Road.

MYTH: Negative impacts on local water supply, decreased flow in Fiddlers Creek, on-site septic discharge, and parking lot concerns can be sorted out during the Site Plan phase

FACT: There are no guarantees that these impacts can be mitigated, especially when so much is obscured and unknown. This does not mean the Zoning Board is not experienced or savvy enough to sort through it as some have claimed. It is purely an issue of not having appropriate data to weigh the positive and negative criteria. Justification for commercial use approval by kicking the can down the road to site plan phase is irresponsible and risky.

**Don't fall for the myths put forward by the developer and others to win this commercial variance.
Please help us STOP THE HOTEL.**