
FRIENDS OF CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE

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Town Open Space Plan Goes to Town Board 1st Quarter, 2003

FCPOS urges citizens to support the Open Space Plan

Friends of Clifton Park Open Space has reviewed the Town's Open Space Concept Plan as it was presented this summer. FCPOS supports the Town's Open Space Concept Plan and was excited about its public presentation earlier this month.

The Town Committee has been dedicated in seeking input and feedback in order to make this plan represent the concerns of its many diverse citizens' groups. It should be commended for this first critically important step in Open Space Protection in the Town of Clifton Park. We urge you to visit the Town offices or web site to read the plan in detail. Below is only a synopsis, which we hope will whet your appetite for more.

The Town has done a good job so far and needs your encouragement to keep moving forward.

Parts 1-4 set the stage for the substance of the plan with:

1. Introduction & Vision
2. Public Participation & Open Space Goals and Objectives
3. Clifton Park's Setting
4. Overview of Clifton Park's Open Space Resources

Part 5 of the Plan develops five major concepts:

- Protection of wildlife nature preserves and watersheds
- A farmland protection program
- Enhanced recreational parklands and ballfields
- A town-wide, comprehensive trails and pathways system
- Scenic roads, cultural resource & historic preservation program

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STEERING COMMITTEE

Frank Berlin, Friends of Veteran's Park

Margaret Catellier, Citizens Assn. for Reasonable Expansion

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

Ray Seymour, Land Trust of the Saratoga Region

Clark Wilson, Rexford Civic Association

Susan Burton, League of Women Voters of Saratoga County



Town of Halfmoon Considers “Town Center”

By Dennis Yusko, excerpted from Times Union

It started as a desire for a new town hall. It's evolving into a search for this suburban community's soul. Halfmoon, the fastest growing town in the Capital Region, is the latest Saratoga county suburb to consider planning a town center. Halfmoon envisioned downtown center, possibly located off Route 9, is seen as a place where residents would live, shop, eat, attend public meetings and enjoy recreations. The concept is built on the notion that “everything old is new”—that is, a return to the sort of downtowns that were the focus of community life before the post-World War II urban exodus.

“Growth is coming. We can either be washed away or handle it,” said John D'Alessandro, a Planning Board member who moved to Halfmoon several years ago and pitched the town center plan. “What do we want to be when we grow up? I don't think we want to be another typical bedroom community.”

Growth is coming. We can either be washed away or handle it.

Supporters believe a town center would provide activities and human contact sorely lacking in Halfmoon's 21,500 acres of new subdivisions old farms and “big box” stores on Rt. 9. “The objective is to create a mixed-use town center that will be the ‘heart’ of Halfmoon,” the project's draft master plan states.

Halfmoon's plan marks the most authentic New Urbanism proposal in the Saratoga suburbs, providing for a range of housing types and price levels that can bring people of different ages, races and incomes into daily contact, said Todd Fabozzi, manager of the Capital District Regional Planning Commission. Suburban zoning in general requires “a very dogmatic separation of uses. The idea behind the town center is an integration of uses,” Fabozzi, said.

Skeptics contend it could increase traffic, erode Halfmoon's agricultural roots and cost too much. “Why change?” asked town native Michael Stiles, 63, a farmer and owner of a Rt. 9 construction business. “We're happy to keep it the way it is. We're still a bedroom community, and that will probably never change.”

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Special recognition was also given to the enhanced protection for drinking water resources as an overall theme.

Each concept section also identifies more specific protection goals with suggested acreage over the next 2 to 5 years along with implementation steps. The Town's Protection Targets in each of these categories still needs to be taken to the "Next Step"—a Clifton Park Resource Evaluation Model or Greenprint Map. This model is a method for evaluating specific parcels in order to develop specific protection recommendations.

Part 6 of the Plan reviews Key Conservation Tools. These are meant to be "multiple practical options, tools, techniques and strategies for conserving open space and rural character." Some of the strategies described here include:

- Land Acquisition
- Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements or Purchase of Development Rights
- Donation
- Term Easements/Tax Abatement Programs
- Open Space Districts
- Traditional Neighborhood Development
- Comprehensive Land Use Planning
- Infrastructure Policy: Making sure utilities/Infrastructure Planning is linked to Community's Land Use Plan and Open Space Conservation Plan
- Amenity (Incentive) Zoning
- Resource Evaluation
- Critical Environmental Areas
- Conservation Design
- Illustrated Design Guidelines
- Rural Road Standards

Part 7 of the Plan proposes Initiatives to Implement the Open Space Program which include important items such as:

- The need for professional staff to administer the program,
- Seeking additional government grants,
- Strengthened communications among government and non-government groups amidst the continuing booming real estate market,
- Enhanced conservation-based design for all type of new development, and finally
- Making a local financial commitment through several suggested funding mechanisms.

References, a Glossary and Appendices A-D (Public Participation Summary, List of Historic Sites, Resource Evaluation Model, Maps—Ecological & Water Resources, Map, Recreational, Greenway, and Trails Map, Cultural, Scenic, and Historic Resources Map and Agricultural Resources Map) complete the document.

FCPOS believes it is important to support this Plan, to protect the undeveloped land that helps define the character and charm of Clifton Park from which all citizens benefit, and to initiate and finance the implementation steps necessary to make the Plan a success.

FCPOS has been involved in this process and plans to stay involved. The Town has done a good job so far and needs your encouragement to keep moving forward. *We urge all citizens to review the plan, attend the public hearings and let the politicians who can make this plan a reality know what their constituents want—now and in the future.* ❖

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

Saratoga Voters OK City Purchase of Undeveloped Land

By Robin K. Cooper, excerpted from the Schenectady Gazette

Voters overwhelmingly approved a referendum Election Day authorizing the City Council to borrow up to \$56 million to purchase undeveloped land for preservation and recreation.

The referendum passed 3-1, with nearly 6,000 votes cast, according to unofficial figures from the Saratoga County Board of Elections.

Beth Hershenhart, a city resident who helped lead the campaign to approve the referendum, said she was not surprised by the outcome. "I'm very please," she said. "This really shows the multipartisan and broad-based support that land conservation has in this community." Hershenhart and a group of local residents spent the past two months distributing fliers and talking with city residents to garner support for the bonding proposal.

Among the major proponents behind the referendum were Major Kenneth Klotz, Open Space Project Executive Director Alane Ball-Chinian and former city accounts Commissioner Ben Mirling.

If the City Council decided to authorize all \$5 million in bonding at one time, the average property tax bill would go up about \$36 a year for 20 years. But city officials have said the Council will more likely buy property a little bit at a time, keeping the tax increase lower.

Halfmoon Town Center....

Located in the southeastern part of Saratoga County directly off the Northway, Halfmoon was second statewide in growth...in the 1990's. During that decade, as new and increasingly affluent families moved in, the population grew by 33% to 18,474. Over the last 8 months, the Planning Board has approved 800 to 900 new homes and heard plans for an additional 460 during one recent evening alone.

A developer is presently scoping the town center project's feasibility off Rt. 9 along Guideboard Road and Rt. 236. The concept has received the blessing of Supervisor Kenneth DeCerce and state leaders, but a handful of residents and town officials at a recent town meeting remained skeptical.

DeCerce acknowledged that the town's medium household income of \$46,234 would make it ineligible for town center grants. But with a chip plant proposed in Malta and Sematech coming to Albany, the town will only grow more, he reasoned.

Fabozzi warned that the spirit of town centers may be a hard sell. "It is a social think in a sense. It's based on open access and people, and that seems to be something that the American society seems to be having trouble with lately," he said.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....

FCPOS GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

Place: Shenenedehowa United Methodist Church
Date: Thursday, February 27th, 2003
Time: 7:30 PM

175TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

What: Winter Block Party
Place: Clifton Park Center
Date: February 8th, 2003

What: John Scherer, Town Historian Discussion—
Clifton Park Develops + "Farms to Suburbs" Display
Place: Shenenedehowa Library
Date: Sunday, February 23rd, 2003
Time: 2:00 PM

CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....

FRIENDS OF CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE MEETINGS-2003

Place: Shenenedehowa United Methodist Church, Rt 146
Time: Thursdays at 7:30 PM

2003 Schedule of Meetings:

February 27th

March 20th

April—To be Announced

May 22nd

June 19th

July 17th—tentative

August 21st—tentative

September 18th

October 16th

November 20th

December 18th

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home page www.cliftonpark.org—get linked to
FCPOS at www.cpopenspace.org!!!
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newsletter via email**

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