

## Friends of Historic Flemington

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[www.FriendsofHistoricFlemington.com](http://www.FriendsofHistoricFlemington.com)



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### **Developer Cust Proposes to “Save” Union Hotel and 90 Main Street**

Flemington Borough and its designated redeveloper Jack Cust, Jr. have released a one-paragraph description and four renderings of a new Main Street development plan they claim will “save” the Union Hotel and 90 Main Street.

Though the renderings incorporate two and one-half exterior walls of the Union Hotel and the whole exterior of the borough-owned building at 90 Main, the Friends of Historic Flemington believe both developer and politicians clearly have not been listening. The National Trust for Historic Preservation designated Historic Downtown Flemington as one of the 11 Most Endangered Places in the United States—not just two of its buildings, significant as they are.

It’s not just about preserving the Union Hotel. It’s about preserving the unique sense of place in New Jersey’s second largest historic district. It’s about respecting Flemington Borough Master Plan guidelines approved less than two years ago that limit development to a height of four stories. And it’s about preserving quality of life in a one-square mile rural borough of just over 4,500 citizens which would be forever destroyed if “Flemington Center Urban Renewal LLC” is allowed to construct a 100-room hotel and 250-unit seven- to eight-story apartment towers which will increase the town’s population by 10 percent or more, clog narrow streets with more traffic than they can handle, and cast the surrounding neighborhood into shadow.

Even as revised, Mr. Cust’s plan is still vastly over-scaled. There is no valid reason for an eight-story cityscape in rural Hunterdon County.

Further, the Redevelopment Agreement still burdens taxpayers countywide with higher municipal, school and county taxes as a result of a payment-in-lieu of taxes (PILOT) incentive the developer has been granted that could last as long as 30 years.

And it still obligates Borough taxpayers to fund multimillion dollar water and sewer infrastructure improvements that should be borne by the redeveloper. Necessary sewage improvements have been estimated at \$33 million. Water system upgrades, yet unidentifiable, could be similar.

The May 4th fire at Tirpok Cleaners, a one-story structure on Reaville Avenue in Flemington, reminds us of the critical importance of infrastructure. The fact is that water pressure in the borough dropped so low that tankers and pumpers had to be called in from other fire departments from all over the region. This brings home the point that there has been no real discussion of how

Flemington's fire department or any mutual aid fire department would handle events were such a crisis to occur at the Main Street Development Project as currently proposed.

Answers to these questions and more are needed before redevelopment moves forward.

Learn more at [www.FriendsofHistoricFlemington.com](http://www.FriendsofHistoricFlemington.com).

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