



P.O. Box 96
Clinton Corners, NY 12514-0096

May 16, 2006

Clinton Planning Board
Clinton Town Hall
Centre Road
Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Dear Clinton Planning Board,

We are writing as Clinton United, a recently formed citizen's group that is concerned about development pressures and the future of our town.

We first want to thank and applaud you for all of your excellent work, and the incredible amount of time, energy, and good faith that you put into the work of the Planning Board. We all deeply appreciate your efforts.

We are writing today about the Double D development (Hollow and North Quaker Roads) that is on the agenda for Tuesday May 16, 2006.

Clinton United, like the vast majority of the town residents, is concerned about protecting the historic, scenic, and environmental integrity of our town's seven hamlets.

As you know, the Community Values Survey included in the Master Plan found that (emphases added):

- 87% of respondents said that our seven hamlets are **important** to the character of Clinton
- 88% said that our hamlets should be protected from **incompatible** developments
- 80% favored further **protective measures** through the creation of historic districts to safeguard areas with historically significant structures

Based on several recent Town Board meetings, as well as Clinton United meetings, we believe that the residents of Clinton feel today much as they did when the Master Plan was developed. **We are all concerned that the historic character of the hamlets be preserved through careful and sensitive development.**

From reviewing the minutes of the January 17, 2006 Planning Board, it seems that you too are concerned that the proposed Double D development be implemented in ways that protect the historic character of Pleasant Plains. We appreciate your concern and stewardship of our Town's future, and want to underscore that such care would seem to include:

- Appropriate **siting** of the proposed houses to ensure that the hamlet-like feel is preserved
- **Architectural design** and implementation (including the scale of the homes) that is in character with the historic homes of Pleasant Plains

- Housing styles that include **appropriate variety** and setbacks to preserve the feeling of the hamlet.
- An **environmental and landscaping design** that preserves the scenic and environmental quality of Pleasant Plains.

As you know, the Master Plan devotes an entire chapter to a discussion of the history and historical resources and preservation of Clinton landmarks, most of which include and can be found in our seven historic hamlets. In no less than 13 places, the Master Plan provides specific recommendations and observations about the need for vigilant oversight of development of the hamlets. Recommendations include (emphases added):

“Clinton has a rich historical past spanning over 200 years since European settlement. Much of Clinton’s unique architectural legacy is concentrated in the seven hamlet areas.” (p. 22)

“Unless the town enacts protection measures, the development pressures so evident in Clinton and the surrounding communities threaten to **irreparably** alter the historic and scenic character that is so valued by residents. ... **Especially important** is the designation of the districts in the hamlet centers that are so crucial to Clinton's identity. In periods of accelerated growth, only consistently applied regulatory measures will ensure the town's historic legacy.” (p.26)

“Recommendation 1.3 To reinforce the hamlets as community centers, the town's land use policies should allow **COMPATIBLE** development in and adjacent to the hamlets and limit development in the traditionally more rural, open areas.”

“Recommendation 2.8 The town should develop guidelines to insure that the new development does not detract from the setting, scale, and design of surrounding architecture and landscape features.”

“Recommendation 5.2 New single-family development should feature **VARIETY** in housing design with varied and sufficient setbacks.”

“Recommendation 5.10 The town should encourage cluster development with preservation of open spaces.”

“All development in the hamlet zones should be held to consistently applied standards of compatibility in terms of scale, setback, materials, and functions.” (p. 100)

We know that you are doing the best job possible for our town, and we have no reason to believe that the Double D developers are not also doing the best job they can do for our town. However we feel that this historic hamlet could be irrevocably blighted if choices are not made now that will enhance, and not ruin, Pleasant Plains and the other hamlets in our town.

We commend your recorded statements at the January 17, 2006 Planning Board meeting where you supported:

Working toward a “hamlet look”

Maintaining that “the size of house has to work with the scale of the neighborhood and needs to be integrated”.

Suggesting that “the applicant [should] consider putting in deed restrictions specifying house size, architectural features, etc.”

We hope, as you requested in the minutes of January 17, 2006, that deed restrictions will be put in place that ensure that the proposed houses for Pleasant Plains are built in ways that

- are compatible with the character of the hamlet,
- preserve its unique identity,
- do not irreversibly damage the character of the hamlet, and
- provide wonderful living spaces for new and current residents of our Town.

We support your taking time and digging deep before approving any plans that will permanently alter the hamlet. What happens now could very well set a precedent for what happens in the future.

Thank you for your time. We can be reached at info@clintonunited.org.

Sincerely,

Clinton United

PS—A copy of this letter will be posted on our website at www.clintonunited.org