

I am writing as both President of Naromi Land Trust, Sherman, CT, and as a resident of the town of Sherman CT, neighbor to township of Dover NY. The north section of Sherman is impacted by development along the Ten Mile River watershed. I urge you to ensure that any development, large or small, that takes place in that watershed not be allowed to degrade at all the wetlands and watercourses that feed the Ten Mile River.

The Appalachian Trail also is nearby the upper eastern hillside of the former Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center. That grand wilderness corridor should have a buffer zone from housing areas. The hill area also contains a large reservoir that was the drinking supply for HVPC. Be certain that all development plans keep the integrity of that water supply; drinking water must always be a protected resource.

The Great Swamp has been recognized by the federal Highlands Coalition as a high priority area for preservation because it is among the upper reaches of the water supply for the City of New York. You must not let development have any negative effects on such an important resource.

One way of protecting the various water supplies and the watercourses is by not allowing development on steep slopes. I understand that the standard in Dutchess County is no development on slopes greater than 15%; please continue that standard for this project.

Another way of protecting water supplies is by the specification of Open Space on the development plans. The most vulnerable areas should be a strong candidate for such designation, in addition to any ridgelines.

For twenty years I worked at HVPC and have an understanding of the need for a commercial center to be an integral part of any large new housing development. At this time of escalating fuel expenses it is incumbent upon those in decision making positions to encourage clusters of housing and businesses. Sprawl will be ever more difficult to support. Please build upon the existing rail and highway infrastructure in the development of Wingdale.

In 1980 I worked on potential plans for new uses for the HVPC campus. One of the difficulties in getting investors interested in the property was the prohibitive expense of demolishing or retrofitting the existing buildings. They are extremely well built, but contain many materials now deemed hazardous. How is this addressed in the overall plan of development of that property?

Wingdale has long needed an economic stimulus and core to replace HVPC and its jobs; I wish you success in that endeavor. However, you must require any developer to either demolish the buildings and build anew, or to create a park on their sites. If you allow unsightly, unsafe structures to remain you will never have much success in convincing more desirable businesses to move in or to convince the potential homeowners to buy into the area.

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