

Affordable

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tunity to excel to get into these kinds of schools that our children are fortunate enough to get into.”

However, while ROSAH supports affordable housing, it claims to be against “high-density luxury developments and bypassing zoning rules with no input from the public.”

“We have to realize that no matter where you are geographically located in Rumson, we are all affected by this. And that’s the school system, it’s traffic, it’s safety, it’s town services, property values, the integrity of our town and its infrastructure,” said resident Stavros Memtsoudis, M.D., who gave the presentation that evening.

“Even if you’re not immediately impacted... this can happen to you tomorrow or 2025, and you should know that at that time, ROSAH is going to be there for you

and fight the same fight,” said Memtsoudis.

ROSAH was founded in February after the borough council approved two settlement agreements and plans to meet its state-imposed affordable housing mandates. One settlement was with the Cherry Hill-based Fair Share Housing Center and the other was with Red Bank-based Yellow Brook Property Co., owned by local developer Roger Mumford.

Currently, the borough’s total affordable housing obligation is 603 units. It’s realistic development potential (RDP), however, is 51 units. The remaining obligation, an unmet need of 552, will be addressed with inclusionary overlay zoning and additional ordinances. The inclusionary overlay zoning will allow property owners to keep a property as is or, if they choose, to one day de-



COURTESY YELLOW BROOK

As part of a settlement agreement with Rumson and Yellow Brook Property Co., the developer plans to build this duplex at 132 Bingham Road.

velop multifamily housing with affordable set-asides.

As part of Yellow Brook’s agreement, housing will be constructed on Rumson Road, Bingham Avenue and Carton Street. Mumford will build luxury market-rate units on rezoned areas of Bingham Avenue and Rumson Road. He will also contribute \$1.35 million toward the town’s construction of

affordable housing at 62 Carton St. Additionally, he will convey his land on Carton Street to the borough.

Since its inception, ROSAH has established a board of trustees, adopted bylaws and committees and applied to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status. It has also defined its strategic goals, interviewed and obtained legal counsel, launched its website and

social media platforms and fundraised. Now it is seeking additional supporters, volunteers and donors to help reach an affordable housing plan “better than” the current agreements.

“No one that I have spoken to is against affordable housing. People are frustrated with the process that we’ve gotten no public input, no ability to have communication, even to date,” said resident Donald Devine.

The organization has taken legal actions to pursue its goals, including filing a lawsuit Feb. 28 in state Superior Court. It alleges that the adoption of the resolutions “was arbitrary, capricious, unreasonable, and contrary to public policy,” because the adoption was done under “substantial duress” by Rumson.

Additionally, on March 5, ROSAH filed its objection to the Rumson Housing Settlements. Working with engineers and planning reports, they found that the borough’s settlement agreements “conflict with the

intent of the Mount Laurel doctrine, are inconsistent with the Borough’s master plan documents, and incompatible with sound planning principles,” according to the ROSAH website.

“Based on the findings of its experts, ROSAH argued that the settlement agreements should not receive court approval because they are not fair to the interests of low- and moderate-income households and fail to provide a realistic likelihood of construction that is affordable to such households.”

Now members await the Fairness Hearing at the Monmouth County Courthouse in Freehold, currently scheduled for March 26. They are encouraging people in the meantime to write letters to Monmouth County Superior Court Judge Linda Grasso Jones objecting to the borough’s settlement agreements as well as state legislators and department of environmental protection members, and to contact the borough council.

LUNCH BREAK CONTINUES FEEDING CLIENTS

Pantry in Need of Nonperishable Food

RED BANK – Although the dining room that feeds breakfast and lunch to visitors is closed, Lunch Break is continuing to provide services with this message: “We’re not going to miss a meal!”

All meals are being distributed “to go” at the blue front door of the dining room, including breakfast, hot lunch, Friday Community Dinners and Saturday breakfasts. Hours of distribution remain the same as specified: Monday through Friday, 8:30 to 10 a.m. Continental breakfast and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. hot lunch;

Friday, 6 to 8 p.m. Community Dinner; Saturday, 10 a.m. to noon breakfast.

In addition, bagged groceries are being distributed at the back door of the Client Choice Pantry; registered Lunch Break pantry clients can pick up groceries. Homebound delivery services are continuing.

With schools closing, the nonprofit anticipates more families visiting with children to utilize the lunch and breakfast services. An added burden is the loss of collected nonperishable food from corporations now that their employees



PATRICK OLIVERO

Lunch Break pantry supervisor Chrissy Valkos helped load cars at the Red Bank headquarters for those in need March 17.

are working from home. The loss is impacting Lunch Break’s food stock.

Lunch Break is in most need of monetary donations and nonperishable food items. At this time they are not accepting donated catered food. The organization said \$25 will pay for six hot meals; \$40 will buy 10 hot meals; and \$50 means a bag full of groceries.

Services such as Clara’s Closet/SuitUp are temporarily suspended. Donations of clothing, promwear and nonfood items are also suspended at this time. Life

Skills programs, such as ESL classes, are temporarily suspended. All coaching can be conducted via phone.

Nonperishable and drop-off monetary donations will be accepted at the rear donor door, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to noon.

Lunch Break freely provides life’s basic necessities of food, clothing, fellowship and life skills for the greater Monmouth County community and beyond.

For further information, please call 732-747-8577.

We’re doing OK. Hope you are, too.



Caroline Darienzo, second from right, just celebrated her 101st birthday at a Chelsea Senior Living community. In many ways, we’re doing what we do at Chelsea 365 days a year, providing seniors with a healthy and safe place to live. When we can allow visitors again, we hope you’ll come by.

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732-747-7540



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