

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

July 2000, Issue 117

Geology of Greenville

The Geology of Greenville was the topic of the night, and it was a good thing we were in the large community room because about fifty adults and children came out to listen to Bob Titus.

I was tempted to capture the details of his one hour slide-and-lecture presentation but felt I probably would not do it justice. Suffice to say, I think most people enjoyed the program and his August 2nd program (7 pm, Community Room, sponsored by Library) on Greenville and the Ice Age will be another standout program.

Bob, who is a professor at Hartwick and resides in Greenville, talked about what Greenville would be like 370-390 million years ago, with its seas and mountains in the region. Two of his books, *The Catskills: A Geological Guide* and *The Catskills in the Ice Age*, give a good background of his lecture and more detail about the topic.

Our next meeting is a share session on August 14th.

Here's the summer reminder about subscriptions. A date on your mailing label of 0101 or higher (01 for year, 01 for January) means you are set until the winter reminder. A 0007 means this month is the last one of this subscription. A five dollar annual subscription (if check, make out to Don Teator) and mail to Don Teator, 3979 Rt 67, Freehold, NY 12431. Also, as your 911 address changes, let me know by re-subscription notice, phone call, or whenever we meet. Thank you.



A big PS 1 and PS 2:

First, big PS 1:

If there is one more meeting I would ask you to attend, it would be the Town Board Public Hearing on Zoning on Wednesday, July 19th at

7:30 pm. The draft proposal is available in the Town Office (library, upstairs). I encourage you to look it over and express your opinion.

Allow me to offer my opinion, and try to influence you to do the following. I think the Town Board needs to hear the following three opinions:

1. Any new building in the hamlets should fit in with the community.
2. Any tearing down of historic structures should be reviewed.
3. The current two acre minimum for hamlet residential is still a good policy.

Please, if you care about any of these three, you need to be at the hearing and voice your opinion. If you cannot attend the hearing, try to call each board member (Brian Wickes, Ted Nugent, Lou Kraker, Kevin Lewis, and Greg Seeley).

And now a little background for each.

Greenville, Freehold, and Norton Hill each have a general commercial zone (GC, proposed to be renamed Hamlet Business to differentiate them from the other GC areas) surrounded by a hamlet residential area (HR). Greenville Center has no GC zone but has an HR zone. These areas approximately are: Greenville: (about Hill Street to Irving Rd on Rt 32, the school to Hill Street on Rt 81), Freehold:(about one-quarter mile from the corners), Norton Hill: (roughly, the park to the first hill out of town), and Greenville Center: (a few hundred yards from the corners).

These areas are the town's most densely populated areas. Numbers 1, 2, 3 above apply **only** to these areas in the town.

For #1, the new proposal is that every new house or addition (anything requiring a building permit) in the hamlet areas, in addition to past requirements, would also have the Planning Board consider how

appropriate the building is (page 11, item C). These include compatibility with the neighborhood, visual harmony, etc.

For #2, the new proposal is that any demolition in these hamlet areas would be reviewed by the Planning Board. Exceptions include safety and welfare of the public (in the current law) and age of structure less than 30 years (proposed). Although this would not absolutely prevent a Sherrill House from being razed, it would mean someone in town would have reviewed the situation first. In addition, a demolition is allowed if the owner can show grounds for hardship (pages 26 & 27). **EMPHASIS:** If the Town Board does not accept this proposal, the tearing down of more historic houses will occur just as it did to the Sherrill House, with no community input.

For #3, there is no new proposal. I think, personally and as a Planning Board member, that the current law is a good one. However, there are a few voices for the lowering of minimum lot size from the current two acres to as small as one-half acre or one acre.

Anyone familiar with Greenville's sewage problem knows some runoff of septic is occurring. Given the alternatives, it appears that a sewage plant for Greenville hamlet is the only way to fix this waste problem. In the past, the expense of such a plant has been too high for reasonable consideration.

I feel that the lowering of the acreage minimum, and allowing more septic, would worsen the problem. At least one town board member thinks we need to have more population density to afford the costs of a sewage plant. As a planning board member, I think the sewage plant comes first, and then the decreased lot size. To do it the other way, to allow more houses before sewage plant, is to encourage more waste flowing down the creek. Furthermore, the people who paid to put in their own septic tank would then have to pay for hook-up to the town sewage if the plant got built.

Furthermore, a decrease of lot size in the hamlet residential zone is contrary to the 1989 Master Plan for Greenville

Thus, keep the two acre minimum for now.

There are other changes in the zoning proposal that you might be interested in. However, as a group of people who are interested in the history and character of town, these are the topics we have talked about this past year. I repeat, if there is one town meeting to go to this year, this one is the one. Although the Greenville Local History Group has pointedly made it clear that it will not enter the political fray as a group, each one of us, as individuals, **should make our voice heard** on this issue.

Now, big PS 2:

The topic of the Presbyterian Church arose at the July Town Board meeting. Many of the details of negotiations, if any, are in process.

One of the strong points made by the Supervisor is that he has heard very little comment about the use of the church. To paraphrase, it would make little sense for the town to purchase the church if there is no purpose or use for it. If the Supervisor and Town Board continue to hear very little, they will take it as a sign that the town does not support a town use of the church. If you have an idea, or feel the town should purchase the church, please CALL 966-5055 (the town office number) and leave a message for every town board member. To be blunt, based on what I thought I heard at this board meeting, if you care about the church and don't voice your support for it, then you have not done your share in trying to have the town protect (purchase) it. (It is possible that a third party could buy the church and do what it wants.)

Furthermore, the Supervisor needs to know what resources, talents, means, efforts, etc., you can bring to this venture. Do you have certain areas of expertise, volunteer time, money, etc., that would help the town purchase/utilize the church?

Again, if you want the town to try to protect/purchase this landmark church, you need to tell the town board.

I half-apologize for being so preachy but part of the purpose of our group is to support those efforts that will preserve the history and historic nature of our community. Now is one of those times when your voice is needed. Bring someone with you.