

Director of Parks and Recreation for Clifton Park, J. Buttner of Clifton Park (10), David Miller, co-chairman of Clifton Park Open Space Trails and Riverfront Committee and executive director of Audubon New York, and Philip Barrett Jr., who presented the finalists and winner to the public.

ment coverage with Halfmoon.

Town officials in both municipalities acknowledged the competition for the

they've either borrowed the county's hired a contractor or rented one themselves.

# Proposed Longkill Road development riles FOLK

## Grassroots group comes prepared to present its case

By GLENN GRIFFITH  
Community News

**CLIFTON PARK** — Residents surrounding a proposed Longkill Road housing subdivision Tuesday asked that the Planning Board prepare an environmental impact statement before allowing the project to move forward.

Kain Development Group, LLC wants to build 18 homes on an 18.75 acre parcel known to many in the area as the Longkill woods. The parcel is on the east side of Longkill Road across from Parkside Drive.

The development's rear yards will be separated from those on Hearthside Drive to the west by a treed buffer area.

Residents living near the parcel have formed a grass roots support group called FOLK, Friends of Longkill, to protest the design. Members of the newly formed group came to the public hearing armed with power point presentations, petitions, and their attorney.

Nearly every speaker sported one of the group's green FOLK buttons on their lapel, including attorney Jeffrey S. Baker.

Baker told the board there is no doubt the project requires an environ-

mental impact statement. He recommended the board pass a negative declaration on the state environmental quality review act (SEQRA) immediately and commit to creating the impact statement.

"By doing this," he said, "it puts the applicant on notice, provides order, and gives information. This is the right thing to do as we try and figure out how to develop this property in an environmentally sensitive manner consistent with all applicable laws."

Baker cited a number of problems with the proposal including an illegally approved variance for an access road. The variance had placed it adjacent to the habitat of a state threatened species of butterfly, the Frosted Elfin. "The need for the variance in the first place, and the resulting move to place it next to the wildlife habitat alone necessitates and environmental impact statement," Baker said.

He pointed to the project's plan to truck in loads of soil for back fill as creating more uncertainties in an area already containing many existing drainage problems.

Baker said a small pond on the site has been neglected in the planning by everyone because it has been classified as an isolated wetland.

"Such a classification," he said, "does not void the board of its responsibilities under SEQRA."

The attorney told the board its policy of relying on the state Environmental Conservation Department's general permitting practices for acceptable storm water drainage design should give it no comfort.

"Encon," Baker said, "puts applicant's on the honor system. They assume they've done what they are required to do. Ninety-nine percent of the time they don't review the plans. That duty is an obligation that falls on the town."

He scolded the board and the Planning Department for making it difficult for residents to get access to information to prepare for the public hearing.

"We need access to Planning Department files," he said. "They need to be readily available. When we were finally given access to the files we were told we could not copy anything. I needn't remind anyone that any document submitted to the town by a third party is a public document."

The 18 others who spoke were residents from the roads surrounding the parcel. Most voiced concern with the potential for water problems to their homes.

Gail and Tony Wassenaar live next to the project's proposed access road on Longkill Road. The two have put more than \$10,000 into keeping their basement dry. Gail Wassenaar described the drainage situation she and her husband face daily.

"We have a primary sump pump that goes on every minute and 47 seconds 24 hours a day," she said. "We have a back-up pump, a stand-by generator in case of power outages, and a battery operated back-up pump because you can't run generators more than eight hours at a time."

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GLENN GRIFFITH/Community News

Members of FOLK (Friends of Longkill) gathered at the Clifton Park Planning Board meeting to voice their opposition to further development in the Longkill Road area. The neighbors cite environmental concerns as the reason development should not be allowed.

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# LONGKILL. Drainage concerns

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I have holes in my basement walls to drain the water into some tubing to a pail before it's pumped out. This is what we do to keep our basement dry now."

Wassenaar read part of the town's comprehensive plan aloud to the board and questioned whether approving the subdivision conformed with the plan's recommendations.

Bill Lorensen, Hearthside Drive presented a personal power point presentation that compared engineering theory to the realty seen from his back yard. He supported the request for the environmental impact statement and suggested Kain Development post a long term bond as a sign of support for their engineering design's drainage system.

One supporter of the housing project was Bill Mackesey the park district chairman to the Longkill Park District. Mackesey said he backed the plan and looked forward to the trails it will add to the town and the connections it will make to Malta.

The board took no action at the conclusion of the comments with regard to the requests for an environmental impact statement or SEQRA action. The public hearing was adjourned and remains open.

Planning Board chairman Steve Bulger promised a point by point answer to each comment with input from Kain Development