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June 27, 2007

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Keep Remington Woods as open space

According to recent *Connecticut Post* news stories, developer Robert Scinto is planning to build "two 70,000 square foot office buildings" on the Stratford side of Remington Woods. Once the property is environmentally clean, "a major economic development project" is planned on the Bridgeport side of Remington Woods. Stratford Town Council Chairman James Feehan thinks a "hotel complex or upscale condominiums on Long Beach is best." Bridgeport Mayor John Fabrizi is considering "some kind of mixed-use development" on Pleasure Beach.

Fairfield County Advocates for Open Space would like to see Pleasure Beach and Long Beach become part of the McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge currently spans 70 miles of the Connecticut coastline providing important resting, feeding and nesting habitat for many species of birds.

FCAOS also advocates for the addition of Remington Woods to the McKinney Refuge. Situated less than two miles from the Great Meadows unit, Remington Woods boasts 422 acres of gorgeous woodlands, meadows, lakes and extensive wetlands that host many of the same migratory bird species as the McKinney Refuge.

Developing these open space properties in Bridgeport and Stratford does not make any sense. The infrastructure required to widen roads to Remington Woods (Broadbridge and Seaview avenues)

HAVE YOUR SAY

We welcome short, concise letters from our readers. Each original letter must be signed and include your address and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length. Letter authors are responsible for content.

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and build bridges to access Long Beach and Pleasure Beach add up to over \$60 million. Plus they are difficult sites to build on. Pleasure Beach and Long Beach are flood hazard zones. Remington Woods has extensive wetlands, unusual topography and reported sewage and drainage problems.

Wouldn't it make more sense for our elected officials to provide Scinto with the opportunity to build his office complexes at Steel Point or along Barnum Avenue, close to Interstate 95 and existing infrastructure? That's smart growth. Yes, many of the sites on Barnum Avenue need to be cleaned. If our elected officials believe we can raise \$60 million for roads and bridges to build on critical open space areas, why can't they instead raise that much for brownfield remediation and

in-fill development?

Alyssa Israel
Treasurer
Fairfield County Advocates
for Open Space
Fairfield

Oh sure, "Remington plans show real promise" (*Connecticut Post*, June 12) all right — a promise to worsen our already filthy air: A promise to increase asthma suffering. A promise to worsen global warming. A promise to increase the burden on manufacturers with more and more stringent emissions controls. A promise of lost jobs due to the subsequent increased manufacturing costs. A promise of increased traffic. A promise of increased town services soaking up our tax dollars. A promise to increase problem wildlife in neighboring yards.

Developer Robert Scinto recently implied that it was more economical to develop wooded areas than it was to improve already developed land ["Scinto to build on Remington site," *Connecticut Post*, June 3]. Both letter writers Peter McKnight ("Scinto to build ...") and Ann Weiss ("Developers' ideas not always on target," June 19) were so right when they suggested we change zoning laws to make blighted areas more attractive to developers, and developing open spaces less profitable.

In addition to increasing fees for

permits to develop woodlands, we could require developers to humanely trap and relocate the wildlife on open space proposed for development. This would alleviate the wildlife destruction caused when animals with nowhere else to go flee into neighboring yards.

Even if some of the land is preserved for them, the reduced food and shelter sources still drive wildlife such as deer and raccoons to invade private yards, destroying gardens, sheds and landscaping. Predators such as coyotes and fox can endanger small pets when driven from their woodland homes. Animals that would otherwise not venture into the road become road kill, increasing the risk of motor vehicle accidents.

A humane trap-and-release program would cause delays and cut into open space development profits, thus making open spaces less desirable to developers, and making it more lucrative for them to develop the blighted areas that we desperately need to rebuild. And, as an added bonus, the developers will discover just how little open space is left when they try to find some place that is willing and able to accept their "donations."

Oh yes, developing densely wooded areas like Remington Woods shows real promise. But they're not advantageous promises. Leave the woods alone and redevelop already built upon sites.

Shirley B. Backus
Stratford

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