

EXHIBIT U

Editorial: Mahwah is losing its way over pieces of PVC pipe

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(Photo: Mitsu Yasukawa/NorthJersey.com)

People of Mahwah, listen to yourselves. You are a diverse community. You are better than this moment in your history. Stop before the litigation comes flooding in, not the Orthodox Jews you imagine. Stop before you say too much and pass too many restrictive ordinances to find a way back to solid ground. Please, stop.

On Thursday, the Mahwah Town Council introduced a so-called "no-knock" ordinance. It was an expected move in the wake of unconfirmed rumors that real estate agents representing Orthodox Jews from New York have been canvassing neighborhoods offering residents cash to sell their homes.

This comes in the wake of the extension of an eruv into Mahwah marked by pieces of PVC piping on utility poles. An eruv allows Orthodox Jews to perform certain tasks outside their homes on the Sabbath, like pushing a baby stroller. Some Mahwah residents believe the eruv is the first step in a planned incursion of Orthodox Jews from New York into their town.

MAHWAH ERUV: [Mahwah police seek two eruv vandalism suspects \(/story/news/bergen/mahwah/2017/09/05/mahwah-police-seek-vandalism-suspects/634004001/\)](#)

EDITORIAL: [Mahwah doubles down on misguided eruv ban \(/story/opinion/editorials/2017/08/25/editorial-mahwah-doubles-down-eruv-ban/602423001/\)](#)

There have been cries of "Lakewood," a town with a large Orthodox Jewish population. In some communities, an Orthodox-majority has changed public school priorities and changed zoning laws to favor the large households of Orthodox families. That may not be desirable to some people, but it's legal. Americans – and that includes Mahwah residents – cannot decide who lives or does not live in their town based on religion. It's against the law.

Mahwah can pass ordinances that restrict what people can do in their parks. On Thursday, one was proposed that even includes a ban on tree climbing. Really? Reports of out-of-state children coming to Mahwah parks have some up in arms. And fire damage to a picnic table by one out-of-state clod has been made into a major scandal. The offender should be fined heavily, but the misuse of a park picnic table did not begin with Orthodox Jews from New York State.

All of this hysteria, the loud, supportive groups at town council meetings, is coming out of an irrational – and more important – unconstitutional belief – that Orthodox Jews must be blocked at the town line.

MAHWAH: [Mahwah council introduces 'no-knock' ordinance to limit soliciting \(/story/news/bergen/mahwah/2017/09/15/mahwah-council-introduces-no-knock-ordinance-limit-soliciting/668166001/\)](#)

DOBLIN: [An eruv connects Mahwah to Clybourne Park \(/story/opinion/columnists/alfred-doblin/2017/08/11/doblin-eruv-connects-mahwah-clybourne-park/557093001/\)](#)

Mahwah residents claim they fear for their property values. They should fear for their property taxes because litigation is expensive and being on the losing side of it is even more expensive. Supporters of the eruv ban say that unlike Tenafly, which lost a six-year battle against an eruv, they are on higher legal ground: Mahwah makes no exception to an ordinance banning signage on utility poles. But PVC pipes are not signs. This is a religious accommodation.

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And the numerous public statements being made that are solely against Orthodox Jews moving into Mahwah make clear that everything the town is now doing – fighting the eruv, trying to restrict use of public parks and a no-knock ordinance in the absence of any unwanted door-to-door solicitation – is designed to block Orthodox Jews.

Mahwah is a diverse community. It is so much better than this moment in time. In the coming days, Jews across the globe will first celebrate a new year and then, later, mark the holiest of days, Yom Kippur, “Day of Atonement.”

For Jews, these coming days will be a time of reflection and atonement. Would that it also would be for the governing body of Mahwah.

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