

Concerned Citizens for Open Space, Inc.



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SPRING 2004 NEWSLETTER

Building, along with approvals from the Common Council for still more building, continues in White Plains. As open space in the city diminishes, definitions of what open space really is, and why it is essential for the health and welfare of a city, are ever more necessary. Space between towers and patches of astro-turf atop buildings do nothing to prevent or decrease pollution or provide a scenic respite from daily activities and stress.

The question of what will ultimately happen to the precious Olmsted-designed property owned by New York-Presbyterian Hospital has once again come to the forefront. Last January, Mayor Delfino reported he made an offer to the hospital, which he says the hospital accepted with a handshake. However, since January there has been no further mention of this proposal beyond our discovery that the city has drawn up plans to develop twenty acres as parkland without consulting either the Common Council or the general public.

THE PROPOSAL

Under the proposal that Mayor Delfino reported in his winter newsletter, the Common Council will have to agree to rezone undeveloped hospital property from "three houses per acre" to "medical COMMERCIAL."

The use of the word "medical" has no legal standing and is nothing more than a description of what the hospital plans to do at this time. "Commercial" is "commercial." Once the property is rezoned, it will be legal for the hospital to build any kind of commercial enterprise it chooses.

Furthermore rezoning hospital property will increase the value of hospital land at least tenfold. This would constitute an enormous gift from the city to the hospital in return for which taxpayers will have the privilege of paying to maintain hospital land the hospital has LENT the city.

Once the property is rezoned the hospital will allow the city to use fifty-five acres for a new park, which Mayor Delfino has described as the "largest park in White Plains."

However, only twenty of the fifty-five acres under discussion can be developed for safe and useful parkland. The remaining thirty-five acres are steep slopes and wetlands on which the hospital cannot build, but presently is

responsible for maintaining. The hospital has not agreed to sell or gift this land to the city. It is only prepared to LEASE the land until such time as, for a myriad of reasons, the hospital decides it wants the land back. It does not make sense for taxpayers to pay for the development of a twenty-acre park on land the city does not own.

It is the position of CCOS that this proposal is a win-win for the hospital and an expensive lose-lose for the city.

After over 100 years of tax-free use of this land by the hospital, the taxpayers of this city have every right to expect the Mayor to be willing to negotiate for a gift to the city of 100 acres of usable parkland. Then we really would have a CENTRAL PARK for White Plains.

No wonder the hospital was quick to shake hands on the Mayor's proposal. CCOS believes White Plains and its citizens deserve a much better deal!

Please use the enclosed proxy to register your vote for the new Officers and Board of Directors for the ONLY White Plains organization dedicated to the preservation of open space in our beautiful city.

CCOS is a volunteer organization. There are costs related to printing, advertising, rental space for forums, legal fees and other operating expenses. Although our membership has grown rapidly, with average contributions of \$25 per year, we need additional funds to continue our efforts to stop the permanent destruction of open space in White Plains and to improve the quality of life in White Plains.

Use the tear-off coupon below to make sure we register your contribution.

Concerned Citizens for Open Space

Tax-Deductible Contribution:

\$25 \$50 \$75
 \$100 \$150 \$250 \$Other

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____

_____ Zip: _____

Please mail your contribution to Walter Michael, CCOS Treasurer, 15 Stewart Place, WP 10603. Thank you!

CCOS is a project of the Open Space Institute. OSI is a tax-exempt public charity under Sec. 501 (3) of the IRS code
