



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

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Date: March 6, 2015

To: Community News, Letters to the Editor

From: Friends of Clifton Park Open Space

Re: Clifton Park Town Center Zoning Variance Proposal

Friends of Clifton Park Open Space would like to support the proposed Town Center Zoning proposals and to oppose the variance for lifting the 50 residential unit cap for the Windsor Development proposal. To outline our reasons on this issue, we would review the thoughtful and publicly engaged process by which these zoning proposals were developed.

The Town has a long and highly successful tradition of seeking both professional advice and public input over a considered amount of time to arrive at multi-faceted and publicly reviewed results. This important issue has not deviated from that habit.

- In 2007, the town a review of the Exit 9 with Halfmoon, NYS DOT and the Capital District Transportation Commission. This study peaked much public interest and resulted in planning sessions, public hearings, and public reviews with Town officials, citizens and professional consultant BFJ Planning.
- In 2011, these steps were a solid start to the town's Town Center Workshops. This more extensive project again included public presentations by professional design firms. Multiple, public, hands-on workshops with design exercises—both during the day and after hours—were conducted to accommodate the most attendance.
- In addition, smaller stakeholder meetings were also conducted with area business owners.
- In 2012, more public meetings were held where each quadrant of the design area was specifically displayed with current and potential development/redevelopment with “before and after,” over-time photos and drawings, as well as short-term and long-term solutions for Route 146.

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- Implementation steps were outlined in the Town Center Plan—including a proactive focus on opportunity sites and the development of Zoning and Design Guidelines/Standards. So in 2014 the Town’s new TC Zoning regulations were presented at a public hearing. They incorporated many of the priorities outlined during the public process and are ready for implementation.

Now is not the time to back away from all the hard work, time, and effort which the town has expended, and flout the years of public participation which it has taken us to get to this point. A consensus vision about the look, feel and function of the Town Center has been carefully developed. Achieving that vision will be a gradual, evolutionary process that will require long-term commitment by everyone in the community. These are the words of the Clifton Park Town Center Plan. Bowing to such a significant variance at this initial stage in the process is ill-advised.

This method of seeking professionals to help educate the public on available options then enlisting public involvement in analyzing, assessing and suggesting additional possibilities for various town projects is a long-standing one. It has worked to cement an increased sense of community within our town and a consensus on how best to spend town money and use town assets. It helps to maintain the property values of our homes and the attractiveness of our businesses. The Town has maintained a balance between residential and commercial development, between passive and active open spaces, between urban and rural settings. This balance keeps our town at the forefront of fiscal responsibility and popular support. ***In this most public of spaces, this balance is more important than ever to maintain both the beauty and the viability of our town.*** See more about our organization at [www.cpopenspace.org](http://www.cpopenspace.org)

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