

PRESERVE OPEN SPACE WITHOUT THE BOND (6/27/06)

The concepts of the Open Space Committee are admirable and altruistic. Unfortunately, they are not based on reality when they suggest floating a bond for seed money to get these ideas off the ground - a bond that will have to be paid for by the taxpayers of Gardiner. This past week's article in this newspaper regarding open space planning in Gardiner states "that 65 to 75 percent of the people supported paying \$50 more in taxes on a home valued at \$250,000." Fifty dollars for seeding doesn't sound like much, but it is to some on fixed income.

Once the seed begins to grow, what will be the future increases? Private property under the law of eminent domain? Most of us in Gardiner supported intelligent zoning change as a guarantee against urban sprawl. If this plan is implemented, there is a good chance people will look back on the people planning this not with a smile but with a frown, as they observe the demise of a multigenerational and multieconomic community and the birth of a Gilded Age in Gardiner, which excludes the young and the old.

A better plan needs to be developed without floating a bond and increased taxes. Taxes do hurt people! Go back to the drawing board, Open Space Committee, and create a plan that includes the enhancement of the quality of life for all Gardinerites and not a select group who can pay more taxes. The Ridge was saved with perseverance, and that quality needs to be drawn upon now. A good marriage of development and conservation can be achieved without making the union into a shotgun wedding with the hasty proposal of floating a bond. I say No to the bond and No to increased taxes.

Perhaps everyone who can afford it could donate \$50 to the local land conservancy group for the protection of local land?

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