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July 13, 2020

Mayor Gail Coniglio
Town Council
Landmarks Commission
Town of Palm Beach
360 South County Road
P.O. Box 2029
Palm Beach, FL 33480

Re: Utilities Equipment related to 70 Middle Road

Dear Madam Mayor, members of Town Council and members of the Architectural Commission:

This firm represents William and Sarah Ross Soter, the owners of 198 Via Marina. We understand that you are scheduled to again review requested renovation plans and multiple required variance requests related to 70 Middle Road.

This letter confirms that the Soters oppose the installation of a chicane on Via Marina because it would create a dangerous life safety issue for pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the neighborhood and because there are available locations for a transformer at 70 Middle Road without a disruption to that owner or to the neighborhood.

It is our understanding that other property owners in the Middle Road/Via Marina neighborhood have agreed to placement of transformers on their properties to service all properties other than 70 Middle Road. It certainly appears that there is sufficient space at 70 Middle Road to place a transformer of sufficient capacity to serve just that property without otherwise negatively affecting the renovation or future use of 70 Middle Road.

This same process is being successfully and repeatedly implemented throughout the Town as Town residents have repeatedly agreed that the efficiency and other advantages associated with underground utilities certainly outweigh any aesthetic disadvantage of the transformer location, especially after the transformer is well-screened by landscaping.

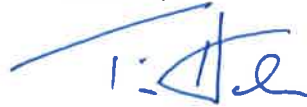
The owners in this neighborhood have already contributed easements to the Town and service has or will be buried to serve the properties. These residents should not have to suffer through the danger and negative aesthetics of a chicane on Via Marina or Middle Road because one property owner believes that only her property should be exempt from locating the transformer on her property.

The refusal by the owner of 70 Middle Road is especially befuddling because the transformer would serve only 70 Middle Road and the owner is requesting zoning relief from the Town which is not currently permitted under the Zoning Code. If the owner is not willing to grant the small easement necessary to serve her property, then the Town should certainly not grant unwarranted zoning relief and variances when no legal hardship exists.

For the foregoing reasons, the Soters request that you deny the zoning relief and variances requested by the owner of 70 Middle Road if she is not willing to provide the Town with a small easement necessary to allow the placement of a transformer on her property.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Timothy Hanlon", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

M. Timothy Hanlon

cc: Mr. and Mrs. Soter