

East Fishkill Town Board
330 Route 376
Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

December 6th, 2007
RE: Building Moratorium

I am here to voice my support for your building moratorium because, you are doing “the right thing” addressing the issue of growth and its impact on our community....not an easy task, and a lofty goal at best, to achieve by September 2008.

Moving to East Fishkill after my husband took a job transfer, was a conscious decision. We looked at neighboring counties and towns. We are proud to say we live here, because, as your tag line says, it’s “a great place to live” is true, and many folks from the various hamlets spoke highly of the sense of community here. I heard, “we love it in Wiccopee,” or “we love it in Hopewell Jct.” and folks were looking to buy up, not *leave* the community. I never heard that in New Paltz, Clintondale, Pine Bush, Beacon, Newburgh, etc. After living at the Poughkeepsie Suites for 3 mos, and about 6 mos. In Beacon, it feels good to call East Fishkill “home.”

Many get excited when growth happens...it helps bolster the economy and many politicians feel like it will make the tax rolls better; but, does it really, in the long run? Not if you take the path of least resistance, it can’t. I liken this to deciding to get all Ds or Cs to just get by because you want the diploma. But what did you sacrifice? I think you all know the answer to that one. Instant gratification is not going to beautify our community, and it will be at a much higher cost later. Who will pay for this cost? Not builders and developers, but the taxpayers and government. It will become our tax burden. Developers will be long gone, or perhaps new LLCs formed if they are still here. This is a matter worth every effort and the time you are taking *now* to update the DGEIS and Master Plan. Just overhauling it to meet today’s minimum requirements probably won’t be enough. Growth can cause long range funding problems that are not seen on the front end, but crop up in the later.

I can testify to all in this room that I have seen it happen. I grew up in a community about the size of East Fishkill, the City of Tigard, Oregon, and it was incorporated in 1961 with 1400 people. It now is home to 47,000. There is not one farm left. The high school was in a cow pasture, bordering John Thomas Dairy, but is now surrounded by 7 homes to an acre, a bedroom community 9 miles SW of downtown Portland, Oregon, with little industry outside of having one the nation’s largest shopping malls. The freeway it faces, an overtaxed north/south which used to be a two lane road, and didn’t even exist when I was a kid. It’s hard to believe. Traffic is beyond impossible. If only I had some photos to share. Route 82 here from 376 to TSP, is an east west connector akin to Scholls Ferry Road, from 217 to Murray, which was a two lane road off of freeway 217, leading to apple orchards, berry farms, and cattle. It is now 5 lanes wide and it still takes 25 minutes to travel 2 miles. If someone told me 25 years ago it would ever have more than a double yellow line and be congested I would not have believed them. Can you imagine this on Route 82? Where we once had acres of meadows and a lot of trees, there are now strip malls, and subdivisions, bordering on ugly. In fact, I took pictures of some development here 3 years ago, to boast of your design review, and the fact that it appeared no one here “just rolled over and did whatever developers wanted.”

The ugly, outside of aesthetics is cost. Have you seen slope failure? Have you seen well contamination beyond the Shenandoah problem? Have you seen homes fall off of foundations, and severe slope stabilization issues, and everyone start to have their septic fail and be forced to hook up to sewer...resulting in an entire community becoming sewer dependent? I have. You are a wise council to perceive these outcomes could happen here.

I was visiting here last spring when it flooded. Why would anyone want to follow the min. standards outlined by the corps of army engineers for slopes, drainage, etc., or decide the flood plain is only where FEMA's maps say it is today? Do we want to become a D-community, or A++ ? I have seen the flood plains rise more than the unilateral 1' mandatory change FEMA put out nationwide a few years ago, to that of a higher rate due to increased density. (see attached article of Nov. 7). I have seen streams need re-routing, and ponds warming up to require mitigation, schools over- capacity, and lack of parks (as home values got pushed up, and it became cost prohibitive to acquire property) and a community *desperately* and I mean **desperately** seeking a long term water source, which is going to cost the taxpayers millions.

A neighboring city, Wilsonville, about 20 miles out of Portland, OR, put a moratorium on building largely because of water issues, but also wanted "smart" zoning. Sadly those farms and apple orchards are gone, today, too. But, it was one of the smartest things they did – work hard at planning right, and learn from others' mistakes. BUT, if the horses get out of the barn? You will face far more than those who criticize a moratorium. It will cost this town and its taxpayers 100s of millions, perhaps billions in tomorrow's dollars.

Water treatment facilities and piping? Cost: astronomical, as are sewers. Widening roads, adding traffic signals, etc.? Cost: astronomical. Where will the monies come from? Each household will be assessed in the long term *far* more than it could possibly gain by willy nilly adding a few to our tax rolls for instant gratification and pleasing a few developers. Acquiring ROW (right of way) now? Much easier – in fact, *over* planning for our future will be economical if done right. Many of Tigard's roads are old farm roads with out a true grid overlay, which has only added to the congestion. But no one ever imagined that unprecedented growth would happen the way it did.

To all of the developers here, I want to encourage each of you to take the high road: be a key player in building it right, or not building at all. Make the decision before submitting a plan for review to know that it is in the best interest of all of us who live here and that it won't cause undue tax burdens on our town in the future, and that it is to a standard that *you* would be proud to live in. Ask yourself:

- "Am I confident that this structure I am building is sound enough, that I would be willing to put up a 20 year bond?" – even though you are not required to.
- Am I good enough to never change my name, or make a different LLC, to cover my ***?

I applaud all of you and your efforts and support you for doing the right thing. Let's keep East Fishkill, a great place to live.

Sally Harding
East Fishkill resident