

Lake Communities of Putnam, Inc.

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Peg Olsen
Bert Windle

Standing Committees

Taxes/Assessment
Bert Windle

Township Affairs
Ken Gilkes

Land Use
Ray Freud

A Letter from the President.....

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for your outstanding response to our request for membership support. We now have 110 members, and we continue to get new memberships each week. Please help spread the word to your neighbors. We would encourage you to consider becoming involved in one of our standing committees, Taxes and Assessments, Township Affairs or Land Use. There is a lot to accomplish, and we could certainly use your help.

Our first and continuing goal has been to register 100% of the eligible voters in the lakeside communities and to get them to vote in person or by absentee ballot at each and every election within the Town of Putnam. We have been making progress, but we feel there are many more eligible voters we haven't reached. Our initial voter registration drive was focused on the recent School Board election in which we endorsed Walt Connor as a candidate.

Walt ran a very respectable campaign with the declared result of 94 to 145. Although there were no "hanging chads", there were challenges to 27 absentee ballots as well as challenges to voters who

voted at the polls. We assume that the 27 challenged absentee ballots would have been for Walt Connor based on our "get out the vote" campaign. We do not know how many may have been challenged at the polls and turned away. If you were turned away at the polling place or had difficulty voting, please let us know. If the challenged absentee ballots were counted, it would have been a 121 to 145 race. With 25 more votes, Walt would have been elected.

We are not certain that the proper standards were applied in this election especially in the case of the absentee ballots. Supervisor LaPointe has arranged a meeting in August with the President of the School Board and the School Superintendent to clarify the standards. If necessary, we will get legal clarification from the Attorney General's office in Albany. Our goal will be to make certain that the voting standards applied in the next election are correct, clearly understood by all who will enforce them and uniformly applied to all registered voters in the Town of Putnam. We will include these standards in the next newsletter. We will try to have a representative of LCP designated as one of the inspectors at the polls.

At the May 8th meeting, the Town Board of Putnam adopted a Site Plan Review ordinance after a public hearing on the proposed law. The Lake George Association supported the law but presented a letter pointing out specific language within the draft where the terminology is vague. The letter also suggests stiffer regulations as to the development within environmentally sensitive areas, such as flood plains, wetlands and shoreline areas. After discussion, it was decided that Supervisor John LaPointe would bring these suggestions to the attention of the Town Attorney John Brietenbach, who will then make appropriate changes. The Putnam law was apparently modeled after the local laws in the Towns of Hague and Bolton. The LCP directors met with Supervisor LaPointe to discuss the key issues of implementation and enforcement of this new law. LCP also is planning to meet with members of the Hague Town Board, Hague Planning Board and enforcement officer to learn how their law works.

Letter from the President, cont'd.....

LCP intends to act as a facilitator to help effectively implement this new ordinance and see that an appropriate enforcement officer is hired. The next stepping-stone in this process will be enactment of zoning regulations for the Town of Putnam. The Land Use Committee will make this its next priority. The committee is currently assessing what other land use ordinances are actually in place in the Town at this point in time. For example, the Town Board adopted residential zoning ordinances for Glenburnie, Gull Bay, Dark Bay and portions of Black Point in the early seventies.

The Board of Directors met with Supervisor LaPointe during July to go over common concerns for our communities as well as individual community issues. The individual committee members will continue to attend the monthly meetings with the Town, School and Planning Boards to advocate on our issues and monitor activity. LCP representatives will also be attending the individual community associations meetings over the summer to answer any questions and to solicit help for our individual committee efforts.

As said at the outset, we have been extremely pleased with the membership support we have received from all three of the lakeside communities. We have also been very encouraged to find that we have attracted members from all parts of the Town of Putnam who have evidenced their concerns over rising taxes, land use issues and law enforcement as well. We thank you all for your support.

As we formed this organization, one of the concerns expressed was that the use of the name *Lake Communities of Putnam* was divisive which was a real concern. On the other hand, so much of the initial impetus for this organization was from lake residents who felt that their concerns were not being fairly addressed within the Town of Putnam nor their significant financial contribution to the community appreciated. These things coupled with the fact that proportionately so few of us could vote led us to believe that initially our focus should be as an advocate for this large group of disenfranchised taxpayers. Hopefully, as our organization develops, we can become the "Communities of Putnam"

Once again, we urge you to join our membership, register to vote in the Town of Putnam, serve on one of our committees, and provide us with political contacts or other information you think will be helpful in our areas of interest. Please let us know what your concerns are and how we can help.

Thank you,

Dan Gallagher, President

...Are you interested in receiving an e-mail copy of the minutes of the meetings of the Town Board of Putnam? If so, please contact us at LCPutnam@capital.net to be added to the list of e-mail recipients. Thanks to Pat Wilson, Town Clerk of Putnam for arranging this as a courtesy to residents of the Town of Putnam..

Call or e-mail us if you were turned away at the polls!!!

- ❖ **Become a member of LCP**
- ❖ **Contact us with concerns**
- ❖ **Serve on a committee**
- ❖ **Register to Vote**
- ❖ **Send us your email address**
- ❖ **Share your political contacts**

Putnam School System Study

The School Budget in the Town of Putnam and corresponding tax costs to each of us has and will continue to be a matter of individual concern for all taxpayers in the Town of Putnam. The Putnam Central School serves pre-kindergarten through grade six (approximately fifty students). Grades seven through twelve (approximately forty-eight students) attend school in Ticonderoga on a tuition basis. The per student cost of operating the Putnam system is proportionately high because of the economies of scale in operating a small system when there are state mandated requirements that have to be met regardless of student population.

The question of what to do about this situation is an extremely sensitive one for some members of the community and appropriately so because it involves the lives of their children. We appreciate and understand these concerns, but we also believe that as taxpayers we have a right and a responsibility to examine what options are available to our community and the relative costs of those options so that all taxpayers within the Town may make an informed choice.

Accordingly, we are now organizing a committee to study this issue in depth. We hope to enlist members from throughout the Town. We also will ask for help from the School Superintendent and School Board. We would ask some of our members to consider joining in this effort especially if you have any experience in this area.

Property Taxes

At the July directors meeting, we met with Supervisor LaPointe on a variety of issues. Supervisor LaPointe advised us that it was most likely that the Town Board would vote at the September meeting to require a reassessment of all properties within the Town. We have been advocating a deferral of this action for at least one year. The Supervisor firmly believes that this action is best for all because of the State of New York equalization tax which raises the tax rate if Town properties are undervalued on the tax roles. We believe that this action will most likely result in a significant increase in assessments for lakeside properties in excess of the benefit obtained from a reduction in the equalization rate. Please call Supervisor LaPointe to express support for the deferral or attend the August or September Town Meeting.

We remind you that you can request a free copy of "*A Taxpayers Guide: How to File for a Review of Your Assessment*". This document can be obtained by email at www.orps.state.ny.us or by writing to N.Y.S Office of Real Property Service, Public Information Office, Sheridan Hollow Plaza, 16 Sheridan Ave., Albany, NY 12210-2714. This publication is designed to inform taxpayers of their right to review property assessments and to guide you through the assessment review process. It explains how the assessor arrives at your assessment and what options you have if you disagree with the conclusions of June Maniacek, SCCA, Assessor, Town of Putnam (518.798.5723).

The tax rates, especially the Washington County portion, continue to be a major concern. Supervisor LaPointe indicated that the health care element of the county budget is already up 19% this year without anything in place to slow down the rise. We feel that we may need to coordinate our efforts on the county portion of the taxes with other lakeside communities in Washington County to have any impact at this level. We are still in the process of organizing a committee to review how best to protect our members' position in this escalating problem of rising assessments and taxes. Your participation is encouraged. Please contact Bert Windle, Tax/Assessments Chairman at _____ or by telephone at 518.547.8426 if you are interested in serving on this committee or would like to provide information or assistance.

Register to Vote.....

Register to Vote!

Go to your local post office for a Voter Registration Form

Call 1.800.For.Vote

On the Web

www.elections.state.ny.us

US

Write for a Voter's Registration Form or Absentee Ballot

**Washington County Board of Elections
383 Broadway
Fort Edward, NY 12828**

School Board Absentee Ballot

**Putnam Central School,
Lower Road
Putnam Station, NY 12861**

A major objective of LCP is to increase our political presence in the Town of Putnam. In order to do that, we will need the help of our fellow New York neighbors. You can help by transferring your voter registration to Washington County so that you may vote on the upcoming issues of interest to Glenburnie, Gull Bay and Black Point Road. These include the election of School Board members, Town Board members, school budgets and other issues that require approval of registered voters. Our ability to influence the outcome of these elections and budgetary approvals is very important.

In the recent School Board election in Putnam, a voter qualification sheet that was circulated suggested that you must be a "resident of the District at least 30 days prior to the meeting at which he or she offers to vote". Many voters were asked if they had lived in Putnam for the past thirty days. LCP feels this was a misinterpretation of the legal voting requirement. The New York State voter qualification web page requires that you live at your present address at least 30 days to be eligible to *register* to vote. We have also contacted the Director of Public Information of the NY State Board of Elections who has confirmed this is the requirement. Accordingly, a registered voter is not required to reside at their Putnam residence for the thirty days immediately prior to an election. If you have any questions about voting requirements or absentee ballots, please contact us.

How can I transfer my voting site to Washington County?

Fill out a New York State Voter Registration Form and mail it to the Washington County Board of Elections in Fort Edward, NY. You should notify your local County to remove you from their Voter Registration List.

What is required to be eligible to register?

The only requirement is that you be a resident of the County thirty days prior to registering.

What do I do if an election is held and I cannot be in Putnam on that day?

Submit a Washington County Absentee Ballot Application.

What about my concern about local issues where I live during the winter months?

In your winter residence you may be one in 200,000 to 1,000,000. In Putnam you are one in 500. Your vote will be more effective in Putnam. Consider transferring your vote for a few years to see the difference you can make!

How will I be made aware of when the elections will be held, what the issues are and guidance on how to vote?

LCP will publish periodic newsletters keeping you abreast of the issues and candidates as well as making recommendations for your vote.

Have other communities been successful in changing the direction their towns have taken by getting out the vote?

Yes! We will be joining the ranks of many successful summer communities. If we succeed in getting over 200 registered voters, we will be able to make an impact on our Town's future, providing guidance that will make Putnam a better community for all.

Should all eligible members of my family who are New York residents register to vote?

Yes.

Site Plan Review Law Enacted

As a result of the Town Board and Planning Board's review of the 1989 Land Development Study over the winter, the Town Board adopted the Town of Putnam Site Plan Review Law. The intent of the law is "to ensure the optimum overall conservation, protection, preservation, development and use of the natural and man related resources of the Town, by regulating land use activities within the Town through review and approval of site plans".

Any new land use activity in the Town will now require site plan approval except: 1) ordinary repairs and maintenance, 2) alterations which would not increase the square footage or height by more than 25%, 3) nonstructural agricultural or gardening uses not involving substantial timber cutting, 4) temporary produce stands, 5) signs under 4 square feet and 6) temporary garage sales. Land use is defined as any activity that materially changes the use, intensity of use or appearance of any land or structure excluding landscaping and minor grading.

The law requires the submission of a detailed site plan at least two weeks prior to the meeting date at which the plan is to be considered. There is a provision for a sketch plan conference prior to submission of a formal detailed site plan to allow the Planning Board the opportunity to advise the applicant of any potential problems before a detailed plan is prepared. The planning board would also make a determination at that time whether or not a public hearing will be held on the proposed land use. A public hearing is mandated with structures of more than 3000 square feet. There is a lengthy list of standards and considerations to be taken into account in approval such as 1) water quality impacts, 2) minimizing topographic alterations and soil erosion potential, 3) impact on scenic vistas, 4) impact on the character of adjacent existing development, 5) storm water run-off, and 6) aesthetics.

The Planning Board is empowered after a public hearing to adopt procedural rules and regulations to implement the local law. The Planning Board is also empowered to grant waivers where special conditions exist subject to appropriate conditions. There is a provision for a daily fine of \$250 for each day of a violation. Russ Kiggins, who issues building permits within the Town, will now inform all applicants that the site plan review approval is required before permits are issued.

The Putnam Site Plan Review law was modeled after the Towns of Hague and Bolton. The Land Use Committee will review how Hague's Planning Board implements the provisions in their community. LCP will work with our Planning Board to advocate for implementation and enforcement. The key to this law having any impact within our community will be an effective enforcement officer as well as the ultimate adoption of appropriate zoning regulations.

Property Maintenance Code of New York State

In 2002, the State adopted the Property Maintenance Code which sets minimum standards for all *existing* residential and nonresidential structures and premises including standards for safe and sanitary maintenance. The law has specific sections prohibiting trash and rubbish, weeds, excess inoperative vehicles and other unsightly or unsanitary conditions in yards. Supervisor LaPointe indicated that it was intended to return some control to the local authority, in our case the Town of Putnam, to deal with substandard properties or blighting conditions. This law was recently used with some success to require the cleanup of two properties in the Town. The Town has appointed Russ Kiggins, a Washington County employee, as the Town's Code Enforcement Officer as required by the new law.

If you have a property in your area that may be subject to this act, please contact Supervisor LaPointe so that he can have the Code Enforcement Officer review the situation.

Lake George Watershed Conference Meeting

The LCWC held one of its bi-monthly July meetings in the Putnam Town Hall for the first time. The LCWC is a conglomeration of approximately 25 state, local and governmental agencies having jurisdiction over matters affecting Lake George as well as highly involved non-profit organizations such as the Lake George Association and Lake George Land Conservancy. It was formed in August 2001. Several LCP directors and members attended the meeting.

The idea behind the LCWC is to have all interested organizations in the same room on a regular basis to coordinate their efforts and resources and resolve individual concerns on an expedited basis. The LCWC's main goal is water quality in Lake George. They developed a master water management plan with 5-year goals. One of the biggest pollutants in Lake George is sediment so that most of the major projects right now are storm water management systems especially in the more populated areas such as Lake George Village, Bolton Landing and Hague.

The attention is starting to turn to the eastern shore of the Lake, and public and private grants may be available to build storm water management structures around Lake George within Putnam. In reviewing the water management plan, it appears that the Lake George Watershed Conference has already been very helpful with certain projects in Black Point and Gull Bay.

LCP has contacted Dave Decker, the director of the LGWC, to determine if LCP may have a role to play in seeking grants to implement water quality management measures within the Town of Putnam. The issue will be addressed at the August LCP director's meeting.

Lake George Land Conservancy Acquisitions

The LGLC has been very active over the last several years with acquisitions of significant properties within the Town of Putnam. The Flat Rock property and Anthony's Nose acquisitions combined to preserve a truly unique element of the Putnam shoreline. Over the winter, the LGLC made another major acquisition of a parcel of land of approximately 470 acres behind Dark Bay and Gull Bay, which preserved and protected a beautiful Great Blue Heron rookery. Additionally, the LGLC acquired a 200-acre conservation easement over one of the major hillsides in Hague that is within the view shed for many of us in Putnam. The LGLC continues to be active within the Town of Putnam with other targeted sites. LCP extends its thanks for those efforts of which we are all the beneficiaries. The LGLC is currently conducting a capital campaign to replenish some of the funds used in these acquisitions. We encourage you to consider the LGLC in your charitable giving plans.

Annual Meeting

The first annual meeting of Lake Communities of Putnam will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 23, 2003, at the Putnam Town Hall. We encourage you to attend!

Thank you to our New Members

The Board of the LCP is grateful to all of our new Members for your invaluable support. We have not listed names of new members who have joined since our last newsletter, as we were not able to contact everyone for permission. Please let us know if you wish to keep your membership anonymous and your name will not appear on any published lists as a member.

Become a Member of Lake Communities of Putnam, Inc.

Yes, I would like to become a member of LCP

- | Membership Levels | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Founding Member | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Supporting Member | \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Member | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual Member | \$10.00 |

Check Payable to LCP

Please cut out and mail to:
Charles Gerwig, Treasurer
(Summer) 1511 Mosswood Way
Putnam Station, NY 12861

(Winter) 12 Mayfield Terrace
Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Name _____

E-Mail Address _____

- Please send my LCP newsletter via e-mail
- Please add me to the list of Town Board Minutes e-mail recipients

Address (Primary) _____

(Seasonal) _____

Phone (Primary) _____

(Seasonal) _____

- Please keep my membership anonymous and do not include my name in any published document.