

STATEMENT

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY RESPONDS TO HOUSING REPORT BY HUD-SELECTED MONITOR JAMES JOHNSON

Statement by Ned McCormack, Westchester County Director of Communications/Senior Advisor to County Executive Robert P. Astorino, on the Monitor's report.

This is more harassment by an overreaching HUD-controlled federal monitor who is apparently upset that Westchester is meeting its benchmarks to build affordable housing while preserving the constitutional rights of local governments to oversee local zoning.

The unfounded allegations by the monitor, who serves at the pleasure of HUD, are a continuation of an unsuccessful smear campaign. Just because the Monitor says something, it doesn't mean it is true. In addition, the monitor's report places a chilling effect on the First Amendment rights of the County Executive and anyone who disagrees with the monitor's opinions.

The record clearly shows Westchester has done nothing wrong. The county has met all of its annual benchmarks for developing 750 units of affordable housing in 31 mostly white communities by the end of this year.

In a major victory for the county last September, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit said in a decision that "there has been no finding, at any point, that Westchester actually engaged in housing discrimination."

The fact that the housing is being built negates any claim that local zoning in these communities is exclusionary or discriminatory. The county is extremely proud of its accomplishments, which speak to the cooperation of our communities. Given the complexities of building housing in general, the progress Westchester has made is incredible by any objective standard.

- The County exceeded the December 31, 2015 benchmark obligations. At the end of 2015, 649 affordable Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing ("AFFH") units had financing in place, exceeding the requirement of 600 units.
- At the end of 2015, 588 affordable AFFH units had building permits or Certificates of Occupancy in place, exceeding the requirement of 525 units.

- As of the end of 2015, a total of 6,178 applications had been received for all of the affordable AFFH units marketed to date. Of these applications, 36% of the heads of households identified themselves as White, 35% as African American, 3% as Asian, and 27% as Hispanic.
- On the Homeseeker Central Intake system at www.westchestergov.com/homeseeker, a total of 8,295 households have signed up on this website since its inception, to receive information on affordable housing opportunities. Those interested come from 31 states, New York City, other New York counties, and all over Westchester County.

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