

## Town Continues With Plans Despite Grant Rejection

### NYS Quality Communities Grant Application Turned Down

The Town of Clifton Park had applied for a grant under Governor Pataki's Quality Community Demonstration Program. The application was submitted by the Town Planning Department back in May and was to be used to hire a consultant and put together a plan for Open Space inventories, a Goals & Objectives survey, Conceptual and Final Plans, Fiscal Modeling and Environmental Impact Study. However, the Town's \$75,000 grant application was turned down.

In its place, the town will set aside \$10,000 to conduct its own survey and open space inventory. FCPOS has already conducted some of this work and plans to work with the town toward its goals.

Also involved in the application process was town resident David Miller, Executive Director of the National Audubon Society of NYS. The Society will make a presentation to the Town Board on February 5th. We urge all residents to attend this important session.



## Town Gets First Option on Round Lake Acreage

### Application filed for NYS Parks & Recreation Grant

Round Lake Reservoir is an 80-acre natural drainage area in the northern borders of the Town of Clifton Park. The Town has sent an application to Commissioner Bernadette Castro of the NYS Department of Parks and Recreation for a 50% matching grant through the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to help with land acquisition costs for this tract.

### FCPOS Special and Threatened Place

Friends of Clifton Park Open Space has worked to identify areas of special significance to open space concerns. Ample reasons exist to support inclusion of this site as an identified "Special and Threatened Place" in Clifton Park as our list is further elaborated.

This forested area has springs, a circa one acre reservoir, protected trout stream and wetlands. It is worthy of protective action, including public acquisition and permanent protection under conservation easement as a natural area. It is seen as a passive recreational area for uses such as nature trails. The secluded watershed lies in close proximity to over 1,000 homes in the Country Knolls neighborhood, yet harbors a remarkable diversity of native woodland plants and wildlife. Members of our organization's Steering committee have personal knowledge of the property's characteristics.

Loss of this asset to subdivision development or timber cutting when the reservoir use is abandoned would dramatically reduce the total remaining natural open space acreage in this part of Clifton Park, destroying both habitat values, and those spiritual renewal and passive recreation opportunities now offered by this unique open space.

FCPOS strongly supports the acquisition and protection of the entire acreage and any suitable adjacent land parcels for forested, publicly accessible open space uses. We are pleased to support the Town's efforts to secure this land.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Frank Berlin, Friends of Veteran's Park

Margaret Catellier, Citizens Assn. for Reasonable Expansion

Bill Engleman, Saratoga County Water Quality Committee

Gil Kortz, Clifton Park Zoning Bd, past Chair Clifton Park ECC

Ray Seymour, Land Trust of the Saratoga Region

Clark Wilson, Rexford Civic Association

Greg Sundik, Liaison to Town of Clifton Park, ECC

# Considering a Town Center...

By Cory Trembath

## Start With Some History.....

Touted by visionaries such as Ebenezer Howard and Frank Lloyd Wright as a utopian world away from the evils of the city, implemented by developers such as Levitt as a solution to the post-war housing shortage and idealized as the embodiment of the “American dream,” the suburbia that is so common throughout the nation today is a living arrangement that is sometimes considered socially, environmentally, and economically unsustainable. This is an idea more and more commonly held.

Life in Clifton Park is a good life. However, suburbs can also be stressful. Once considered far enough removed to fully enjoy the benefits of the countryside, continued development throughout the town has sharpened awareness of some of its drawbacks.

The large lots of land on which suburban single-family homes rest are spread far enough apart to make the distance to neighbors, school, work and the store inconvenient. Residents must spend many hours and gallons of gas as they fight rush-hour traffic to make their daily commute, increasingly to other suburbs, not just to the cities.

Meanwhile, children, often isolated by miles and busy streets from their classmates and activities, have no safe means of transportation. Thus the suburban youth is extremely dependent

on their parents—or anyone with a driver’s license—until at least the age of 16. Meanwhile, the free time of their parents, already shortened by long commutes, is further burdened with commitments.

## Walking versus Driving

In fact, little is within walking distance, and even when it is, the route is often so pedestrian-Unfriendly that few walk it anyway. Many people—children, the elderly, and those who cannot afford, or for whatever reason have no access to a car—are put at an unnecessary disadvantage. Thus generally only those who have access to an automobile can live here easily. This, along with the observation that suburban homes are larger, more luxurious, and more expensive than they were 50 years ago—the 1200 sq. ft. home of the 1940’s cost 2.7x the median income, in comparison to 4x for the 2000+ sq. ft. home of the 1990’s—leads to the realization that only a narrow slice of the general population is even capable of living in these types of suburbs.

## Excess Resources

With their excessive land use, high energy demands for heating and cooling, and their dependency on constant automobile use, the suburbs are the most wasteful of all environments. The miles of infrastructure—roads, electric, water, and sewer lines, etc.,—as well as the byproducts such as air pollution and traffic congestion, are a disproportionately large strain on the environment and the economy.

*(See Page 3, Column 2)*

**FRIENDS OF CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE** would like your **financial help** in sustaining our research and outreach efforts. If you would like to help in this way, please detach, complete and mail the form below with your check made out to: **FCPOS, P.O. Box 821, Clifton Park, New York 12065**

*Thank you very much for your support!*

Yes, I would like to help the Friends of Clifton Park Open Space in their work to preserve the “Park” in Clifton Park

I would like to contribute: \$10  \$20  \$30  \$40  \$50  \$75  \$100

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to: Friends of Clifton Park Open Space—or—FCPOS**

Contributions are not currently deductible as a charitable contribution

## HOUSING IN AN URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

Hypothetically, instead of accommodating the projected growth through single-family residences, new homes could be provided in the form of multi-family residences in the UGB. One model—shown here—is a three-story building containing 12 residential units, varying in size but averaging just over 2000 sq. ft. per residence. This figure closely approximates the “unofficial estimate” of the town’s Building Department of a current town-wide average of roughly 2200 to 2300 sq. ft. per residence.

This is an example from Europe of higher density living in a natural setting. It may clarify the type of residential units envisioned here. These structures are composed of 12 units of varying sizes which share a 3m (9'+) wide corridor on the north side and large expanses of glazing on the south façade.



## Automobile Traffic & the Northway

The construction of the Adirondack Northway between 1958 and 1965 undoubtedly brought the most tremendous change to the Town of Clifton Park. No longer a primarily agrarian region with a series of small hamlets like Jonesville, Clifton Park Village, Grooms Corners, Vischers Ferry and Rexford, the Northway brought a massive influx of commuters from Albany. The population rose from 4500 in 1960, to 15,000 in 1970 to 32,000 in 1990.

This phenomenal growth is largely a result of stronger pressures from the Capital Region as a whole. Saratoga County is now the fastest growing county in the region. Over 4,500 of the nearly 10,000 acres of newly developed land in the Capital District between 1986 and 1997 were in Saratoga County.

The following population growth is projected on the Town’s own web page:

2010—Population	37,308
2020—Population	40,250
2030—Population	43,000

Such an influx will necessarily have an impact on the landscape of the town. **It is estimated that an additional 4424 homes will be needed for their accommodation.** By way of comparison, there are 143 homes going into the Summerhill development and 256 homes going into The Oaks development both along Vischers Ferry Road in the western part of town.

## Urban Growth Boundary

One concept for establishing a Town Center—in this case—addressing residential housing needs—is the “Urban Growth Boundary” or UGB. Used successfully in places across the country such as Portland, Oregon, this construct works to prevent growth from continuing to spill out uncontrollably into prime farmland and undeveloped green space such as that in the western part of town. In addition, it works to concentrate the growth in an area of a physical size that can comfortably absorb such growth and serve to create a density that makes a walking-scale community—like the scale of those turn of the century villages many find so nostalgic today. A UGB is an imaginary line drawn around the area where growth is desired. It restricts growth beyond that boundary, preventing the further destruction of open space and allowing it to exist within reach of members of the community.

A hypothetical UGB could be drawn around the area stretching from the Northway west to Vischers Ferry Road, between Route 146 and Clifton Park Center Road.

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*Projected town growth would necessitate housing developments over 10 times the size of those now going in along Vischers Ferry Road*

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....

### FCPOS GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

Place: Shenendehowa United Methodist Church  
Date: Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, February 15<sup>th</sup>  
Time: 7:30 PM

### AUDUBON PRESENTATION TO TOWN BOARD

Place: Clifton Park Town Hall, 1 Town Hall  
Date: Monday, February 5<sup>th</sup>  
Time: 7:00 PM

### CLIFTON PARK TOWN BOARD MEETINGS

Place: Clifton Park Town Hall, 1 Town Hall  
Date: Every Monday Night  
Time: 7:00 PM

### CLIFTON PARK PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS

Place: Clifton Park Town Hall, 1 Town Hall  
Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday Nights  
Time: 7:00 PM

### ROUND LAKE FAMILY X-COUNTY SKI DAY

Place: Village of Round Lake-Main Parking Area  
Date: February 4<sup>th</sup>  
Time: 1:00 to 4:00 PM  
Contact: Helene Brecker 899-2103  
Discover the Saratoga County Heritage Trail

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Friends of Open Space Receives Stewardship Award

On Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup> Friends of Clifton Park Open Space was honored at the Town Board meeting by a presentation from the Town's Environmental Conservation Committee with an Environmental Stewardship Award. Mr. John Ritter and Mr. Justin Fisher of the ECC did the presentation, and Town Supervisor Phil Barrett also spoke about the group.

The ECC cited the Friends work on beautification efforts, protecting waterways and habitats, promotion of aesthetic principles, conducting forums, walks and speakers and generally exemplifying citizenship's finest qualities. They spoke about how protecting enjoyment of the environment is the right thing to do and hoped their award program would raise community awareness of such citizen efforts. Also honored that evening with an award was Mary Jane Row and her long-standing efforts on behalf of all the animal populations of the town.

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*"If only everybody would do a little bit....", John Ritter, Environmental Conservation Committee*

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Friends hopes this honor will encourage other citizens to participate in such efforts and make Open Space issues a continuing ones for our town. ❖

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