

## Clifton Park Town Board and Comprehensive Plan

### FCPOS makes presentation to Board at Public Hearing

At the August 26<sup>th</sup> Public Forum on Clifton Park's revised Comprehensive Plan, the Friends of Clifton Park Open Space presented a detailed and thoughtful presentation of our findings and recommendations. Ray Seymour outlined both a short history of the town's development and the work FCPOS has done inventorying, mapping and consolidating the various open space resources throughout the town. These included such items as: rivers, streams and waterbodies; current & proposed DEC wetlands; aquifers and recharge areas; farm land; parks; land conservancy areas; and historic district and sites. Each of these items was marked on individual overlays so the convergence and proximity of all these resources could be more easily assessed.

The group made specific recommendation that:

1. The Town shall adopt an open space plan.
2. The open space plan shall reside in the Planning Dept.
3. The Town shall establish open space zoning that requires development designs that support the Open Space Plan.
4. The Town shall establish procedures to administer the Open Space Plan

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### **Steering Committee:**

Frank Berlin, *Friends of Veteran's Park*  
Margaret Catellier, *Citizens Association for Reasonable Expansion; United Civic Associations & Neighbors*  
Bill Engleman, *Saratoga County Water Committee*  
Gil Kortz, *Clifton Park Zoning Board, past Chair of CP Environmental Conservation Committee*  
Ray Seymour, *President of Board of Directors of Land Trust Of the Saratoga Region*  
Clark Wilson, *Officer of Board of Directors of the Rexford Civic Association*



## Open Space Plan Progresses—We Need You

The Town Board has provided a measure of support for our group and our work so far. The Planning Department has been helpful in supplying maps and information and the Town Historic Commission and the Trails Committee have allowed us to add the work of their groups to our own for a more complete and comprehensive view of the Town's resources. More recently, we have had access to the skills of Jason Kemper-Town Environmental Specialist to help convert our inventory to a GIS mapping system.

Great progress has been made on an open space plan for the town. The quality of our work has been recognized by the Town in its approval of a resolution giving us access to these Town agencies and resources.

However, we are determined to make this plan a citizens' plan, a plan that has the support of all the Town's constituencies.

### **That's why your support is important to us.**

That support can be demonstrated in many ways:

1. Attend one of our general monthly meetings held at the Shenendehowa United Methodist Church at 7:30 PM.
2. There are many tasks that can be completed outside of the general meeting—all kinds of research, calling other town which have had success with open space planning, distributing notices, fund-raising, writing letters, requesting a meeting for an organization in town you know or belong to, requesting grants, designing a web page.
3. Make a contribution—large or small—any amount would be a help.
4. Educate yourself and talk about these issues to others.
5. Attend Town Board and Planning Board meetings and ask questions about the issues presented.
6. Call Greg Sundik at 373-1627 to get involved in a way best for you.

Help us build a strong base of support for Open Space issues to have a stronger voice before the politicians!

Each of these recommendations was accompanied by, specific, further definition and implementation mechanisms.

**Subsequent Town Board Meeting undercuts recommendations**

At the Town Board meeting on September 20<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Speckhard indicated that these recommendations were not added to the Comprehensive Plan because it was felt that an open space plan would soon be adopted and that was the most appropriate place for these items. Although he is right that these items would become part of the plan, we felt very strongly that some changes to the Comprehensive Plan needed to be made independently of the open space plan since it could easily be next summer before the final document was completed.

On October 4<sup>th</sup> Town Board meeting, the group presented some very specific modifications, which were drafted to fit in the context of the pending draft Comprehensive Plan, and which would result in very little additional text. Unfortunately these changes were not accepted for the final revisions to the town's Comprehensive Plan.

This experience shows that our work is only just begun and the formulation of strong town-wide support for open space initiatives at a grassroots level is increasingly important to preserving open space and establishing the mechanisms to protect these resources. ❖

# Let's Get Educated....

## *Bibliography:*

Save Our Land Save Our Towns by Thomas Hylton. (Harrisburg, PA: RB Books, 1995)

The Geography of Nowhere by James Howard Kunstler. (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1993)

Home from Nowhere by James Howard Kunstler. (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1996)

“Once There Were Greenfields” by F. Kaid Benefield, Matthew D. Raimi and Donald D.T. Chen (Washington D.C.: Natural Resources Defense Council, The Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1999)

“ULI on the Future: Smart Growth”, ULI-the Urban Land Institute, (Washington D.C., 1998)

Cities without Suburbs by David Rusk (Published by The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, distributed by The John Hopkins University Press, 1993)

## *Webliography:*

<http://www.smartgrowth.org/>

A site full of resources put up by the Smart Growth Network, a growing coalition of developers, planners, government officials, lending institutions, community development organizations, architects, environmentalists and community activists, all stakeholders in the development process.

<http://www.sprawlwatch.org/>

Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse site, a resource center which provides information, advice, and referrals on issues related to sprawl, smart growth and livable communities.

<http://www.uli.org/>

The Urban Land Institute Site. Scroll down to the section on Smart Growth and click on “What is Smart Growth?”

<http://www.sierraclub.org/transportation/sprawl/>

A comprehensive Sierra Club site about sprawl

<b><i>CALENDAR OF EVENTS:</i></b>
<u>ECPOS GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING</u> PLACE: SHENENDEHOWA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TIME: 7:30 PM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16 <sup>TH</sup>
<u>STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS</u> PLACE: CLIFTON PARK LIBRARY TIME: 7:30 PM, MONTHLY
<u>PUBLIC MEETING ON FARM LAND PRESERVATION</u> PLACE: TO BE ANNOUNCED TIME: : JANUARY, 2000
<u>MEMBERSHIP DRIVE</u> PLACE: ANY NEIGHBORHOOD IN CLIFTON PARK TIME: SOMETIME IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY SOLICIT MEMBERSHIP OR CONTRIBUTIONS CALL: GREG SUNDIK AT 373-1627
<u>CLIFTON PARK TOWN BOARD MEETINGS</u> PLACE: TOWN HALL TIME: EVERY MONDAY NIGHT, 7:00 PM
<u>CLIFTON PARK PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS</u> PLACE: TOWN HALL TIME: EVERY 2ND & 4 <sup>TH</sup> TUESDAY NIGHT, 7:00 PM

DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> MEETING  
AT SHENENDEHOWA  
UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH

Our monthly meeting will take place on Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM. We will be reviewing our progress on the Open Space document to be presented to the town for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. We will also hear about progress on our public forum on farmland preservation methods.

Please join us. We always have a list of various ways you can contribute whether at public gatherings, doing research, or performing various administrative tasks on your own time.

**Some Facts about Growth in Clifton Park**

- ❑ The Town's population in 1994 was 31, 279.
- ❑ This is a 700% increase from 1960.
- ❑ The Capital Region Planning Commission projects a growth of 43% in the next 33 years. This will add 12, 500 people.
- ❑ 90% of the citizens of Clifton Park reside on 50% of the developable land.
- ❑ From 1984 to 1989 more than 2000 houses were built in Clifton Park.
- ❑ In 1950 171 farmers worked 17,000 acres.
- ❑ Today approximately 2,600 acres remain farmed by 35 farmers.

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