



TOWN OF CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE PLAN

January 2003



Prepared by:

**Behan Planning Associates, LLC
With the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Committee**

Town of Clifton Park

One Town Hall Plaza
Clifton Park, New York 12065
(518) 371-6651
Fax: (518) 371-1136

Philip C. Barrett
Supervisor
(518) 371-6651

Thomas E. Paolucci
Councilman

Sanford I. Roth
Councilman



Patricia O'Donnell
Town Clerk
(518) 371-6681

Roy A. Speckhard
Councilman

Lynda M. Walowit
Councilwoman

Resolution No. 115 of 2003, a resolution adopting the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan.

Introduced by Supervisor Barrett, who moved its adoption, seconded by the entire Town Board.

WHEREAS, the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Committee was appointed in 2001 to prepare an Open Space Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Committee represented civic groups, farmers, recreational leagues, developers, and open space professionals, and

WHEREAS, significant public input has been received throughout the preparation of the Clifton Park Open Space Plan, and

WHEREAS, the goals suggested in the Open Space Plan are recommendations to the Town Board from the Open Space Committee, and

WHEREAS, the Town Board will continue to work with the Open Space Committee to achieve these goals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Board hereby adopts the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan with the addition of the Responsiveness Summary included.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Ayes: Councilman Speckhard, Councilman Roth,
Councilwoman Walowit, Supervisor Barrett

Noes: None

Absent: Councilman Paolucci

DECLARED ADOPTED

May 19, 2003


Patricia O'Donnell, Town Clerk

Town of Clifton Park

Department of Planning
One Town Hall Plaza
Clifton Park, New York 12065
(518) 371-6054 FAX: (518) 371-1136



To: The Clifton Park Town Board

From: David J. Miller & Jim Romano
Clifton Park Open Space Plan Co-Chairs

Re: Responsiveness Summary of the March 10th, 2003 Public Hearing on the Clifton Park Open Space Plan

April
Date: ~~March~~ 4th, 2003

The Public Hearing on the Clifton Park Open Space Plan provided a strong base of support for this program. Of the 30 speakers, 25 of which spoke in favor of the plan, while 3 speakers raised serious concerns over certain sections of the report. In addition, 2 other speakers provided commentary on several issues not directly related to the open space plan. Most of the comments about the plan asked for clarification and did not oppose the overall direction of the initiative.

The comments received, which require a response are summarized below. This responsiveness summary should clarify questions raised about the plans intent and the implementation process.

1. Funding mechanisms for implementation of the open space plan.

Concerns were raised on which type of funding mechanism would be incorporated by the plan. In response to these comments it is important to note that the plan mandated no set funding mechanisms for the town to implement the program. Instead, the plan estimates the cost of implementing the priority conservation objective over its first years. To achieve these conservation objectives, funding mechanisms ranging from general budget appropriation, allocation of the town's surplus fund, federal, state and or county grants, private contributions and a possible future bond referendum for open space purchases should all be considered. These approaches would need to be evaluated and acted upon by the town board with full public involvement in order to implement the plan. Under New York State law the town of Clifton Park can establish an

open space account (an account which they created on March 10th) and can accept private tax-deductible donations to such an account as long as those donations remain in said account for the purposes of an open space plan.

2. Identification of Priority Conservation Areas and Trails.

The open space plan concept map provides an overview of possible targeted areas in town for land acquisition, conservation easements and trail systems. The map provides an area much larger than the five-year priority conservation targets identified in the plan. Concerns were raised that some zones included lands of private owners that may not want to participate. No private landowner that does not want to participate in the program will be forced to comply. The entire program is a willing seller incentive based approach. The concept map provides the town with flexibility to reach out to those interested landowners within specific priority conservation areas.

In addition, the trail system outline is conceptual and not site specific. No trail will be included on any private land without the full consent and involvement of the private landowner. These trails are a varying degree and design pending on the trail system program being coordinated and implemented by the town. Some of these trails may include bike paths and sidewalks in more developed sections of the town. While in other more rural and less developed areas, these trails may be smaller walking paths. Everything from the natural nature trails in locations like the Vischer Ferry Preserve to the sidewalks developed along Moe Road are possible trail designs but it is important to note that the intention of the plan is to have passive designs that respect the environment and cultural character of the areas. The plan calls for a cooperative effort where neighborhoods would be involved in every phase of the development of these trails. Again, it is important to note that no trail will be sited on any private land without the approval of the landowner.

3. The Open Space Plan's Relationship to Town Zoning and Other Laws and Ordinances.

Any changes to the town of Clifton Park's zoning laws or other ordinances would have to be voted upon by the town with public involvement mechanisms mandated by town law for such decisions. The open space plan is only a guide for such future decisions making processes and provides specific recommendations and rationales should the town wish to explore these approaches to open space protection.

4. Open space plan and other governmental planning programs.

The Clifton Park open space plan is a guidance document for the town of Clifton Park and should be utilized by the planning department and other local governmental programs in their deliberations. It provides no legal mandates for the town to follow but rather provides opportunities for future coordinated conservation actions. As stated in the previous section, it will take further town action to implement many of the proposed steps in the Clifton Park Open Space Plan. However, the plan itself can be used as a guide for the town as it updates its own comprehensive plan. It will also provide federal, state and

county agencies justification and support documentation for possible grant applications. The Clifton Park Open Space Plan will provide the town with a distinct advantage when applying for these funds to implement specific projects in the plan.

Conclusion

This responsiveness summary provides clarification to several issues raised at the public hearing on March 10th, 2003. It is recommended that this document be adopted by the town board as an appendix to the Clifton Park Open Space Plan. It should be noted for the record that overwhelming support for the Clifton Park Open Space Plan was documented during the town's public involvement process including the March 10th hearing.

We recommend the town's approval of the Clifton Park Open Space Plan as soon as deemed appropriate and we volunteer our services to assist in the plan's implementation. Thank you again for the leadership the Clifton Park Town Board has provided throughout this process.

Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan

January 2003

Prepared for the:

Town of Clifton Park Town Board
Town of Clifton Park
One Town Hall Plaza
Clifton Park, New York 12065
(518) 371-6054

Prepared by:

Behan Planning Associates, LLC
6 Lake Avenue, Suite 200
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866
(518) 583-4335
e-mail: info@behanplanning.com

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TOWN OF CLIFTON PARK TOWN BOARD FUNDING SUPPORT

Philip Barrett, Town Supervisor
Roy A. Speckhard, Deputy Supervisor
Tom Paolucci, Town Board Member
Sanford Roth, Town Board Member
Lynda Walowit, Town Board Member

CLIFTON PARK OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Frank Berlin
Kevin Bowman
Margaret Catellier
Jim Chandler
Gil Kortz (former member, 2001-2002)
Bill Mackesey
David J. Miller, co-chair, (Audubon New York)
Kevin O'Brien
Isabell Prescott
Jim Romano, co-chair, (Niagara Mohawk)
Jim Ruhl
Ray Seymour

TOWN OF CLIFTON PARK STAFF

Planning Department
- Jason Kemper, Director of Planning
- Jan Dean
- Lynn Hedger

With contributions by:
Walter Smead, Town Assessor
Michael O'Brien, Environmental Specialist

Photo Contributors

Eric Hamilton
Bill Mackesey
Isabell Prescott

IN-KIND SERVICES

Audubon New York

American Farmland Trust

Friends of Clifton Park Open Space

Niagara Mohawk, a National Grid Company

CONSULTANT

Behan Planning Associates, LLC
- John Behan, AICP, Principal
- Jennifer Clouting Viggiani, Environmental Planner
- Monica Carson, Planner/Landscape Designer
- Lawrence Howard, Land Use Attorney/Planner
- Jason Baum, Planner/GIS Specialist (formerly)
- Arthur Buckley, Community Planner
- Cynthia Behan, RLA, Landscape Architect

Thank you to all who participated in the two community surveys, the public workshop – design charrette, the focus groups, and all of the public meetings! Continued support of the plan's implementation is vital.



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- Item 1. "Town of Clifton Park Open Space Conservation Survey 2001"
- Item 2. Record of Public Participation Input from Public Meetings

- Appendix B. Town of Clifton Park List of Historic Sites**
- Appendix C. Town of Clifton Park Open Space Resource Evaluation Model 2002**
- Appendix D. Resource Maps, Prepared by the Town of Clifton Park Planning Department, June 2002**

- Item 1. Ecological and Water Resources Map
- Item 2. Recreational, Greenway, and Trails Map
- Item 3. Cultural, Scenic, and Historic Resources Map
- Item 4. Agricultural Resources Map

Appendix E. Fiscal Analysis

- Item 1: "Fiscal Findings & Plan Implementation Strategy," digital presentation prepared by Behan Planning Associates, LLC.
- Item 2: "***Town of Clifton Park Fiscal Analysis: Summary of Findings***," prepared by Behan Planning Associates, LLC, December 2002.

Appendix F. Public Comments on the Town of Clifton Park Draft Open Space Concept Plan, June 17, 2002.

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