

**RESOLUTION OF THE FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
(SOMERSET COUNTY)
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

RESOLUTION TO OPPOSE the proposal by Jalaram Seva Samaj of North America to build a large (24,000 sq. ft) Temple/Cultural Center on Block 57.01 Lot 60.02 on Cortelyous Lane, and to recommend preserving this lot as open space.

WHEREAS, the primary objective of the Environmental Commission is to advise the Township Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Board of Health on environmental issues, including preserving and protecting the natural resources of the Township, as well as the impact of proposed developments within the Township; and

WHEREAS, the lot in question is an approximately 6-acre parcel, which is now in farmland assessment, and is adjacent to a portion of the Six Mile Run Reservoir Site, an area of high environmental significance in Franklin Township that is particularly valuable for wildlife and for residents of the Township who value wildlife and the environment; and

WHEREAS, it is likely that vastly increased traffic, lighting, and runoff (currently slated for diversion into the Six Mile Run Reservoir Site), could only have negative effects on the local environment, and on the citizens of Franklin who reside there or who visit Six Mile Run to hike, watch birds, hunt, or otherwise enjoy this unique environmental resource in the heart of our Township; and

WHEREAS, the surrounding residents rely on wells and septic systems that will be negatively affected by the strain imposed on the local hydrology by the proposed septic system which underestimates the size and volume of waste that will be produced by the proposed Temple/Cultural Center; and

WHEREAS, the proposal underestimates the amount of parking and associated impervious surface that will be required for the facility, which would in turn increase runoff, exceed established limits, and negatively affect neighboring wells and septic systems; and

WHEREAS, the Six Mile Run Reservoir Site is currently being managed, together with other township lands, to increase populations of declining grassland birds, including the Grasshopper Sparrow (on the NJ Threatened and Endangered Species List), and endangered raptors, including the Northern Harrier, which also frequent the site; and

WHEREAS, the plan to build a large complex at this location is antithetical to the Township's and state's efforts to preserve and enhance the environment in an area located in the Designated Historic Preserved area of The Six Mile Run, and on one of the Township's Scenic Corridor Roads; and

WHEREAS, it is further our understanding that both the Franklin Township Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Open Space Advisory Committee have voted to recommend that the township act to preserve the site of the proposed development; and

WHEREAS, the concept plan does not take these environmental qualities that limit the appropriateness of development into account; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Commission believes that the developer's request for a variance regarding Schedule 6 Buffer Requirements to forgo setting aside an appropriate conservation buffer for the property that abuts State-owned Open Space (Six Mile Run Reservoir Site) indicates a lack of regard for the environmental impacts of their development;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Environmental Commission of the Township of Franklin, Somerset County, State of New Jersey, opposes the proposal by Jalaram Seva Samaj of North America to build a large (24,000 sq. ft) Temple/Cultural Center on Block 57.01 Lot 60.02 on Cortelyous Lane. The Environmental Commission recommends that the Zoning Board of Adjustment deny the requested variances for insufficient parking and lack of buffering from the Six Mile Run Reservoir Site. The Environmental Commission further recommends preserving this environmentally sensitive area as open space.

Adopted April 21, 2008 by vote of the Environmental Commission.

The listed members voted in favor of this resolution. John Clyde was absent at the time of the vote.

Arnold Vernick, Chair
Arnold Schmidt, Vice Chair
Barbara Beringer
Dr. Theodore Chase, Jr.
David Triggs
Dianne Pydeski
Ernesto Roman
Dr. Michael Ricketts