

September 18, 2019

Why Quimby Village?

At the present time, current zoning permits a developer to build 80 residential housing on Quimby Lane and without direction, can potentially be developed in a manner in conflict with the desires of residents per a 2018 survey. We believe these units should be designed in a way that enhances Bernardsville and creates an environment for sustained merchant and Borough success. To do this, Quimby Village will be developed as a single redevelopment plan to ensure that any developer of the properties will serve the best interests of the Borough, our 7,700 residents, stabilize declining real estate values, and create additional tax revenues.

Quimby Village is being created to address Bernardsville's declining tax base and empty store fronts; it is intended to revitalize our Borough's attraction to shoppers, restaurant goers and home buyers while maintaining Bernardsville's rich historical significance, beautiful architecture and classic "main street" character that is the envy of many neighboring communities. The existing Quimby Lane properties are inconsistent with the vision and strategy for Bernardsville and they provide only minimal tax revenues to the Borough while residing in the heart of town.

Is Quimby Village consistent with Bernardsville's residents view as to how the Borough should move forward?

Quimby Village embodies the Borough's concepts set forth in the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination, included the following goals:

- Promote the downtown as the commercial and civic center of Bernardsville
- Create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere in the downtown
- Provide open space and recreation areas
- Study the Mill Street/Quimby Lane areas with the aim of improving the streetscape, connecting parking areas and introducing new land uses.

These goals were further reinforced by the 2018 resident survey about new initiatives for downtown. The committee received input from 70% of Borough households. These responses showed that:

- 98% of respondents think that revitalization is important, with 82% thinking it is extremely or very important; and
- 94% support expanded outdoor activities.

How does Quimby Village resolve these challenges?

Quimby Village will create:

- Residential units with a quality level and size consistent with Bernardsville's standards oriented towards capturing empty nesters and millennials;
- 12 units of affordable housing as mandated by state law;
- New restaurants with outdoor dining and experiential retail to create a night life and year round vibrancy to the downtown;
- A public park that enhances and capitalizes on the Mine Brook;
- Public plazas to create a walkable community feel;
- Year round management and programming of public spaces
- Consistency in architecture, signage and landscaping;
- Pedestrian connection with Claremont Road and Olcott Square to help all businesses; and
- Sufficient parking, primarily underground, both to address the new uses and current downtown needs.

In summary, Quimby Village will be a central place for children and adults of all ages in our community to enjoy and be the pride of Somerset Hills.

The new residences are the catalyst for all of these amenities: they create the demand for the new energy around Quimby Village spilling into the rest of the town. The new residences will provide a ready customer base for the new restaurants and other experiential businesses as well as more activity for existing businesses. As the downtown becomes a more revitalized place, our homes will be in more demand and have more value. Moreover, better utilization of the space along Quimby Lane will improve the appearance of Bernardsville and enhance the revenues derived from that area.

How will Quimby Village impact our schools?

We do not expect that Quimby Village will have a substantial impact on school populations. Other than the Affordable units, the apartments are one and two bedrooms, sized to be attractive to empty nesters and starter families.

How will Quimby Village impact parking in Bernardsville? We've heard that some of the proposals provide less than current Code-required parking.

Selection criteria for the winning developer will include sufficient parking for all new uses. The Borough will likely go beyond that and require the developer to provide additional parking to serve other downtown needs, which may be at Borough expense. Quimby Village will not impair the current parking situation and will likely improve it.