

Snookered? I think so! By Marion Kells (October 4, 2006)

☐ September 27 Freeman editorial voiced hope that the Gardiner \$1.5 million bond referendum will not be anti-development. And, if The Freeman has been persuaded that it isn't, they have been, to use their own word, "snookered".

☐ According to the Gardiner Open Space Committee, the bond will be used as seed money to fund purchase of land to keep it undeveloped. And as "seed money" it will spark grants for further purchases and start the snow-ball effect of keeping more and more land undeveloped. No cap has been set on how much of Gardiner will be "undeveloped". Estimates have between 18 and 25 percent of Gardiner already permanently protected. ☐

☐ Up to now the owner of a sizeable piece of land could look forward either to continuing to pay taxes on it for the privilege of having all that space around him, or he could plan to develop and allow homes to be built where people could live. Now, the pressure is on him either to go into some kind of land preservation/conservation scheme, or risk losing out on his development potential when the new zoning laws are passed. These new laws are being written at this moment, and promise to be restrictive and exclusionary. And just to insure that no bad-guy developer can sneak in in the near future, the moratorium now in effect, is about to be extended.

☐ In addition to the \$1.5 million bond, Gardiner's open space plan calls for setting up a fund dedicated to purchasing even more land for the purpose of keeping it undeveloped. Tax money could be funneled into the fund without a by your leave from taxpayers.

☐ So, if all this isn't "anti-development", maybe we had better redefine that term.
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