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Environment Groups Back FASNY Proposal

Sixteen environmental leaders were at the former Ridgeway Country Club Thursday to support the proposed French-American School of New York.

By [Zach Oliva](#) | [Email the author](#) | 10:47 am

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Sixteen environmental leaders from throughout the region signed a letter supporting the proposed French-American School of New York (FASNY) Thursday, a week before the first public hearing scheduled to discuss project.

The letter, addressed to White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach and the six members of the common council, applauds the proposal's expected positives in regards to the environment and local economy, among other things.

"Turning two-thirds of this defunct private golf course into an 84-acre public nature preserve—at no cost to the city in acquiring, developing or maintaining the facility—will deliver significant social, environmental, educational and economic benefits to White Plains and its citizens," the letter states.

Since purchasing the former Ridgeway Country Club in January 2011, FASNY leaders have been seeking the City's approval to build a new school campus on the property. The proposal also includes a "Greens to Green Conservancy" that would leave two-thirds of the property undeveloped and open as a passive walking park that would be open to the public.

Leaders from five environmental groups discussed why they support the plan Thursday.

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"It will open a tremendous resource for public enjoyment, this will become a great recreational resource, a destination in a region that has a \$4 billion tourism industry," said Ned Sullivan, president of Scenic Hudson.

Sullivan added that if left on the market, he is concerned the property will eventually be purchased by a developer and made into a large residential subdivision.

"To have this unique combination of positive economic development and an educational institution—it's going to be terrific," he said

Neighbors have rallied against the project, citing traffic concerns, reductions to property values and a change to the character of their neighborhood.

Terence Guerrire, president of the Gedney Neighborhood Association, which has opposed the FASNY proposal, said that while the Greens to Green Conservancy may seem appealing, it doesn't reduce concerns about the changes the school campus will bring to the surrounding neighborhood.

"It seems that the French-American School of New York is doing everything they possibly can to avoid talking about the large negative impacts of the school," Guerrire said. "We would like to focus on the most important part of the application, which is the large intense traffic generating aspects of the FASNY plan and not be distracted by the constant call of conservancy."

The proposed campus would house about 1,200 students and 250 staff members. In addition to the 84-acre open space conservancy, the proposal includes the construction of an upper, middle and lower school totaling 230,863 sq ft., three playgrounds, four tennis courts, four soccer fiends, a six lane track, a basketball court, baseball and softball diamonds and 428 parking spaces.

The White Plains Common Council declared the DEIS as complete and ready to be discussed at public hearings on Sept. 19 and Oct. 17 at 7 p.m. at city hall. Written comments will be received until 5 p.m. on Oct. 20 and should be directed to the City Clerk, City Hall at 255 Main St., White Plains, NY 10601.

Click [here](#) to view the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the project. A copy of the DEIS will also be available for view at the [White Plains Public Library](#).

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chris

3:49 pm on Friday, September 14, 2012

Who were the signers? Scenic Hudson and who else?

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John Botti

9:12 pm on Friday, September 14, 2012

The full endorsement letter is on the website:

<http://greenstogreen.org/endorsements.html>

Here are the 16 environmental groups and leaders that strongly endorsed the plan for the campus and the conservancy:

Eban Goodstein, Ph.D.

Director

Bard Center for Environmental Policy

Bard MBA Program in Sustainability

Ned Sullivan

President

Scenic Hudson

William H. Schlesinger, Ph.D.

President

Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies

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Candace Schafer
Executive Director
Westchester Land Trust

Jonathan F.P. Rose
Founder & President
Jonathan Rose Companies
Green Real Estate Policy, Planning and Development

Lucy R. Waletzky, M.D.
Member
Westchester County Pest Management Committee

Edward Goodell
Executive Director
New York – New Jersey Trail Conference

Steve Ricker
Director
Westmoreland Sanctuary

Zyvia Wojnar Research
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