

Six Ponds News

March, 1998

An Occasional Publication Of The Six Ponds Improvement Association

Important Digital Land Hearings!

On Tuesday March 17, and Tuesday March 24, at 7:30 pm at the PCIS Little Theater, the Planning Board will hold public hearings on the Green Company Master Plan for the development of the 3000-acre Digital land.

The Master Plan includes 2.4 million sq. ft. of office and commercial space, 220,000 sq. ft. of retail, and 1,900 residential units. The total retail, office and commercial space is equivalent in floor area to 44 Cedarville Star Markets, and the Green Company plans to construct all this commercial space at the Clark Road interchange at Route 3!

Obviously this proposed development will have a massive impact on the 6-Ponds community. e. g., the Green Company wants to widen Clark Road to 4 lanes and install a traffic light at the Clark Road - Long Pond Road intersection.

Please attend these important hearings if you want to learn what is being planned and have a say in it and even change it. The Planning Board is looking for public input.

Together, we may be able to reduce the density of this development and change the Master Plan so as to protect better our area from unfortunate impacts. . . **IF WE ATTEND AND SPEAK UP!**

Digital Land Development To Proceed

In 1996 Town Meeting approved a zoning change that would allow new uses on the 3,000 acre Digital land that borders the Six Pond area. This area, now almost entirely forested, was formerly zoned for housing, agricultural and commercial uses only. With the new zoning, 220,000 square feet of retail was added to the mix in an Open Space Mixed use development (OSMUD) zoning overlay. The OSMUD requires that 70% of the land be left as open space. This OSMUD, together with an earlier zoning change that expands minimum house lots in rural Plymouth from 1.5 to 3 acres, are the two major planning changes that will shape future development in the Six Ponds area.

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On An Historical Note

It was nearly fifty years ago when eighteen concerned Long Ponders in September 1951 met in Mrs. Emery's living room at Long Pond to plot how to form a group dedicated to the well-being of our Ponds. The minutes of this meeting sound so much like our current agenda! One key concern was zoning. Mrs. Emery stated that although "change is inevitable, a change in the use of a property may influence the whole neighborhood, and the organization could express opinion more effectively than one person." It was noted that a "Long Pond Lodge" was soon to open on the east side of Long Pond to serve lodgers. Sanitary conditions at the local dump and improvements of the nearby roads were were also high on the agenda. So also was the matter of the use of water from Long Pond to flood the Cornish bogs. Discussion at the meeting was of a "Five Ponds Improvement Association." Round Pond was added a few months later, and the first official meeting of the Association was held on July 5, 1952. Interestingly, the word "Improvement" was agreed on after considerable discussion -- it was felt that "improvement" sounded less selfish than "Protective."

Spring Social

Update on the Digital and Home Depot developments

Pot Luck Dessert*

Sunday, April 26 at 2 p.m.

Camp Wind in the Pines on West Long Pond Road

*Bring enough for six people

Newcomers encouraged to join us and learn more about Six Ponds

Digital...

With approval of the new OSMUD zoning, Tom Wallace, a local businessman who sponsored the zoning change, passed development control of the project to the Green Company, an upscale residential developer from Newton, Massachusetts and their partners New England Development, Inc., a large scale retail and commercial developer. In a series of Planning Board workshop presentations over the past six months, the Green Company sketched their vision for an OSMUD development, which they hope to begin this year.

Their plan calls for the creation of a village center northeast of Exit 3. This would consist of a New England styled cluster of retail and housing around a common green, with a road system extending north from the village center to access residential clusters and recreational facilities (golf courses, etc). The area south of Beaver Dam Road would be reserved for an office/commercial development and the unpaved portion of Old Sandwich Road would be left untouched. The Greens claim they can build 1900 housing units on the site, ranging in type from stand-alone houses on traditional lots to clustered and attached houses. Nine hundred of those units, according to the OSMUD, would be restricted to retirees - people of minimum 55 years of age.

Because of the size and scope of this development, the entire project may take 10-20 years to realize, and will have to be done in phases. Each phase will require close scrutiny by the Planning Board, with a 4/5 approval vote needed at every stage for the developer to proceed. A Citizen Advisory Committee, with Six Ponds Association representation, will also monitor the development, and has already met a number of times with both the Planning Board and developer.

The developer plans to begin the project with the construction of 160 houses off Beaver Dam Road, in an area adjacent to the proposed village center. Included in this phase will be a few village center buildings and golf course with club house. They also hope to build a hotel and conference center in the first phase.

Before the developer can proceed with any construction, however, they must

first submit a master plan for the entire site. The Green Company has done this, with hopes of beginning phase one construction this summer. We have serious questions as to the density of the development and the quality of the open space which is distributed around the site in "dribs and drabs". One of the many critical issues which has not been resolved is how and when the State's environmental review process (MEPA) will be applied to this development. Another is how the northern portion of the site will be treated, given the State's interest in creating a continuous open space system that connect Miles Standish State Park to the ocean through Forges Field, the Digital land, and the 1800 acre Edison power plant site.

The Six Ponds Association will continue to monitor the Digital development and report to you again in future newsletters and at upcoming Six Pond meetings.

Larry Rosenblum

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

An initiative has been undertaken to put the question of charter reform before the voters in the May elections. Proponents of the initiative have been successful in collecting the 4000 signatures required to place the item on the ballot. The ballot will include this question, as well as the names of those people wishing to serve on the charter review commission. Fifty signatures are required to get on the ballot, and the nine highest votegetters will be elected to the commission.

Ten years ago, charter reform was considered by such a commission. After a year of study the commission proposed two options, maintenance of the existing Town Meeting structure, with some recommendations for change of a non-structural sort; and a ten member town council form of government. The town voted to maintain its Town Meeting structure with some modifications.

If charter reform is approved and a commission is elected in May, its members will spend a year to 18 months identifying various forms of

town government, studying their relative merits, visiting towns with different forms of government, and making it's recommendations to the voters.

This is a critical issue for the town. Voters will be asked to chose between the current form of government with considerable local representation (104 members from 13 precincts), and a government made up of a much smaller number of people, possibly headed by a mayor.

Jean Loewenberg

THE NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU

We need all the help we can get -- manual labor, intellectual and financial. We welcome your letters, articles or suggestions. The Six Ponds address is:

P.O. Box 1580,
Plymouth, MA 02362.

WATER TESTING

For many years The Six Ponds Association has conducted extensive pond water testing. During the summer of 1997 these tests showed very low Coliform counts. There were no "hot" spots in any of the ponds. This testing involves considerable effort and volunteer time and I want to thank the Erslands, Laura Blackadar, and Walter Morrison for helping me take the 15 samples that are required every 3 weeks.

When the Spring water turn-over occurs in April a few hearty souls will once again venture out into the middle of the ponds to test the nutrient levels. Those results will be compared to the test results taken last Spring and help build data on the water quality. Volunteers are always welcomed.

Lois Post

Six Ponds Association Officers

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(Long Pond)
Vice Pres. Edward Russell
(Long Pond)
Treasurer Walter Morrison
(Bloody Pond)
Secretary Peggy Briggs
(Halfway Pond)
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Jeanne Loewenberg
(Round Pond)
Jody Bourque
(Little Long Pond)
Paul Shea
(Gallows Pond)

Six Ponds News

Editor: Charlotte Russell
Publisher: Douglas Post

IMPACT ON LITTLE LONG POND OF A PROPOSED GREEN COMPANY WELL

The proposed development on the Digital Land originally included three wells to supply its potable water. One of the proposed wells was located near Little Long Pond and while this well is not shown in the latest proposal, we must be watchful to assure that it isn't brought back in the future. The well, as originally proposed, was within the contributing groundwater recharge zone of Little Long Pond and withdrawal of groundwater would have an environmental impact on this pond. The amount of groundwater to be pumped

wasn't announced but withdrawal of large amounts would have an impact on the pond, especially during summer months when precipitation volumes are low, groundwater recharge to the pond is reduced and surface water is lost due to the natural processes of evaporation and evapotranspiration.

Little Long Pond is rather shallow, with an average depth of 4 feet and a deepest point of about 9 feet. Due to the pond's size and limited volume, cumulative impact from large scale withdrawal would result in a loss of water volume, loss of depth, possible increase in temperature, and possible impact to existing fish populations and wildlife species.

Should this well be resurrected in the future, additional information must be obtained about the volume of water to be withdrawn.

Paul Shea

An Invitation to Join or Renew your Membership in the Six Ponds Association

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone _____

(summer/winter) _____ / _____

e-mail _____

Winter address if different

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Dues: \$10 per year

Mail to: Six Ponds Improvement Association
P. O. Box 1580
Plymouth, MA. 02362

Two-Stroke Motors

We all recognize that outboard motor boats generate a lot of smoke and noise but the following information from the latest Sierra Club magazine will surprise everyone. The article addresses the two stroke outboard - the workhorse of recreational boating.

The automobiles we drive around in have four-stroke engines. They are more complicated and expensive but are cleaner engines than the two-strokers that burn a combination of oil and gas. Two stroke engines are typically found in lawn mowers and motor boats. Four-stroke outboard engines cost 15% more to purchase but the initial cost is offset by 4 times greater gas mileage.

The Sierra article claims two-strokers are second only to storm water runoff as the primary source of toxic water pollution in the United States - they discharge one quarter of their fuel unburned into the water. "The amount of unburned oil these stinkers put into our lakes, rivers, and drinking-water reservoirs every year is 15 times what the Exxon Valdez spilled."

Two-strokes are heavy air polluters as well. A 70 horsepower two-stroke operating for an hour releases as much hydro carbon pollution into the air as a car driven 5,000 miles.

With all of the effort put into cleaning up auto emissions, what's being done to limit this water borne source of pollution? Massachusetts has done little, but some jurisdictions have taken action; California banned two-stroke motors from Lake

Tahoe, and Switzerland prohibits their sale anywhere in the country. We may have to look to local authorities to take action because the EPA has reached a rather weak compromise with the marine engine, boat, and jet ski industries for a 75% reduction in emissions by the year 2006 (these industries are well organized and active). The Sierra Club article has plenty of criticism of this EPA compromise; "Incredibly, the EPA ignored an already existing alternative. The four stroke motor is quieter and 40 times cleaner than the old two-stroke, and 7 to 10 times cleaner than the new two-stroke models on the drawing board." Bluewater Network, a coalition of boaters, fishers, and clean water advocates, also criticizes the EPA for allowing the industry nine years to phase in a technology that is ten times worse than a four-stroke. Bluewater has picked up where the EPA left off; they've initiated lawsuits against manufacturers of two stroke motors in California.

We already have one four-stroke motor boat resident on Long Pond, and it's clear to everyone on the pond that it's much quieter than the older motors.

If you are thinking of purchasing an outboard, please consider a four stroke engine - they are the future. The Sierra Club challenges concerned boaters to donate their old two-strokes to the Bluewater Network (415-788-3666) and then scrap it. This non-profit can offer you a tax deduction, and that will help with the purchase of a new four-stroke motor.

Ed Russell

PROPOSED NEW WATER MONITORING AND POND PROTECTION INITIATIVE

Your Executive Committee is formulating a detailed plan to initiate comprehensive water quality monitoring of each of our Six Ponds. In the past such regular monitoring has been largely limited to coliform bacteria. We propose that this be expanded to monitor regularly several key parameters of pond water quality, including turbidity, dissolved oxygen, total phosphorus, pH, chlorophyll, and aquatic vegetation. We believe with the increased development in our immediate area, and particularly the threat of the Green Company development looming across Route 3, that it is extremely important to set up now a scientific credible monitoring program that will collect data to establish baseline criteria and provide early warning of any environmental degradation and adverse impacts on our Ponds. The Committee will present its proposed program in detail at the Spring Meeting. At that time the Committee will also outline an initiative to enlist the active participation of pondfront owners in the protection of our Pond water quality and habitat.

Six Ponds Improvement Association

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