

# Lake Communities of Putnam, Inc.

## Lake Communities of Putnam, Inc.

P.O. Box 19  
Putnam Station, NY 12861

**Bert Windle, President**  
518.547.8426 (summer)  
602.300.5046 (winter)

[www.lakecommputnam.org](http://www.lakecommputnam.org)

### Officers:

- **President**  
Bert Windle
- **Secretary**  
Ray Freud
- **Treasurer**  
Charles Gerwig
- **Directors:**  
Doug Chase  
Ray Freud  
Eugene Frost  
Richard Gasser  
Charles Gerwig  
James King  
Peg Olsen  
Robert Rudt  
Bert Windle

### Standing Committees:

**Taxes/Assessment**  
Bert Windle

**Land Use**  
Ray Freud

**School Study**  
Eugene Frost

**Editor & Webmistress**  
Cee McKenzie-Rudt



## A Letter from the President Bert Windle

It has been stated that Liberty is always unfinished business. How true, even in Putnam, our small town in northern Washington County, upstate New York. We, the citizens, formed the Lake Communities of Putnam to address issues of land use, water quality and property taxes. In doing so we aim to protect our liberties and assist our local government and school board to better understand our needs, protect our rights and deliver a clear and unified message to both our county and state politicians.

Since our inception we have been involved in various activities to pursue our objectives: membership, voter registration, site plan review, deferring revaluation, tax reform, capping county tax increases, scrutinizing town and school budgets, creating a stronger voice in Albany, and better law enforcement.

**Membership:** We have achieved a high percentage of lake front home owners as members. We would like your help in getting the same results from the interior sections of Putnam so we can better understand and assist them with their concerns and issues like water quality and taxes which are everyone's concern.

**Voter Registration:** We continue to campaign for increased voter registration in Putnam from our membership. We ask that you reconsider your voting choice and call on us if you have any questions or need assistance in registering. The quality of our government at all levels is determined by those who vote and whom they elect. **PLEASE REGISTER IN PUTNAM NOW .**

**Site Plan Review:** We have in place a site plan review developed by the Putnam Planning Board and the Town Board, and endorsed by the LCP Board. The Planning Board works diligently to properly implement the original intent of site plan review. Drop in and see them in action on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM at the Town Hall. Please make note that the Planning Board minutes are posted on our website (<http://www.lakecommputnam.org>) as soon as available (30-day delay). The site plan review law will have lasting benefits to our town and the water quality in both Lake Champlain and Lake George.

**Deferring Revaluation:** Congratulations to the Putnam Town Board on continued deferment of a revaluation in Putnam. They have saved EVERY, yes EVERY, taxpayer in town many dollars. As you know, we have lobbied and continue to lobby for deferment until New York State can correct their problems of over dependence on the real estate taxes.

**Property Tax Reform:** We are still working on property tax reform. We have brought attention to the runaway real estate tax increases by bringing this issue at the forefront this election year and forced every politician to address the issue. Take a look at your 2004 tax burden and compare it to the 2006. In actual dollars we held the line or are down slightly. Compare that with the 35% increases of 2002 and 2003. We aren't looking for credit, but ask that when called upon to write a letter or make a phone you don't hesitate to do so.

## President's Message (continued from page 1)

**Capping County Tax Increase:** We didn't achieve our goal here, but as noted above we are flat in actual dollars from 2004 and Washington County tax levies had a lot to do with that. As you know, the LCP had open and candid discussions with Washington County officials regarding the county tax burdens.

**School and Town Budgets:** The budgets are reviewed in a public forum and we encourage each of you to attend, ask questions, make recommendations, and in general, participate. We will make every effort to advise you in advance of budget review dates. Please be sure to update your email address and other contact information so we can communicate with you on a regular basis.

**A Voice in Albany:** The LCP Board communicates regularly with Senator Little, Assemblywoman Sayward, and Assemblyman McDonald. Our objectives may not always line up with their agendas as many of our members are secondary home owners and do not vote in their districts. These three still represent us and it is important that they know your position on issues at hand. We have provided a list of your representatives with contact information, including email. Please use these and copy the LCP Board on your communications.

**Law Enforcement:** We have supported the Putnam Town Board in implementing new laws and enforcing existing ones. Enforcement has proven to be more difficult than one might think. The LCP Board is contemplating how we may help with enforcement and has ongoing dialogues with the Town Board on this issue. The Town Board meets on the second Thursday of each month at 7 PM at the Town Hall. The meeting is open to the public and your questions and comments are addressed...stop by.

**Additional Items: Newsletter** — We would appreciate assistance from anyone who has time and desire to help. This is a time consuming, expensive task and places a burden on a very small committee to produce the newsletter. Due to the facts mentioned, we will be using email to provide news briefs as they happen through the year and will produce only one newsletter this year. Thanks!

**Email** — Help us to help you...get us your updated information, including any updated email addresses.

**Tax Alert Elevated:** In closing, please remember the federal and state budgets have large deficits and they have become increasingly dependent on local property taxes to cover revenue shortfalls. Their mandates and liberal spending habits haven't changed so we must be vigilant with our tax watch.

Yes, it's an election year and property taxes have stirred political discontent throughout the state. Remember, politicians are reluctant to raise sales or income taxes due to fear of political retribution. So stay focused, be persistent, be forceful, be informed, be vigilant, and be involved! Take the time to help develop fair tax reform by sending your ideas to your representatives. Our goal, besides cutting spending, is to have NYS provide alternative funding for public schools thereby relieving the property tax system from this unsustainable burden.

Sincerely,

Bert Windle  
President LCP

## Vote in Putnam or Pay the Price by Gene Frost

Is there a connection between taxes and voting? Let's look at the recent history ...

Remember 2001? It was a defining moment. It was the year that we saw a 35% increase in real dollars appeared on our county tax bills. It was a time of shock, anger, and for some despair. A 35% increase in real dollars in one year was a devastating blow to the pocketbook and a wake-up call or a call-to-arms for all of us. Many were caught completely off guard as these camps and modest homes, some of which had been in our families for generations, came under siege. Still others were attempting to realize the American dream of home ownership of that vacation or retirement home. All of us could see our hopes and dreams of quiet enjoyment and perhaps leaving a legacy for our families dashed with the stroke of an assessor's pen.

Certainly, we cannot and should not blame the assessors. In most cases and as is the case in Putnam and Ticonderoga, the assessor serves us at the pleasure of our elected officials, namely the Town Supervisor and the Town Council. If our elected officials say "No", there is no possibility of a revaluation. This is why the state of New York has an equalization rate that is based on local recent sales. Putnam's equalization rate is now about 63%. Some communities across the state have equalization rates of 2% or lower.

To encourage compliance with state law, New York State provides state aid of \$5 per eligible parcel to municipalities that keep assessments at 100% of market value each year. What happens if a town fails to perform a revaluation to maintain assessments at the market value at 100%? They lose state aid to the tune of \$5 (FIVE DOLLARS) a parcel. In Putnam that's around \$4,500!

Yet, we, the residents of Putnam, have become very complacent. Ticonderoga had a reassessment a year ago and the town residents became very upset; so much so that the Town Supervisor almost lost his reelection bid to a late, almost unknown, candidate. Truth is he would have lost had he not promised to forgo reassessments in the future until the state of New York solved its problem of unfunded mandates.

The Town of Moriah had a reassessment just last year and the town officials cited state mandates and state aid for the reassessment while at the same time blaming the assessors. That was equivalent to shooting the messenger. The media does nothing to correct those misstatements or to clarify the matter.

In any event, do not be surprised if your own complacency leads to yet another reassessment in the near future in Putnam. This matter requires that you remain an active, vigilant watchdog. It's far too late to become upset or alarmed after a reassessment. All you can do then is litigate and that's a costly remedy with no guarantees. An ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure.

Consider this: Recent sales in Putnam include a farm with much marshy land and a very modest home for \$395,000. Yet another abandoned home needing total rehabilitation sold for \$175,000. Still more "interior" township properties are on the market for \$600,000-\$700,000. A very modest home on Lake George sold for \$850,000. Other properties on the lake are listed for sale in the \$1-3 million range. What does all this mean? It means that a reassessment of Putnam's real estate will likely double or triple everyone's assessment no matter where in the town they reside. And when that happens, no matter what the town tax rate, the Washington County part of your tax bill is going to rise considerably.

What can you do to stop this from happening? Two things: First speak to your friends and neighbors throughout the town. Make sure everyone knows this is a bad idea for everyone. Second, at the risk of sounding redundant, register to vote in Putnam. You and your family of eligible voters or at least someone in your family needs to declare Putnam their domicile and vote here.

Keep in mind too that all proposed real property tax relief legislation assumes that you are a primary resident. This clearly means that if you expect tax relief you'd better be a voter.

## Vote in Putnam or Pay the Price (continued from page 3)

One final question to consider is where is my vote worth the most? Where is it most effective? You might be voting now where your vote is one in a 100,000 or more; your vote in Putnam would be one in 600 and your vote may save your home for generations to come. I think the answer is obvious. Register to vote in Putnam!

### How do I register to Vote?

There are numerous ways to register to vote within the Town of Putnam:

- Your local post office has Voter Registration Forms;
- Call 1-800-For-Vote; or 746-2180
- On the web <http://www.elections.state.ny.us>; or <http://www.co.washington.ny.us>
- Via "snail" mail at Washington County Board of Elections, 383 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY 12828
- Contact Town Supervisor John LaPointe for Voter Registration Forms at 547.9591.
- Contact Bert Windle for Voter Registration Forms at 547.8426
- If you are a registered voter and will be out of the area for any voting days, you can contact the Board of Elections at 746-2180 to request an absentee ballot. Voting is then as simple as putting a stamp on an envelope.



## YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

***Don't ever think your vote doesn't count, because in ...***

**1845** - ONE vote brought Texas into the Union

**1868** - ONE vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment

**1876** - ONE vote gave Rutherford Hayes the presidency of the United States

**1939** - ONE vote passed the selective service act

**1960** - ONE vote per precinct elected John F. Kennedy President

**1978** - in Fullerton, California, a Democratic candidate for the State of California's legislature lost by TEN votes in a primary election where 32,000 votes were cast

## The Initiative and Referendum Amendment

Many states allow residents a say in government by allowing residents to place items of interest on the state ballots for all voters to vote their opinion on the topic at hand. One of the more well known initiatives was California's Proposition 13 to control real estate taxes. Unfortunately, New York State does not allow residents to voice their opinion by the ballot box in this manner, but change is in the wind.

The New York State Senate has passed "The Initiative and Referendum Amendment" that if passed by the New York Assembly, this amendment to the New York Constitution will allow New York residents the ability to place measures on the November ballot after obtaining the required amount of signatures supporting the proposal. The required amount of signatures will be at least 5% of the total voters statewide from the last gubernatorial election. To ensure a "broad base" of statewide support of the proposal, the law will require at least 5,000 signatures from 60% of the New York State congressional district.

Contact your Assemblyperson and tell them to vote "YES" on the "The Initiative and Referendum Amendment" when it comes up to vote.

**It's time to take back our state government!**

## Contact the LCP Board or Your Local Representatives

### LCP Board of Directors:

Bert Windle—wnd330@aol.com

Ray Freud—rsfreud@verizon.net

James King—jking@mail.als.edu

Robert Rudt—bobcee@wildblue.net

Doug Chase—chaser309@verizon.net

Charles Gerwig—gerwugcj@aol.com

Eugene Frost—ehfrost@bluemoo.net

Peg Olsen—pegolsen@audibon.org

Richard Gasser—rtgasser@gasser.com

### Town of Putnam:

Town Supervisor—John LaPointe—518.547.9591—supervisors@co.washington.ny.us

Town Clerk—Patricia Wilson—518.547.8317

Highway Supervisor—Gary Smith—518.547.8297

Superintendent of Schools—Matt Boucher—518.547.8266—mboucher@mum.neric.org

### Washington County: 518.746.2210—supervisors@co.washington.ny.us

Chairman, Board of Supervisors—Joann Trinkle—518.677.3324

383 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY 12818

Budget Officer—Ken Talkington—518.642.2369

3954 County Rte 30, Salem, NY 12865

### New York State:

#### Roy McDonald

112th Assembly District

383 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY 12828

Phone: 518.747.7098 Fax: 518.747.7204

mcdond@assembly.state.ny.us

#### Theresa Sayward

113th Assembly District

21 Bay Street, Glens Falls, NY 12801

Phone: 518.792.4546 Fax: 518.792.5584

sayward@assembly.state.ny.us

#### Senator Elizabeth Little

Queensbury, 45th Senate District

21 Bay Street, Glens Falls, NY 12801

Phone: 518.743.0968 Fax: 518.745.0336

little@senate.state.ny.us

#### Governor George E. Pataki

The Executive Chamber

State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224

Phone: 518.474.8390

www.state.ny.us/governor

#### Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

US Senate

476 Russel Senate Office Building

Delaware & Constitution Avenues

Washington, DC 20510

Phone: 202.224.4451

senator@clinton.senate.gov

#### Senator Charles E. Schumer

US Senate

476 Russel Senate Office Building

Delaware & Constitution Avenues

Washington, DC 20510

Phone: 202.224.4451

senator@schumer.senate.gov

#### Representative John E. Sweeney

US House of Representatives

416 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Phone: 518.792.3031 or 202.225.5641

www.house.gov/sweeney



## Welcome Doug Chase

The LCP would like to welcome its newest board member from Glenburnie, Doug Chase, who was duly elected at the 2006 General Membership meeting.

## Agencies and Organizations Involved in the Use of Lake George and the Surrounding Land

### STATE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

**APA (Adirondack Park Agency)** Regulates land use within the park, including subdivisions, building, shorefront setback, lot size, clearing and cutting.

**LGPC (Lake George Park Commission)** Regulates and issues permits for docks, wharfs, moorings and marinas; establishes special navigations rules and aids and operates the marine patrol; issues storm water management permits for constructions projects within the basin; manages the milfoil control and other water quality programs.

**DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation)** Regulates land use as it affects environmental issues.

**HD (Health Department)** May have land use jurisdiction in special cases

**LGWC (Lake George Watershed Conference)** A non-regulatory advisory organization comprised of representatives of the nine municipalities and three counties around the lake, the APA, LGPC, Dept. of State, and the non-profits associated with Lake George.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

**Washington County** administers building permitting and code enforcement for the town.

**Putnam Town Board** Elected town government; The Town Clerk has information and forms for obtaining project permits and approvals.

**Putnam Planning Board** Administers subdivision regulations and the site plan review ordinance for all construction projects.

### NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

**LGA (Lake George Association)** Works to protect conserve and improve the beauty and quality of the Lake George Basin. Activities include storm water remediation, continuing education and the floating classroom, control of invasive species, monitoring land use activities and advocating responsible land use policies, GIS mapping and many others.

**The Fund for Lake George** Supports and finances programs in the basin which will protect and preserve the lake.

**Lake George Waterkeeper** is supported by the Fund for Lake George. Consultant and advocate for water quality and land use as it affects the water quality.

**Lake George Land Conservancy** Protects lands around the lake through conservation easements, land donations and fee acquisitions.

**Darrin Fresh Water Institute** is operated by RPI. Researches the impact of human activity on the Adirondacks and particularly Lake George.

**Adirondack Council** An environmental advocacy group, with headquarters in Albany, established to protect the open-space resources of the Park.



**<http://www.lakecommputnam.org>**

## **Lake Communities of Putnam Website**

The website is updated monthly to add the most recent Town Board and Planning Board minutes, so be sure to visit regularly.

Our website has a wealth of information on both our organization and our community:

The **main page** (<http://www.lakecommputnam.org>) contains a brief overview of our organization and contact information.

The **news page** (<http://www.lakecommputnam.org/news.htm>) contains links to the LCP Annual Meeting information, past Putnam Town Board Monthly Minutes, past Planning Board Minutes, LCP Newsletters, LCP Committee Reports and contact information for the Putnam Central School. Also, look for any news on issues that might arise over winter.

The **membership page** (<http://www.lakecommputnam.org/membership.htm>) contains information on renewing memberships or joining the LCP.

The **links page** (<http://www.lakecommputnam.org/links.htm>) contains links to other associations and organizations around Lake George, including: information on how to register to vote, the Adirondack Park Agency, Lake George Park Commission, Lake George Association, Committee for Property Tax Relief, Lake George Water Quality, The Fund for Lake George, the Lake George Waterkeeper, and the Town of Putnam webpage and our local Central School webpage. If any of you know of others that should be included, please let the webmistress know at [LCP@lakecommputnam.org](mailto:LCP@lakecommputnam.org).

The **feedback page** (<http://www.lakecommputnam.org/feedback.htm>) contains the email address for commenting on the website and offering your suggestions for continuing improvement.

## Dredging of Gull Bay

There has been an ongoing problem for over ten years in Gull Bay.

The problem has been recognized by the Putnam Town Board, Gull Bay Association, Gull Bay residents, Lake George Association (LGA), New York State Environmental Agency, Lake Communities of Putnam, Lake George Watershed Conference, and everyone that uses the boat launch. A number of these groups have been working to try and stop the erosion into Gull Bay. In 1997 the Putnam Town Board joined forces with the LGA in an attempt to solve the problem (see the April 97 LGA newsletter). Then again in 2002 the LGA Lake Saving Project Coordinator made a site visit to Gull Bay and recommended dredging as a possible solution to the problem.

During this period the inner bay continued to fill with sand and silt, both to the north and south of the Town beach. This has created additional hardship for the property owners (taxpayers) and made using the boat launch almost impossible as the water levels drop in the fall. We consider this more than an inconvenience; it's a hazard to navigation and must be corrected!

On August 26, 2006, at the Putnam Town Hall, Mr. Dave Decker, Director of the Lake George Watershed Conference explained the extent and method of dredging to be done in Gull Bay on or about the last week in September or the first week in October 2006. The meeting was attended by Town Supervisor Mr. John LaPointe, over 20 concerned citizens representing Gull Bay residents, Gull Bay Association and the Lake Communities of Putnam. Details of both the site plan and dredging were explained, the drawings were documented with core samples and grading elevations. Permits have been obtained; and funding is in place from both the NYS Environmental Protection Fund and the Lake George Watershed Conference.

**"BUT"** As of Friday, October 13, 2006, we were notified by Mr. Decker that the Gull Bay dredging project will not take place this fall and he recommends rescheduling to the first week of May 2007.

As Chairman of the Gull Bay Dredging Committee I had no previous knowledge of this and by no means hold the purse strings for this project. At this point I feel we can only go along with the new projected date and ask for some guarantee or assurance that this commitment will be met.

Bob Coulter  
 Chairman, Gull Bay Dredging Committee  
[coulterb@nycap.rr.com](mailto:coulterb@nycap.rr.com)



## Storm Water Management

After a heavy rain, there are numerous points along the shore where excessive and muddy runoff enters the lake, leading eventually to silting and delta buildup. LCP members residing along the lakeshore are generally aware of these points near their homes. Depending upon the severity and nature of the runoff, we may be able to obtain assistance in alleviating these problems from the Lake George Association, which has established a Lake Savings Projects Committee. The committee is in the process of identifying projects that will protect or enhance the lake, and establishing priorities for these projects. If you are aware of particular storm water runoff situations, contact Ray Freud, a member of the Lake Savings Projects Committee, with the details and it will be brought to the attention of the committee. Photographs will be a big help.

## Board of Assessment Review Opening

At the Town Board meeting on September 16th the Town Board voted unanimously to accept Cee McKenzie-Rudt from Gull Bay onto the Board of Assessment Review. The vacancy had been created when former resident and LCP member Walt Connor moved from the town and the Town Board invited the LCP to suggest a candidate for the position.

## Property Revaluation

There will be no assessment revaluation in 2006. The LCP has consistently held the position that "reval" is neither required nor advantageous, and that not having a revaluation in several years has resulted in less property tax increases for citizens of Putnam.

## Treasurer's Report

A cash balance in excess of \$11,000 is presently in the LCP account. This is considered by the Board to be sufficient to fund most situations that may arise, such as litigation or special projects. Annual dues have been established at a modest \$10 for individuals and \$20 for families, and will be used to meet operating expenses including the newsletter. It is also important that the LCP have a current count of paid-up members when dealing with various government agencies and officials so that we can say we represent a group of 200 strong.

**Dues:** Membership is renewable June 1 of each year. If you have not renewed for this year, please remit your payment of \$10 for individuals or \$20 for a family. Please list all adult family members that are included so we will have an accurate membership count.



### Lake Communities of Putnam, Inc. Membership

- Renew my Membership in LCP
- Become a Member of LCP

**Membership Levels:**

- \$10 Individual Membership
- \$20 Family Membership
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and mail with your check payable to LCP and mail to:

Lake Communities of Putnam  
 c/o Ray Freud  
 PO Box 19  
 Putnam Station, NY 12861

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please include all adult family member names for family memberships.)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Winter Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Winter Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Summer Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Summer Telephone

**Please Print**

**Thank you!**

Lake Communities of Putnam, Inc.  
P.O. Box 19  
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