

Letters

4/24/15

The Truth About Yorktown's Economic Development

To the Editor:

Exactly how much economic development has taken place in Yorktown over the past three years? The answer depends on who you ask and what you count.

According to the Republicans, the answer is between \$250 - \$300 million. But if one takes the time to look behind the claim, the numbers simply don't add up.

The numbers don't add up because they're based on PROPOSED projects — and the "proposed" projects cited by the Republicans haven't materialized. It's one thing to hype planned, proposed and "in the pipeline" projects. But true economic development means shovels in the ground and completed projects that put rateables on the tax roll. And that hasn't happened in Yorktown.

In a January, 2013 article in the Westchester Business Journal headlined "Yorktown open for business," Supervisor Michael Grace and former Town Councilman now state Senator Terrence Murphy claim the following development projects:

Costco: \$60 million. FACT: Costco

came to Yorktown in 2009, before either Grace or Murphy were on the Town Board. The project still hasn't been approved — and the delays have been primarily due to Costco.

Fieldhome: \$90 million. FACT: This proposed senior independent living project, initially proposed in 2011 before Mr. Grace was supervisor, was approved by the Planning Board in April, 2012 and is still — still — waiting for NYC DEP approval. Nothing has been built.

Stateland: No dollar figure was given for this potential 140,000 sq. ft. big box store. FACT: The Town Board rezoned the parcel in 2013 but to date NO SITE PLAN has even been submitted.

Jefferson Valley Mall: \$45 million upgrade. FACT: This project started in 2011, before Mr. Grace became supervisor, and was approved by the Town Board in October, 2013. To date no work has been done on the upgrade.

FACT: Since January, 2012 when Mr. Grace took office, there have been three new major commercial structure built in Yorktown: Mohegan Lake Motors, Best

Plumbing at Crompond Crossing, and the Mt. Kisco Medical Building in Jefferson Valley. All three entered the pipeline BEFORE Supervisor Grace took office.

As for the dozen or more "new businesses" that have opened in Yorktown in recent years, all they did was fill up vacant storefronts; they didn't add a penny to the tax rolls.

But there's good news on the horizon; there's been an increase in economic activity in Yorktown, especially over the past year with two potential commercial projects involving the Bear Mountain Triangle, upgrades to the Staples Shopping Center and other activity along Route 202.

But let's be honest: this new activity is primarily a function of an improving economy, something the town, and politicians, have little control over.

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