

County Adds to Inventory of Protected Open Space and Farmland

By Noela Hooper, Senior Planner



Dutchess County has added another 672.5 acres to its inventory of protected farmland and open space.

The County has recently closed on three acquisitions recommended for funding by the Dutchess County Planning Board and approved by the Dutchess County Legislature:

- **Silver Ledge Farm**, a 401.6-acre farm at the key gateway intersection of the Taconic Parkway and I-84 in East Fishkill;
- **Pulver Farm**, the 171.4-acre hub of a large and diverse farm business at the base of Stissing Mountain in Pine Plains;
- **Greystone**, a 99.6-acre property overlooking the Hudson River recently restored to its historic name, **Carnwath Farms**, by the Town of Wappinger.

In addition to these completed projects, the County expects to close on the acquisition of **Peach Hill** by the Town of Poughkeepsie and to finalize a conservation easement on **Linden Farms** in the Town of Red Hook by the end of 2003. These two projects will add an additional 391 acres to the inventory of conserved resources.

Silver Ledge Farm: A 400-acre vista is protected in Southern Dutchess.

In this issue:

- Wetlands Protection
- GIS Comes to Your Town
- Planning Federation Awards - Call for Nominations
- Zoning School Success
- Transit News

Continued on page 2

Poughkeepsie's Renaissance

By Anne Saylor, Housing Coordinator

The City of Poughkeepsie's official symbol is a Beehive, which is increasingly appropriate as the city buzzes with redevelopment projects. Why is City real estate suddenly so hot?

The City's Development and Building Departments have made the development process more rational and friendly. Private and non-profit developers seeing potential in the wonderful City buildings have taken the initiative to help the City reclaim its past glory. The County and City have provided a significant amount of financial assistance through their community development programs, while more flexible private financing and low interest rates have made projects financially feasible. The County's tight housing market has also encouraged residents looking for more moderately priced housing to look to the City. Finally, there is new interest in the benefits of city neighborhood living, where people can walk to stores, restaurants and cultural events.

One of the best examples of the City's resurgence is the recently completed Garden Street Townhouses. The 1890's Queen Anne style townhouses were severely deteriorated when Hudson River Housing (HRH), a local non-profit housing developer, reached out to the City, which owned most of the buildings. Today, the buildings are restored and seven moderate-income families are homeowners. This is the second of three HRH restoration projects completed in a twelve month period: Harlow Row in

Continued on page 3



Seven Queen Anne style townhouses in the early 1990's.

Today, each townhouse contains a three-bedroom unit for the property owner, and on the third floor, a one-bedroom rental to help pay the mortgage.



County Executive Steinhaus explores Stone Church with Legislative Chairman Brad Kendall, Dover Supervisor Jill Way and others.



"County Adds to Inventory" continued from page 1

The Planning Board is also considering funding recommendations for four additional projects: the **Kimlin Cider Mill** in Poughkeepsie, the **Stone Church** property in Dover, the **Randolph School/Deer Hill Estate** acquisition in the Town of Wappinger, and **Steiner Farm** in the Town of Red Hook. Approval of these proposals would increase the County's acquisitions to more than 1,500 acres.

Referring to the protection of Silver Ledge Farm, County Executive William R. Steinhaus called the acquisition a "centerpiece accomplishment for my vision of Dutchess County's future, not only because of the extraordinary scenic and agricultural resource we are protecting, but also because of the partnership this acquisition represents."

Based on a 1999 proposal from County Executive Steinhaus, Dutchess County's Open Space and Farmland Protection Program started with a single proposal—that the County provide a matching grant to purchase conservation easements on **Mead Orchards**, a 100-acre farm in the Town of Red Hook. Since that time, the County Planning Board has recommended funding for four farmland protection proposals and five open space acquisitions that will preserve more than 1,200 acres, and will leverage a County investment of \$1.8 million to acquire easements valued at \$5.5 million.

The Matching Grant Program was revised in 2000 to encourage municipal participation in the Partnership for Manageable Growth. Farmland is protected when the County purchases development rights, insuring that the acreage will not be developed; the farm stays in private ownership and on the tax rolls. Open space acquired in partnership with municipalities or private land trusts becomes public space, providing County residents and visitors access to trail systems, parkland, and extraordinary views that will be protected for future generations.

Transit News

In July, Dutchess County chose Professional Transit Management, LLC (PTM) to manage the Dutchess County LOOP Bus System, effective October 1, 2003. PTM, which is based in Cincinnati, Ohio, currently manages 11 other public transit systems throughout the country, including Worcester, Massachusetts, Asheville, North Carolina, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and South Bend, Indiana. The new General Manager is John Diers, who has more than thirty years' experience in transit operations. Mr. Diers has held managerial positions with the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) in Minneapolis-St. Paul and with the Belle Urban System (BUS) in Racine, Wisconsin. The remainder of the LOOP personnel, including the drivers, maintenance technicians, dispatchers and administrative staff will remain the same.

The LOOP system provides both fixed route and demand response services, and coordinates Medicaid transportation services for Dutchess County. During 2002 LOOP provided almost 800,000 passenger trips.



Congratulations to the Graduates!

Six members of the Town of Union Vale Planning Board have received a passing grade in "Zoning School." The at-home training program, offered by the Pace Law School Land Use Law Center, trains local board members in basic land use matters. In order to be certified in Zoning School, a majority of the members of a local board must successfully complete five of the nine modules offered and pass an exam on each one. The educational program takes approximately ten hours to complete.

Congratulations to:
 Paul Heslin (Chairperson)
 Scott Kiniry
 Loren Pinckney
 John Rapetti (Vice Chairperson)
 Brad Rosenthal
 Teresa Levitch

PLAN ON IT STAFF



Editor - Lynette Wacker
 Graphic Designer - Patricia M. Houston

PLAN ON IT is a publication of the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development in conjunction with the Dutchess County Planning Federation. PLAN ON IT brings local, regional and state planning news to over 1600 individuals and organizations. If you would like to be added to our mailing list or wish to share your views on planning, write to Editor, PLAN ON IT, 27 High Street, 2nd Floor, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12601, or phone (845) 486-3600. PLAN ON IT is also posted on our website at www.dutchessny.gov.

Milbert's Tortoiseshell (Aglais milberti)



"Poughkeepsie's Renaissance" continued from page 1

December 2002 and the soon-to-be-completed restoration of 305-307 Mill Street.



305-307 Mill Street: Built in 1870 as a two family home, it was rented by HRH for its Transitional Housing Program for homeless youth.



HRH recently purchased the building and rehabilitated the building's exterior and mechanical systems.

Private developers are also getting involved with Main Street. Construction has already begun on Jon Behrend's 300 Block Project to restore eight deteriorated buildings. His earlier project on lower Main Street will yield a café opening this fall. The old Schwartz building, a former department store, is currently being converted into work/live lofts, and a ground-breaking was recently held on the 400 Block project, which will create 54 moderate income apartments on a vacant lot. There are also two projects being developed on the 500 Block, which will result in a total of about 40 apartments plus several commercial spaces.

Of course, none of this would have happened without MONEY, and the redevelopment of old buildings takes a lot of it. Even in this good housing market, City rents are often insufficient to support heavy redevelopment costs so grants can

cover the gap between the private financing and the development costs. To date, the County has committed almost \$2.2 million towards the rehabilitation of six projects that will revitalize 113 housing units and many commercial spaces. About 40% of these housing units will be income-restricted with the balance being market rate. This money, and additional subsidies from NYS Housing Programs, City programs, and private foundations, is one of the keys to fostering investment in the City.



Architects Unlimited 125 Fifth Avenue New York New York 10003

December 26, 2002

Elevations

Slated to begin this January, the developers, Pennrose Properties and Duvernay & Brooks, will create 54 moderate-income apartments and 6,000 square feet of commercial space on a cleaned-up brownfield site.



Architects Unlimited 125 Fifth Avenue New York New York 10003

December 26, 2002

Site Plan

GIS Comes to Town – Your Town

By Richard Birch AICP, Assistant Commissioner

The Town of Pleasant Valley recently hosted a presentation to community officials as County Executive William R. Steinhaus announced that information recently developed on the County GIS is now available to municipalities. GIS (Geographic Information Systems) is data and maps in a digital format.

Through this initiative, municipalities can access assessment and planning data using applications developed by county departments called “Parcel Explorer” and “Atlas”.



A sample of what can be done with Parcel Explorer and Atlas. Using the Val-Kill National Historic Site in Hyde Park as an example, the following GIS layers are selected: Aerial photography, tax parcels, DEC wetlands, NWI wetlands, streams and waterbodies.

Communities can use this information to facilitate project review tasks and improve the decision-making process. Municipalities now have a great deal of information available to handle responsibilities from assessment to zoning. While each office at town hall will use this data in different ways, the potential uses for planning and zoning will change the way boards and staffs approach their reviews.

Maps And More The County GIS is an excellent source of up-to-date maps. Staff/board members can view geographic features from computers in their town halls. The mapping tools include an ability to make customized maps, including real property parcels, roads, wetlands, steep slopes, zoning, and more. The information on these maps can provide snapshots of areas under development. Staff can also produce maps for distribution at workshops/public hearings.

But GIS is more than maps. It is the information that can be portrayed on maps that is a valuable resource. This information - on natural resources, proposed developments, designated historic sites, and neighboring developments - can assist board members and staff as they review projects. A wealth of data is now available at the beginning of project reviews, instead of after a lengthy review process. Boards now have information at their fingertips that in the past they have waited for as applicants completed the review process.

Decision-Making With the information now available boards can change the way they accomplish their reviews. With more data up front in the review process, boards can quickly focus on key elements of a landscape or proposed development. They can concentrate on those important elements

and then make more informed decisions. For example, municipal boards now have data on the location of wetlands and steep slopes. Thus, the focus should shift from what is on the site to how to deal with the natural resources. This will result in time savings as the review and approval process takes place.

Municipal boards are now more of an active partner in the development review process because of the data they have at hand. The Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development is available to assist boards in their use of GIS to review proposed projects.

The Near Future The availability of the County GIS fits in with the trend of requiring applicants to submit digital maps for the review and approval process. Time savings in project reviews and improved decision-making will gradually take place as staff and board members become more familiar with the data and tools available through GIS.

SAVE THE DATE ! SAVE THE DATE !

The Dutchess County
Planning Federation's
**Annual Awards
Dinner**

is scheduled for

**Thursday, January
29th, 2004**

Casperkill Country Club
and Conference Center
Poughkeepsie, New York

Your invitation will follow

Please plan to join us on
January 29th

Wetland/Waterbody/ Watercourse Protection Catching On

By Lynette Wacker, Planner

The movement to protect water resources is gaining momentum. Within the last year, four Dutchess towns - Fishkill, Union Vale, Pleasant Valley and Poughkeepsie - passed local laws to protect wetlands, waterbodies and watercourses. That's in addition to two towns that previously adopted legislation - Pawling and LaGrange. All of these local laws require buffers for certain streams, wetlands and other waterbodies - essentially, development must be set back a certain distance from these water resources, or the developer must apply for a permit to encroach on the protected area. While these laws are not designed to prevent any reasonable use of the protected water resource areas, they should discourage unnecessary disturbance and minimize any necessary impacts. The local laws fill the gaps left by state (NYSDEC) and federal (US Army Corps of Engineers) regulations. The State generally has jurisdiction only over wetlands 12.4 acres or larger, requiring a permit to develop within a 100-foot buffer area. The ACOE oversees certain smaller wetlands, requiring a permit to disturb more than 1/10 acre of wetland, but has no buffer requirement. Neither agency protects forested stream buffers.

The benefits of wetlands and riparian buffers are numerous: wetlands break down and filter pollutants before they reach groundwater, control flooding and erosion by absorbing stormwater, recharge groundwater supplies, offer recreational opportunities, and provide wildlife habitat to preserve biodiversity. Riparian buffers filter sediments and pollutants from runoff entering waterbodies and streams, stabilize banks

to prevent erosion and sedimentation, and provide shade to keep the water temperatures cooler- essential for trout.



Photo credit: Dutchess County EMC

Streams that lack a buffer containing trees and shrubs are vulnerable to erosion and elevated water temperatures.

A review of local real estate listings shows that proximity to "protected wetlands" is often considered a bonus, affording opportunities to appreciate wildlife and an assurance of protected open space.

Norm Benson, Town Planner and Environmental Director for the Town of Pawling, has seen positive results from their law, which has been in effect for more than ten years. "Once it becomes Town Law, developers and realtors respect it", said Norm. "We have a 100-foot buffer on all wetlands and streams, and sometimes even that's not enough to protect things like wildlife habitat. As property values go up, developers are often looking to build on marginal land. The law has saved a lot of smaller wetlands that would have been destroyed, and that's important because you have to look at the cumulative effects of lost wetlands."

David Burns, Watershed Coordinator at The Dutchess County Environmental Management Council (EMC), recommends providing some level of protection

for every watercourse, including intermittent streams. It is often these smaller, often unnamed watercourses that are the sources of much of the erosion, sediment, and potential pollution for streams. EMC is a valuable resource to communities seeking options for protecting their water resources by providing materials, mapping and other technical support. Their "Model Ordinance for Wetland, Waterbody, and Watercourse Protection" has been used by communities as a reference when drafting their own regulations. For more information, contact the EMC at 677-5253 or dburns@co.dutchess.ny.us



Photo credit: Dutchess County EMC

Forested buffers help stabilize stream banks, provide wildlife corridors, and protect water quality.

Dutchess County Planning Federation Call for Nominations

The Dutchess County Planning Federation's Board of Directors currently has vacant positions that will be filled at the Business Meeting of the 2004 Annual Awards Dinner. Board members meet approximately six times per year to help plan DCPF programs that serve to educate and recognize the Dutchess County planning community. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please fill out the nomination form below and submit by **December 15th** to: DCPF – Nominations, 27 High Street, 2nd Floor, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. Candidates must be currently appointed to a Dutchess County municipal governing body, planning board, zoning board of appeals, conservation advisory council/board/commission, greenway committee/group or the Dutchess County Planning Board. Terms are three years.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Affiliation: _____ Telephone Number: _____

All You Have To Do Is Ask....

Putting the Park in Parking Lots

Whose fault is all this asphalt? Customers are attracted to greenery and go out of their way to find any bit of shade for their cars, so why do property owners completely surround their stores with these ugly, uninviting, uninterrupted tar pits called parking lots? According to an Urban Land Institute study, lush landscaping leads to long-term value, increasing financial returns 5 – 15% for developers.



Break up the blacktop. At the Samuel F. B. Morse Historic Site the parking aisles are well shaded with rows of trees and shrubs. Also, an overflow portion of the lot is gravel, which allows infiltration of rainwater into the ground and is less expensive than paving and installing drainage structures.



Why not parking groves? Diamond shaped tree islands six feet wide provide a shade tree every 4 to 6 stalls, without losing a single space.

PLAN ON IT

A Dutchess County Planning Federation Newsletter

Dutchess County Planning Federation
27 High Street, 2nd Floor
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
POUGHKEEPSIE, NY
PERMIT NO.109

