

# The Kingston Interfaith Council

*United in Service to Justice, Mercy and Love*

City of Kingston Planning Board, 420 Broadway, Kingston, NY 12401

April 24, 2018

Dear Members of the Kingston Planning Board,

We are writing to you as religious leaders of our community in support of RUPCO's Landmark Place proposal. As religious leaders, we understand the care of the most vulnerable among us to be the primary moral responsibility of any community, so our main reasons for supporting this project are because we see a need for affordable housing in our community. We hear from people who need housing on a regular basis, and we often have no resources to offer. We particularly recognize the need for supportive housing for people with behavior health issues and substance use disorders. This project would help with some of these vital needs in our community. We represent a variety of religious traditions, and all of our traditions call us to compassion, care for the vulnerable, and recognition of the inherent worth and dignity of every member of our community.

Several of us recently attended the public hearing that the Planning Board had on this proposal. We heard many people raise concerns about the cost to the community of providing this housing and these services. We would like to bring your attention to several important studies which show that supportive housing, especially for people with the specific needs this project is designed to address, actually reduces total cost to the community by reducing the use of emergency services of various kinds, as well as reducing interactions with law enforcement and the courts. For examples of some of these studies, here are some links:

<https://shnny.org/research/the-culhane-report/>

<http://www.csh.org/fuse-map/fuse-research-evaluations/>

[https://www.health.ny.gov/health\\_care/medicaid/redesign/supportive\\_housing\\_initiatives.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/supportive_housing_initiatives.htm)

We hope that you will approve this project so that we can take this important next step toward everyone in our community having access to safe, affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work on behalf of our city.

Sincerely,

Rev. Erica Baron, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills, Kingston

Pastor James Childs, Pointe of Praise Family Life Center, Kingston

Deacon Elke Hekler, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Kingston

Rev. Renee S. House, Old Dutch Church, Kingston

Rev. Dr. G. Modele Clarke, New Progressive Baptist Church, Kingston

Father Frank Alagna, Holy Cross/Santa Cruz Episcopal Church, Kingston

Rev. Dr. Clinton Bennett, Clinton Avenue United Methodist Church, Kingston

Rev. Thomas E. Taylor, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Kingston

Imam Syed Khlid Khan, Masjid Umar, Kingston

Rev. Justin Johnson, Trinity Lutheran Church, Kingston

Rev. Michelle Meech, Saint John's Episcopal Church, Kingston

Deacon Susan Bonsteel, Saint John's Episcopal Church, Kingston

Pastor Erick Mercado, Vida Real Church, Kingston

Cantor Bob Cohen, Congregation Emanuel of the Hudson Valley, Kingston

Rabbi Yael Romer, DD, Congregation Emanuel of the Hudson Valley, Kingston

Rev. Kendra VanHouten, Fair Street Reformed Church, Kingston

Rev. Dr. Faye Banks Taylor, Saint Marks AME Church, Kingston

Rev. Alison Quin, Christ the King Episcopal Church, Stone Ridge

Rev. Susan Auchincloss, Saint Gregory's Episcopal Church, Woodstock