

Easton Citizens, Decision Time Is Here
Do You Want to Add Smart Revenue to Our Tax Base?
by Donna A. Lopolito, CPA, Finance Committee Chairman, Town of Easton

The Finance Committee unanimously supports warrant article no. 9, “Queset Smart Growth Overlay District”, otherwise known as the Queset Commons 40R development. We urge Easton voters to support this article at our Annual Town Meeting on Monday, May 19th.

Queset Commons equals smart revenue growth for the town of Easton. A 40R development allows for negotiation, ensuring we have a voice in the project and get the best for our town. Take a look at just the financial side of this proposal:

- \$740,000 estimated annual new tax revenue for Easton
- \$350,000 estimated one-time 40R incentive payment from the State direct to Easton
- \$840,000 estimated one-time housing permit bonus from the State direct to Easton
- \$600,000 estimated rehabilitation and expansion of Depot Street Fire Station
- \$1,500,000 estimated intersection and traffic improvements on Route 138

So the financial picture is \$3,290,000 in cash and capital improvements and \$740,000 in new annual tax revenue. Yes, we do want this new source of funding. But we also want the other benefits of the proposed development, including affordable housing units, a waste treatment system, community based retail development, and new open space for all citizens to use.

Some of you believe that a no vote for the Queset Smart Growth Overlay District means that the area will remain as it is today, undeveloped. Leaving this area undeveloped is highly unlikely. Some of the area designated for Queset Commons is already zoned commercial and the remainder could be used for a 40B development. If we do not support the Queset Smart Growth Overlay District, then some other commercial development and/or 40B project would most likely occur for which we will have no input; the developer will unilaterally make all decisions. Additionally, we would lose the estimated \$1,190,000 in one-time State payments. We would lose the estimated \$2,100,000 in incentive payments to fix the fire station and traffic problems.

Two years ago the Finance Committee supported a Proposition 2 ½ operational override. We urged you to support an override and you did. Time has proven that your support was a smart decision. Let us all make another smart decision; let’s decide to support Queset Commons. Let’s decide to add smart revenue to our tax base that will help the town of Easton well into the future.

Donna A. Lopolito is the Finance Committee Chairman for the Town of Easton. She is a Certified Public Accountant with a twenty-seven year financial and business background.