

**PUTNAM COUNTY COALITION  
TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE**  
P.O. Box 122  
Carmel, New York 10512

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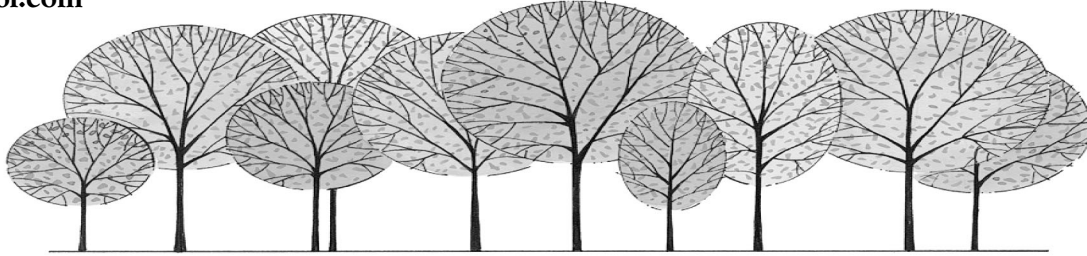


**PUTNAM COUNTY COALITION TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE**  
(Protecting land, Protecting Water, Protecting Quality Communities)

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**FALL/WINTER 2003/2004 NEWSLETTER**

Dear Friends,

The old year did not end without good fellowship and good cheer enjoyed by all at our first annual meeting and dinner on December 3rd at the Southeast Grille.

Graced by the musicianship of John Cohen and David Anram from Putnam Valley, the incomparable poetry of Seymour Morgan and the presence of County Executive, Robert Bondi, the evening brought out the best and brightest in the open space movement. To those who could not attend but participated nevertheless by generously contributing, a heartfelt thanks to you also. Honored at the dinner were the first lady of land preservation, Ms. Eleanor Fitchen and champion of watershed protection, Dr. Marian Rose, President, Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition.

The New Year has begun with the actions of a PUBLIC from East to West of Putnam County that is energized, knowledgeable and increasingly savvy, able to navigate the maze of town politics, SEQRA regulations and land use decisions. From the founding of the Coalition, we have witnessed a sea-change in public attitude and involvement. Let us count the ways:

1. Attendance at Town Board, Planning Board and Conservation Board Meetings— Solitary figures no longer, residents have participated in the political process in record numbers, challenging the direction proposed by developers and acquiesced by pliant Planning Boards even to the extent of litigation.

Together with courageous residents, the Coalition joined Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition, Riverkeeper, CRSE in opposing developments that impair the environment, inflict tax burdens, threaten town character and quality of life of residents. Weston Chase (12 homes); Meadows at Deans Corners (103

homes); Campus at Fields Corners (143 homes and three office complexes abutting Tilly Foster Farm) and Terravest International Corporate Park (495,000 sq. ft of industrial/warehouses, senior housing and a town park). How about "Effluent for the Affluent" to describe the scenic wonders of a sewage treatment plant adjacent to the "market value" senior cottages— all compliments of the developers of Terravest. A model of Town Planning!!

**ON THE COALITION'S WATCH LIST**

Hamlet of Carmel will witness an explosion of development in the sewered and traffic-congested area should proposals come to fruition and current 3-acre zoning code annulled. Example: Michael's Glen, a 28-residential development on less than an acre fronting windy, dangerous Fair Street and within 100 ft of Michael's Brook. Described by one respected environmental organization as environmentally destructive, the project nevertheless received the approval of the Carmel Planning Board.

**MORE TO COME**

A. Hillcrest Commons off Rt. 52 and Horsepound (a mixed-use development expanding the ShopRite area by 10,000 sq. ft.; constructing a 60,000 sq. ft. office building and a 150 unit affordable senior housing) and parking, affecting slopes, wetlands, stormwater and traffic. The Planning Board has determined that the proposal may have a significant adverse impact on the environment and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) must be prepared.

B. The Fairways a.k.a. "The Links" off the Centennial Golf Course on Fair St. another "market value" 100 senior com-

plex proposed by Mr. Camarda. Solution to traffic: two lights— one on John Simpson Rd and Fair St. and the other on Fair St. and Hill and Dale.

C. Route 6— Bridge currently undergoing expansion only to John Simpson, at which point it reverts to two lanes, is slated to be the egress point for the Hotel/Conference Center; the "Y," a "Kiddy Park," an "In-Line Skating Rink," restaurants, assisted living residences, retail center - all proposed by developer, Camarda at various times. Currently, Mr. Camarda has stated at the February 3rd Town Board meeting that he has resolved the legal issues with adjacent property-owner, Shapiro, and is ready to close on the contract in March.

The ISSUE: THE FATE OF THE 'Y'— the centerpiece of Mr. Camarda's campaign persuading the public that the sale of the 19 acres for \$1.2 million and 3-year term contract, would provide the necessary conditions for the "Y's" entry into Carmel, a benefit not only for Carmel but for nearby Town of Southeast, Kent and Patterson residents.

Mr. Camarda has deftly positioned himself, outfoxed the old Town Board and now holds the cards to negotiate with the new Town Board members on his terms.

THE PRIZE: THE "Y" and WHAT ELSE? 1. Revisit the 3-acre zoning code; 2. Withdraw as defendants in the suit filed by Mr. Camarda challenging the legality of the Town Board to impose 3-acre zoning; 3. Maintain the loosely-written senior housing law.

D. "Camarda Park"— Joel Greenberg, the architect, has now requested that the Carmel Town Board engage an engineer of such expertise as to go head-to-head with DEP engineers. Donated by

Mr. Camarda, it appears that the 47-acres, 17 of which are wetlands, are so environmentally-sensitive that wetland mitigation measures and stormwater pollution prevention plans required DEP scrutiny. Be that as it may, the former Town Board accepted this "donation" in haste and without performing due diligence.

The Hamlet needed "ball fields" and politically it was certainly the right thing to do. In fact, it was a disservice to the Willow Ridge residents, the residents of Seminary Hill Road and the residents of the Hamlet. A disservice to the Willow Ridge residents in that the Town Board provided Mr. Camarda with an escape-hatch whereby the cluster designation would be removed, alleviating the developer of the mandated 35% open space requirement and thereby raising the number of housing units to 71. In exchange, Mr. Camarda was permitted to donate the "park."

It was a disservice to the residents of Seminary Hill, who would be severely impacted by traffic and noise and it was a disservice to the residents of the Hamlet who were entitled to recreation land without encumbrances.

2. And now onto Patterson/Kent— Within the last four years, two efforts have been made to install mega retail centers at the Patterson/Kent boundary off Exit 18 on I84. Both attempts failed due in no small measure to the efforts of Larry Blanchett, the residents of Kent, Riverkeeper, CWCWC and a host of others.

Not to be deterred Mr. Camarda has now proposed a third mega retail center of over 400,000 sq. ft. persuading the Town of Patterson Board to change zoning for a portion of the land from residential to industrial. Supervisor Griffin and Town Planner, Williams, have indicated their support for this project ostensibly to provide tax relief for Patterson residents.

As an aside but most pertinent: In Southeast, Brewster Highlands, another gross monstrosity off Exit 19, also received a zoning change and variance and Terravest requires a special permit for its senior housing as does Hillcrest Commons in Carmel.

Burdick Farms— Threatened with over a 130+ home development, recently reduced to approximately 37, we encourage the County, DEP and open space preservation organizations to purchase this property. As reported in the Feb. 10 issue of the Journal News, 200 copies of letters in support of the

purchase were sent to Mr. Bondi. Bullet Hole resident, Jill Eisenstein said it all: "The land should not be built upon because it represents the county's agricultural past and sits above the Great Swamp where polluted runoff from new roads and septic systems will collect."

3. Lastly, but not least Putnam Valley— Putnam Valley Residents Coalition has mounted a campaign of citizen awareness and involvement and together with Riverkeeper has challenged the town-wide senior housing ordinance, an open invitation to high density senior housing as proposed for Bryant Pond Rd.

Additionally, it has been at the forefront of the battle to bring sanity and rationality to the direction of residential and commercial development advocating and building support for moratoriums and open space preservation and participating in Master Plans sessions. While still rural, Putnam Valley still has a window of opportunity to forego the mistakes of other towns and truly become a model for economic growth and environmental protection.

#### PETITION DRIVES

Petition drive as a method of citizen addressing their elected representatives is alive and well and working. From its founding, the revitalization of the historic Village of Brewster has been a priority of the Coalition. And the issue was joined as both the viability of the Village and the integrity of Tilly Foster were threatened by the proposed Town of Southeast plan to re-locate town and court offices to the farm. Begun aptly on Brewster Founders' Day, petition drives by the Coalition and Village Residents— Michael Santos et al garnered over 400 signatures and was subsequently reported in The Journal News.

Fundamental to the revitalization of the Village is the implementation of the Columbia Plan which seeks to break the impasse between the Village and the Town.

Among its recommendations is the proposal that sharing of governmental space



**TILLY FOSTER FARM**

will facilitate communication, an ingredient sadly missing to the detriment of the Town and the Village.

Lastly, we ask you in the words of Village Trustee, Michael Santos to "Come home to the Hub of the Harlem Valley." In a Letter to the Editor, Michael extends an open invitation to commuters tired "of the trials and tribulations of the Southeast Metro North Station... to try the warmth of coffee, breakfast, plenty of newspapers in the commodious, recently renovated historic, circa 1930 train station." Another important step in cobbling together ways to return Brewster to its rightful place as the historic center of Putnam County.

#### 3. LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS

ROUTE 22 "Improvement " or "Widening"— not the same thing. Countering the attempt by Town of Southeast officials and attorney, Willis Stephens, to marginalize the environmental community and to characterize the recommendation by the Watershed Inspector General, Jim Tierney, for regional land use policy among the six towns affected, as a "significant departure from traditional Home Rule" designed by an "outsider" to the particular governmental unit," a forest of Letters to the Editor, Op-Ed and Guest Opinion pieces recently appeared in the Journal News and the Putnam Courier. "Widening" as countless transportation studies have shown is an invitation to more development( recall 58 acres recently purchased near the Gold Dome); more traffic congestion, more degradation to East Branch reservoir, which even Mr. Stephens concedes is an "impaired waterbody," and threat to its headwaters, The Great Swamp. The true intent of Mr. Stephens

plea for Mr. Pataki's intervention is to "enhance our ability to attract quality business development, which is vital to this region."

Does Route 22 need more development?

**TILLY FOSTER**— "Preserve America, Preserve Tilly Foster" Debate continues over the uses of Tilly Foster as the Tilly Foster Advisory Committee weighs in on a short-term scheme by the County Executive to relocate the "environmental" portions of the Department of Health to buildings on the Farm, a move inconsistent and incompatible with the stated mission and vision of the Farm. Similarly, in view of the Coalition, efforts to relocate other offices under the pretext that they are tangentially involved "in the environmental field" should and will be opposed. What distinction is there from the suggestion by the County Executive or legislators to "farm out offices to the Farm." None. Both are expedient, band-aid approaches to a problem that begs a comprehensive, long-term solution. As Legislator Hay has stated, "It's up to the public to protect the integrity and the spirit in which the farm was purchased."

Many thanks to all for your letters and phone calls.

**4. FORUMS**— In late November, The Coalition in association with Concerned Residents of Carmel/Mahopac sponsored a forum on the DEC proposed Model Forest Plan for Mt. Nimham. Subsequent to this well-attended forum featuring DEC officials, Martin Brech and Jeff Green, videotaped for RCN showing, an article appeared in the winter Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition newsletter, "Is the Clock Running Down on Protecting the Forests that Protect our Watershed" wherein I

stated, "No longer viewed for their intrinsic value as protectors of biodiversity, recreation and water, forests have now taken an utilitarian function as economic goods with their value calculated proportionally to their contribution to the economic mix." Kent Town officials together with State Senator Leibell and Assemblywoman, Sandra Galef and Assemblyman Stephens have weighed in on this issue and have met with DEC Commissioner, Crotty. Resolution of this issue is expected shortly.

We are also concerned with logging by private landowners especially in Carmel. Efforts to log off Lake Gilead and Hickory Bend Roads by landowners raises issues of logging in areas abutting residential areas, effect on water quality, infrastructure and safety. It is an issue that the Town Board should examine and develop codes enforcing "Best Management Practices" and resident safety.

**OTHER: ANYONE A BETTING MAN?** Recent NYTimes articles have featured the successful petition by the Schaghticoke Indians, housed in Kent, Ct. For recognition as tribe. The ramifications for Putnam: According to the Feb. 15th article, "Since the Jan. 29th court ruling, Chief Velky has begun seeking a "host community" in Southwest Ct that will allow the Tribal Nation to build a casino.(Recall - articles suggesting such a casino at the Rt. 6 border) The founder of the Subway restaurant chain, Frederick A. DeLuca, has been a major outside investor in the tribe's efforts."

#### WHO'S WHO IN PUTNAM

From time to time, we will be highlighting organizations in Putnam whose goals are consistent with those of the Coalition: protecting open space and preserving his-

toric site and structures. This issue will highlight our partner organizations: The Putnam County Land Trust and The Putnam County Historical Society, located at 68 Marvin Avenue, Brewster— (278-7209).

The Putnam County Land Trust is a 40-year, volunteer organization with approximately 500-acres under preservation. The Land Trust in accepting land donations also accepts the legal responsibility for stewardship for the land and therefore volunteers are urgently needed to assist the Trust in fulfilling this obligation. The Coalition to Preserve Open Space, while advocating for open space preservation is not a Land Trust. Should friends, neighbors, relatives express an interest in preserving their land in perpetuity, we urge you to notify Judi Terlizzi, President.

Allan J. Warnecke, Putnam County Historian, has submitted the following which has been excerpted: The object is to partner public and private, individual and organization with the leadership of a local individual or group to restore and maintain historic sites and structures around Putnam. Volunteers are needed and encouraged in efforts to initiate local projects (parks, rehabilitation of historic cemeteries and structures) with the knowledge of the County Historian's Office and control will be retained locally. At appropriate times the resources (human, financial and equipment) of Putnam County will assist in the completion of the project.

While lengthy, I hope that the newsletter will be informative and encouraging to us all that the tools of democracy are there to use to effect change.

Sincerely  
Ann Fanizzi, Chair

### COALITION TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTION FORM

We thank you for your generous support, continuing phone calls and attendance at meetings. Your tax-deductible contribution has made our work and success possible. Please take a moment to renew your membership, if you haven't already done so. It is vital that we have funds to cover escalating litigation, flyer distribution, and postage costs.

\$15.00 \_\_\_ \$7.50 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel/e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to the address listed on the masthead of this newsletter. Together we can keep Putnam County, the county where the country begins. Lisa Aurello, Treasurer