

**An Open Letter From
Maplewood Village Merchants**

4/5/16

TO: Mayor DeLuca, Mr. John James, and Mr. Joseph Forgione

CC: The Maplewood Township Committee, The Maplewood Village Alliance board, The Village Green, The Maplewoodian, NJ.com, News Record

FROM: Maplewood Village Merchants and Landlords (undersigned)

RE: A Request Regarding Clarus Maplewood (Post House) Tenant Selection

This past week through local media we learned the identity of the likely tenants for the Post House Development. In an interview with the Village Green, Mr. Forgione shared that the prospective tenants are Starbucks, a drop off dry cleaner, a bank, a farm-to-table restaurant and a clothing store. Mr. Forgione noted that leases have not yet been signed.

Tenant selection at this site has been of community interest since the Township first proposed new construction in 2012. During this past year we understood that identifying potential retail tenants was a sensitive issue for Mr. Forgione. Now that this phase has passed, we are ready for a collaborative discussion as to tenants whose specific business both meet Mr. Forgione's goals and make significant positive contributions to the Village overall.

The proposed tenants compete directly with some of our existing businesses, but the matter of new competition is not our first concern. We already have and accept fair competition. Our concern is based more on the ways in which the choices can be *complementary* to the Village economy overall, and not unduly driven by the project's desired financial gains, or the fact the project is the recipient of tax and other incentives that are not available to local landowners and merchants.

To our knowledge, the TC has never approved tax discounts to our landlords that could be used to incentivize improvements to our buildings and help our businesses be more competitive.

Additionally, our longer-term concern is that these businesses do not support the outcomes for the Village that you have each shared publicly. You asked us to believe each of you while the details of the project were developed this past year. We are now ready to discuss the ways in which the project will help the community overall.

Mayor DeLuca, you were quoted as saying, "*...you wanted any tenants to be solid businesses that **add value to the shopping and dining experience** in Maplewood*

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Village”.

Mr. Forgione, you offered just this week, “*I am going to be very selective about what tenants are in the building. **It has to be added value for the town***”

Finally, Mr. James, the MVA shares in your written material, that “*your (group’s) efforts are driven by **creating a favorable environment for our local businesses.***”

We hope you agree that the collective belief and confidence of the local Village business community is critical to the project’s success. As business people, we live by the numbers each day, and we now ask that you do the same and engage in a conversation on the benefits of the proposed selections that Mr. Forgione has outlined.

Therefore we are writing to request that **before** merchant leases are finalized and signed for the Post House that all of you participate in an open meeting with Village merchants, landlords, and other interested Village stakeholders to discuss and share information and analysis regarding the project’s benefits to existing merchants and to the Village overall.

We ask for a response to our request by this Thursday 4/8. Please suggest a venue such as The Woodland, or the Maplewood Library meeting room which would be conducive for a productive discussion.

Thank you in advance for supporting our collective success.

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**THESE ARE THE VILLAGE BUSINESSES/LANDLORDS THAT HAVE SIGNED ON
TO SUPPORT THE REQUEST CONTAINED IN OUR MERCHANT LETTER
SUBMITTED ON APRIL 5, 2016.**

... we are writing to request that **before** merchant leases are signed for the Post House that all of you participate in an open meeting with Village merchants, landlords, and other interested Village stakeholders to discuss and share information and analysis regarding the projects benefits to existing merchants and the Village overall.

Able Baker
Abril Cocina
Alchemy Hour - Ma/Da
Anthony Garubo
Arts Unbound
Bagel Chateau
Baker Street Yoga
Beacon Jewelers
Bee & Thistle
Berc's Art
Belmont Eatery
Bill & Harry
Cactus Charlie's
Chelsea Set
Dobrosky's Opticians
Freeman's Fish Market
Keller Williams
Kimaya Kama
Kim's Nails
Kokoro
Linda's Cleaners
Le Saisons B&B
Leo's Nails
Lorena's - Steve
Lotus Petals
Madeline Moss

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Maple Leaf
Maplewood Cleaners
Maplewood Deli
Maplewood Liquors
Maplewood Stationers
Mona Lisa Framing letter
Mount Fujiz
Kevin Muench Dentistry
Palmer's Sweetery & Cafe
Salvage Style
Irwin Semel ESQ.
St. James Gate
Truly Yours
Village Barber
Village Ice Cream
Village Wine Shop
WORDS
Julie Perlow-Green Clothing - 7 Highland Place

Landlords

Al Gottlieb
Saule Fischer
Shirley Levy