

**Forest Home Improvement Association
Annual Meeting
October 26, 2011, 7:30 pm
Forest Home Chapel
Minutes**

1. Welcome and introductions

Twenty-eight residents were in attendance. Tompkins County Legislator Peter Stein attended as a guest.

2. Treasurer's report

Treasurer Bill Arms presented a breakdown of expenses and income for the fiscal year October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011.

Contribution to Forest Home Chapel: \$250.00
Forest Home website hosting (renewed every 2 years): \$195.09
Traffic calming survey: \$11.99
Block party: \$241.85
Spring clean-up: \$65.92
Total expenditure: \$922.40
Dues received: \$785.00
Interest: \$38.79
Total income: \$823.79
Balance of legal defense fund: \$1,884.85.

All accounts reside at Alternatives Federal Credit Union.

3. President's report

Alternative Transportation Working Group projects: Jon Miller discussed a list of projects to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities based on the work of the Alternative Transportation Working Group. This list, which has been presented to Town Supervisor Herb Engman and chairman of the Town's Public Works Committee Bill Goodman, was distributed by email prior to the meeting. It includes new crosswalks, new sidewalks, snow removal, lighting improvements, improvements to the Forest Home Walkway, and clean-up at the speed tables. Jon reported that the Town responded to a request to elevate a hazardous storm grate on FH Drive.

Forest Home Walkway: Requests include: extending the rope rail, increasing the height

of the railing, and surface maintenance. Some repairs have already been made to the railing. Town Public Works Director Jim Weber has indicated his reluctance to spend additional money on the FH Walkway if the Warren Rd. sidewalk is to be built. Residents asked if they could volunteer labor on the Walkway. Town Supervisor and FH resident Herb Engman suggested that the Walkway be engineered first, then volunteer labor might be helpful. Herb suggested keeping the PWC informed through Bill Goodman, who met with the FHIA officers at their meeting on October 12, 2011.

Streetlights: Teresa Craighead noted the poor visibility on the crosswalk at the bottom of the FH Walkway and suggested moving the streetlight to the adjacent pole. Ellen Lane and Elizabeth Sanders suggested that the light be lowered as well. Herb said NYSEG will have to be consulted in either case. Bill Arms remarked that a solar light could be attached to his fence at 200 FHD.

Snow removal: Jon reported that the officers have asked the Town to clear the walkways between the two bridges, as well as sections between the downstream bridge and Judd Falls Rd. and the lower portion of JFR. Doug Brittain suggested that Cornell be asked to clear 100 block of FHD and JFR to connect the new Plantations building with the golf course and Hasbrouck. Don Rakow has been nudged on these issues, but he has been resistant. David Gross remarked that he and Art Bloom put salt on the sidewalk of Judd Falls Rd., but the plows dump snow there and keeping up with them is a challenge.

Crosswalks: Ellen proposed that crosswalks be elevated with gentle bumps similar to what was installed by Milstein Hall.

Car sharing: Joe Schwartz of Fairway Drive suggested that the neighborhood ask Ithaca Carshare to establish a parking space. It was agreed that volunteers would be sought to investigate this possibility.

Light reduction: Seth Bensel asked that a streetlight near Beebe Lake be removed. The light illuminates a crosswalk that leads to an unmaintained path. Bruce Brittain said this crosswalk is an old path (100 years old). The issue of light reduction is very important to some community members and efforts have been made to get some of the lights turned off. J. Miller mentioned that one light was turned off by Cornell after he made several calls about it. The officers have mentioned the excessive lighting at the new Plantations Welcome Center parking area to both Cornell and Town officials but so far there has been no action. It was agreed that volunteers would be sought to form a lighting working group.

Upstream Bridge: Bruce Brittain gave an update on the Upstream Bridge renovation project. The renovation was projected for 2011, then 2012, and is now uncertain. The bridge was inspected three weeks ago and passed inspection, but the walkway did not. Repairs should be made in the next couple of weeks. Bruce explained the inherent weaknesses in the bridge structure at the present time: corrosion is almost all the way through on the lower (tension) members, the floor joists are rotted through, and the trusses' compression members are experiencing incipient buckling where the rivet heads on the inclined end-posts were ground off. Bruce said that if it were his bridge he would close it tomorrow, and asked members to contact him if they see any sags in the deck, or if the buckling gets worse.

P. Stein commented that he didn't see the bridge getting fixed anytime soon because of economic constraints and estimates for repairing it have risen greatly. County highway commissioner John Lampman's original estimate to fix the bridge was \$1.1 million and currently that figure has increased to 1.9 million. Five percent of the funding comes from the County and the rest comes from Federal and State monies. J. Lampman is unsure where that additional money will come from as NY State is cutting back on funding projects at the local level. Peter said the design was changed in response to Forest Home residents' requests and this made for the additional cost. He will report to J. Lampman regarding Bruce's assessment of the bridge. Herb Engman reported that as recently as one week ago he had heard that the money had become available for the bridge renovation because other projects had been cancelled. So, it is possible that it will move forward in 2012.

Micro-hydroelectric power project: This project is ongoing with Cornell and they have handed it over to a group of students to work on. P. Stein said the county planner was consulted and expressed interest.

Traffic calming survey: J. Miller noted that generally people thought speeds have been reduced with the new speed tables and entry features. The response to a question about whether to reroute buses was not conclusive.

4. Town of Ithaca update

Herb Engman, FH resident and Town Supervisor, provided information about the following:

Forest Home Park: Cornell Plantations director Don Rakow asked the Town to take over the land referred to as the 'little park' (by the downstream bridge) on a 15-year lease. Recently the Plantations amended the proposal to a 90-year lease with no

revocation clause. The Town is now considering it. Herb asked what people want to do with the park. Although the Town would own the land, Cornell would retain rights to the bank of the stream. Herb suggested that it may be possible to shift the road slightly towards the park to make more room for a sidewalk on the opposite side of the street. It was agreed that volunteers would be sought to work on issues surrounding the park.

Outdoor lighting: The Town has passed a lighting ordinance. Herb suggested that residents use timers and pay close attention to light direction. Some discussion followed about the potential for reducing unnecessary light in the neighborhood.

Stream setback law: Herb explained that a stream setback law was still in development, with the objective of protecting waterways from pollution. He said the biggest threat is chemicals used on residential lawns.

Other issues: Herb noted that the Hasbrouck bench had been moved back to the park. Herb also pointed out that once the upstream bridge renovation starts, then other projects could more easily get lumped into that project, especially sidewalks that connect the two bridges.

5. Tompkins County update

Peter Stein, Tompkins County legislator, described the County's position with respect to the state property tax cap, which requires a special vote to approve tax increases above 2.9%. He said the Country would need to increase taxes by 13% just to cover projected costs with no new programs. The choices are to increase taxes or decrease services. County legislators ultimately voted for a 3.9% increase. Peter asked residents to contact him if they have any questions or complaints, not just about taxes but about any issues of concern to them.

6. Traffic Calming Phase II priorities

It was agreed that the priorities moving forward were for improved biking and walking facilities, and that the list presented earlier fairly represented those priorities.

A petition was circulated to lower the speed limit on Judd Falls Rd. from 30 mph to 25 mph. Once enough signatures are gathered, this will be presented to the Town. Herb noted that the State sets speed limits but the Town needs the petition in order to demonstrate need.

7. Buses in Forest Home

David Gross reported on the status of efforts to reduce bus traffic through Forest Home, including buses from TCAT, Cornell, visiting sports teams and Swarthout tours.

The aim is to encourage TCAT to use other routes instead of going through the narrow roads and bridges of Forest Home, especially as that there are no bus stops in the hamlet. David has been in communication with TCAT and other bus companies for several years now. As a result, the number of TCAT routes through the neighborhood has been reduced from five to four. But 62 TCAT buses still travel through each day, not counting out-of-service buses. The hope is to get the #31 & #37 to take an alternate route via Cradit Farm Rd. David has contacted Swarthout regarding an apparent increase in charter buses and they seemed willing to reroute.

Bill Arms noted the volume of tractor trailers on Forest Home Drive. Cornell transportation director Joe Lalley has said he would contact the county's mappers to reflect the S-curves, traffic calming features and weight limits on maps used by GPS companies in order to discourage them from routing vehicles through FH.

It was agreed that volunteers would be sought for the effort to reduce bus and truck traffic.

8. Social and community activities

Beth Kelly reported on several events that took place over the past year. Some were annual events and others were one-time offerings. The holiday party in December was hosted by Mary Kane and around 30-40 neighbors came with food, drinks, music, caroling and good cheer. In March, FH resident Rhiannon Crane gave a talk on attracting birds to backyards. In April, Bruce Brittain gave a historical walking tour of Forest Home. The annual spring clean-up was held on April 30. A music event was held at the Forest Home Chapel on May 14, organised by Beth Kelly. Around 12 people performed and around 30 people attended the concert and reception. On June 11, residents Max Evjen and Megan Halpern of Redshift Productions gave a talk about science presentations and improvisation. The fall block party was held on September 24 with many neighbors coming out bringing food and beverages, and with a face painter and ice cream provided by FHIA.

The next event is the annual holiday party, to be held at the home of Michael Bend and Valerie Hans on December 17 from 5 to 8 pm.

9. FHIA Communications

Everyone was reminded that there is an e-mail list as well as a directory and if you are new to the neighborhood or have a new e-mail address this information should be sent to foresthomenews@gmail.com. An updated directory was delivered to everyone's house by street captains in October. There is also an FHIA Facebook page on which anyone can post.

10. Other business

David Gross reported that Cornell's deer management program is coming to its 5-year conclusion. He urged everyone to support the continuation of the program. Alan Fletcher mentioned a documentary by an Ithaca College student about deer management, mainly in Cayuga Heights. Very interesting results and viewing is possible if people are interested. Could be shown at the Chapel.

Herb Engman mentioned that the "Tin Can" underpass is scheduled for replacement in 2014 and noted that it may be expanded to accommodate buses.

11. Nomination and election of officers

The following slate of FHIA officers was presented by the Nominating Committee:

President: Teresa Craighead, Fairway Drive

Vice President: Christine Leuenberger, Crest Lane

Secretary: Ari Lavine, Forest Home Drive

Treasurer: Bill Arms, Forest Home Drive

Immediate Past President: Jon Miller, The Byway

A voice vote was unanimous in favor of the slate as presented.

12. Adjourn

Meeting ended at 9:40 pm.