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## Battle Heats Up Over FASNY in White Plains

Pat Casey | Jul 17, 2012 | [Comments 0](#)



FASNY

The [French-American School of New York](#) announced last week that it has contracted with one of the region's top environmental organizations to help design its proposed 84-acre preserve. Meanwhile the [Gedney Association](#), which represents the neighborhood of FASNY's proposed campus and is opposed to the project, stepped up its own community outreach, marking the latest in what's been a PR battle over public support for the project.

FASNY has been led by the [Briarcliff Manor](#)-based public relations firm Thompson & Bender to help ease their application for a special permit to operate a regional educational institution within the Gedney residential neighborhood through the White Plains governmental process. With open houses, informational sessions, media releases and mailings into the greater White Plains neighborhood, they've sought to stem the tide of outcry from neighbors of the former private golf club. Those neighbors, most specifically the Gedney Association, have responded with their own marketing program of "FASNO" t-shirts, lawn signs, door-to-door petitions, and city-wide mailings.

The latest offering from the Gedney Association is an eight-page brochure outlining reasons why FASNY means higher taxes and rents for White Plains residents; why FASNY will create major traffic problems; why FASNY will make local flooding worse; and why the nature conservancy proposed by FASNY is actually a Pandora's box of negative environmental implications.

This brochure comes just after the White Plains Common Council rejected the preliminary DEIS (draft environmental impact statement) submitted by FASNY, saying it lacked sufficient information. The Gedney Association brochure also follows an announcement from FASNY that it has hired specialists from the well-known regional environmental research and education center in Yorktown, Teatown Lake Reservation, Inc., to conduct a study of the property relating to its Greens to Green Conservancy program on 84-acres of the 130-acre site.

On the one hand, FASNY says it is attempting to restore the natural character of what it calls in a media release "an intensively managed, artificial golf course environment." The study conducted by Teatown will analyze habitat and meadow restoration and strategies applicable to the site including wetland, pond and forest restoration. The GreenstoGreen.org website provides an overview of the concept including maps and renderings.

On the other hand, in an interview with The White Plains Examiner, Gedney Association President Terence Guerriere said, "FASNY is trying to distract everyone from the central idea of the development. We are not hearing about the school and the multi-building development. We are hearing about open space. We are missing the elephant in the room, which is the large regional educational institution they propose to build."

Many city residents have called the dedication of 84 acres as parkland in 10-square-mile White Plains very attractive. Concerned Citizens for Open Space (CCOS), the major open space activist organization in White Plains, has supported a zoning change to create an open space recreation district that would encompass the former Ridgeway Country Club property but has not specifically weighed in on the preserve.

In the end, it is the Common Council, representing White Plains as a whole, that will make the ultimate decision about whether or not FASNY gets the go-ahead.

*Editor's Note:*

*The second to last paragraph has been changed from the article that appeared in the July 17 edition of The White Plains Examiner. While CCOS has previously submitted a recommendation to the City of White Plains regarding the property of the former Ridgeway Country Club, they have not officially taken a position on the 84-acre preserve proposed by FASNY.*

