

New Jersey Highlands Council **Letter 18**

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The matter of the Parsippany Waterview Rezone Attempt Fiasco RD Developer Slaps Parsippany Around Citizens Fight Back. Parsippany, NJ has been engaged in an effort along with citizens of Mountain Lakes to prevent an unneeded speculation development on the last undeveloped landscape along Route 46 known as the "waterview tract"; 26.5 acres. This is no ordinary landscape but a hardwood upland forest, with well drained high chroma, non hydric soils. The land borders on the Troy Brook and contains a wetland transition zone.(Harbors a cemetery) The area has also been mentioned in a Rutgers Study of the Troy Brook Regional Stormwater Management Plan, Drainage Area Specific Water Quality Quantity and Recharge Objectives. One most important aspect of this report mentions the importance of maintaining bio-diversity in the area for obvious reasons explicit in the reports title. This landscape characteristics qualify it as a "natural resource" or a natural resource asset already working for us, harboring trees, ground water recharge and community enhancement acting as a threshold to an older traditional Parsippany neighborhood. However because it exists in the Planning Zone of the Highlands none of its assets or character was recognized and its value was market real estate only, zoned for office space. Do to the lack of need and the over development of office buildings in the area the property owner and a developer tried to have the property re-zoned in order to proceed with an unneeded market development scheme. The Administration of Parsippany at the time went along and tried everything they could to promote this development scheme, misleading the public with false premises like tax rateables, jobs and the threat of public housing development if it was not developed now this would happen later. From a local Letter to the editor by me sums it up: Because we (Parsippany) are in the Planning Zone of the NJ Highlands Waterview landscape is not seen for it's inherit natural resource value, as our Master Plan should. Waterview landscape is like an innocent person being sentenced to prison. It has been deemed real estate not land or resource despite a Rutgers Study, our own master plan and evidence discovered by the Group Citizens 4 Health, Safety, and Welfare. Citizen's argument is supported by the preponderance of substantial, reliable, and probative evidence because the parcel was evaluated for its "natural resource geologic and hydraulic nature and characteristics, in addition to being harmonious with the neighborhood. This unique landscape is so unique it has cause itself to be advocated through the human agency for its defense, simply because it is a provable natural resource in its character, ground water recharge, trees, habitat for other life forms and aesthetic qualities. Landscapes such as the waterview Block Lot although in the Highlands Region Planning Zone in a Municipality not conforming to the Regional Master Plan and having a water deficient would of complicated their situation by allowing the loss of this important landscape for no just cause or sound reason. Without the formation of the Citizens 4 Health Safety and Welfare this loss would have occurred. The accumulative impacts and cost avoidance scenarios were not part of the Planning Process, nor considered by the administration at that time. Flooding; which does occur in the area, water quality, air pollution, trash/litter, stormwater pollution were all matters to be passed on to the NJDEP, not for the municipal authorities to be concerned. The developer was given more rights and considerations than the citizens themselves. The developer actually attempting to legally loot county open space money for a buffer zone he would of had to provide anyway after the Council voted No to the project the developer sued the Township. (Why it was not thrown out of court is another curious matter).(Perhaps we need special courts and qualified judges to present land use cases based on land science not corporate economic development rights of ownership). In conclusion unique landscapes that still remain "everywhere" in the region,(planning zone or not), need to be found and reassessed for their natural resource value. From the Office of the President of the United States, Enhancing the Climate Resilience of America's Natural Resources ..Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. "the landscape is not defined by the size of the area, but rather by the interacting elements that are meaningful to the management objectives. In addition, for the purposes of this report, the term "landscape" encompasses watersheds and marine environments that match the above description. The term "cumulative impacts" refers to the combined, incremental effects of human activity on a resource ecosystem , or human community. This in addition to the regional Master Plan of the Highlands should enforce its position of reason and legality in intervene in such circumstances as what happened in Parsippany, NJ. Science must replace personal favoritism and political deals favoring rewards for municipal officials that allow unneeded development over objections from the populace or an apathetic populace. Much of what we call the private sector must be made to comply with the best management practices in all circumstance, including energy efficiency and waste curtailment. Higher qualifications for Planning Board Members in land-use must occur. All 88 municipalities should be made to have Highlands officials or representatives attend or be appointed to regular Planning Boards as consultants and overseers. We call ourselves the United States is is not true any longer without coherent regional planning we stand to slowly but surely ruin what nature has given us to be its stewards. From: Christian Parenti, a teacher at New York University, Reading Hamilton from the Left.. As the waters rise and the storms grow more intense, the state and the public sector will be called forth. What the state can or will become as it "returns" is an open question — or rather, open to being reshaped by pressure from social movements. Unfortunately, American society is very far from facing the crisis. And a huge part of the problem is the Jeffersonian notion that "the government that governs best is the one that governs least." While that is true as regards individual liberty, it is absolutely dangerous to think that way as regards the economy. Regional Master Plans must become the stay of the land.... To the Delaware Indians, land was an element, a medium of existence, like the air and the sunlight and the rivers. To him "ownership" of land meant, not exclusive personal title to the soil itself, but occupation of a certain position of responsibility in the social unit which exploited the soil. The sale of land might to the Delaware, be almost mutually satisfactory change in the relationship of two groups of persons subsisting on the land. In the earliest sales the Indians seem to have intended only to give the Christians freedom to use the land in conjunction with the native population. This was very similar to our own early European Land tenure conceptions. It is also relevant to the present state of affairs here in Parsippany. The Land must be recognized for it's inherit natural resource and characteristics, not fall to a corporate developers plan that erases this element of its actual life force. The same society that advanced on the notion of individual rights above all else is the same society that robbed others of their lands and rights, its transformation into market systems will do the same to us all in the end. Waterview Landscape in Parsippany was like an innocent victim being sentenced to prison because of political, not just cause. Its actual character totally ignored because it's location in the Planning Zone. To Parsippany officials; "no problem exist with water at all, and what is good for the region, may not be good for Parsippany" quote of a present Councilman & former Planning Board member..

Respondent

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