



Friends of Clifton Park Open Space, P.O. Box 821, Clifton Park, New York 12065

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Friends of Clifton Park Open Space
P.O. Box 821
Clifton Park, New York 12065
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Letters to the Editor
Community News
Clifton Corporate Park
Clifton Park, New York 12065

Friends of Clifton Park Open Space (FCPOS) have just completed their 501C3 application for tax exemption status as a corporation. This step will allow the group to pursue available grant money to continue and expand the work we have been involved in over the past 10 years. We wanted to take this time to make a general statement of what we do as a group to continue the protection of the open space resources of the town and what each of us can do as individual stewards of the land.

FCPOS started as a citizens group concerned about the rapid expansion—both residential and commercial—across the town. We wanted to understand the issues and concerns of the different sectors involved and to suggest possible ways to highlight the value of open space protection in preserving the quality of life in the town while accommodating the need for growth and vitality.

In 1996 we asked the town to include open space zoning in a pending zoning update. We were awarded a small Rural New York grant in 1998 and hired a consultant to help with the first mapping of resources and identification of special places in the town. These resources included: Agricultural districts, Farmland not in ag-districts, Conservation easements, Land Trust properties, Parks, Streams, DEC wetlands, Aquifers, Recharge areas, Habitat, and Historical sites. We presented these findings to the Clifton Park Town Board and worked throughout the review of the town's Comprehensive Plan to promote their protection. The town recognized the value of these resources and asked the Town Planner to work with Friends to convert the information into a GIS (Geographic Information System) tool.

We have sponsored speakers, a forum with large landowners & the Town Assessor, walks & tours, and numerous presentations to the Town Board and Town Planning Board on our issues. We received an Environmental Stewardship Award from the Town Environmental Conservation Committee. We were actively involved with the town's Open Space Plan and GEIS (Generic Environmental Impact Statement) studies, lobbied hard for hiring the Open Space Coordinator, spoke at many Public Hearings, suggested several zoning changes. The list goes on.

The purpose of this letter today is to familiarize the public with what we do and to suggest ways citizens can get involved in doing similar work either within our group or on their own. Stewardship of the land is important to everyone.

Almost everyone in the town has important open space resources nearby. Most developments have park districts. Town trails are being added and extended regularly. There are different interest groups for passive and active recreation, for paved and unpaved trails, for river access and for historic preservation. Open space opportunities in the eastern part of town are important to identify. Whatever your interest may be, we urge you to get involved in making a case for its attention in open space planning.

There are many ways to get involved. We plan to suggest more in the future. But for starters, consider joining our group. FCPOS seek to continue:

- Defining what resources exist in the community
- Maintaining an independent force for advocating protection of those resources
- Publicizing how open space is valuable to our economy as well as our way of life
- Investigating what is possible and what has been done in other, similar towns
- Being a creative force—generating ideas for consideration by town officials
- Communicating those ideas to the community and facilitating a broad discussion of ideas
- Soliciting active participation by the public in our goals.

Please visit us at our web site, www.cpopenspace.org or attend our monthly meetings generally held on the third Thursday of the month at 7:15 PM at the Shenendehowa United Methodist Church on Route 146 near the Shenendehowa campus.

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