

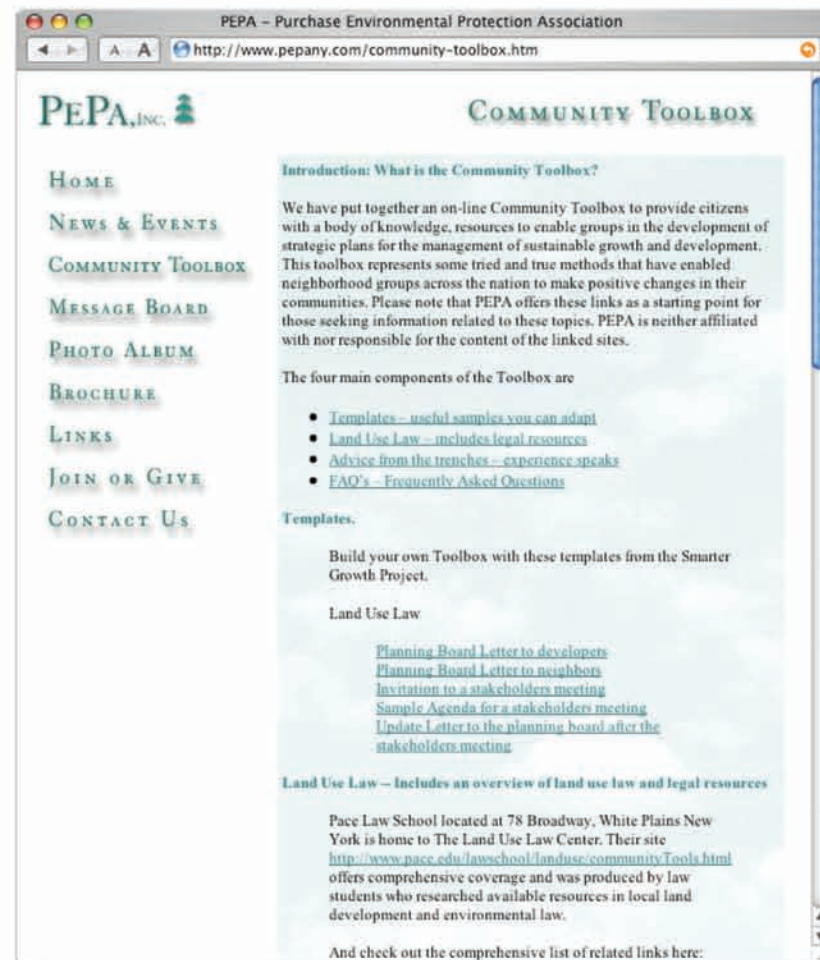
the PEPA Perspective

The Newsletter of the Purchase Environmental Protective Association

Community Toolbox

Community toolbox offers an online resource for groups similar to PEPA, creating plans to manage development while preserving the local environment, historical sites and recreational opportunities. It consists of templates for letters to developers, neighbors and planning boards; detailed links for background on land-use laws; advice on strategy, negotiation and mediation for land development issues; and responses to frequently-asked questions (FAQs).

The toolbox is designed to empower residents of local communities who may feel overwhelmed by professional lawyers and support staff hired by economic interests. Its purpose, to provide a counterweight to these interests, is achieved by pooling the resources of local groups throughout the country. Please visit www.pepany.com to access the toolbox. ■



Welcome



Anne Gold
Executive Director
PEPA

Dear Neighbor,

A new Master Plan will soon be unveiled by the Town/Village of Harrison (TVH) Board for public comment. The Plan will dictate, regulate, and control growth through detailed guidelines on community development. A sound Master Plan will also prevent an office park developer from overturning the preservation victories of PEPA over the past 25 years.

We must do everything necessary to protect the current harmonious balance between the environment and economy. Let's work together to ensure our Master Plan contains suggestions for open space and healthy recreation, and prohibits townhouse zoning in residential areas. An effective Master Plan is an indispensable tool to prevent suburban sprawl, preserve open spaces, and maintain the special character of our village.

We have also included an update on the status of a construction site near the Hutchinson River Parkway and Purchase Street.

Please consider these issues thoughtfully. In the end, we will benefit from proper land management.

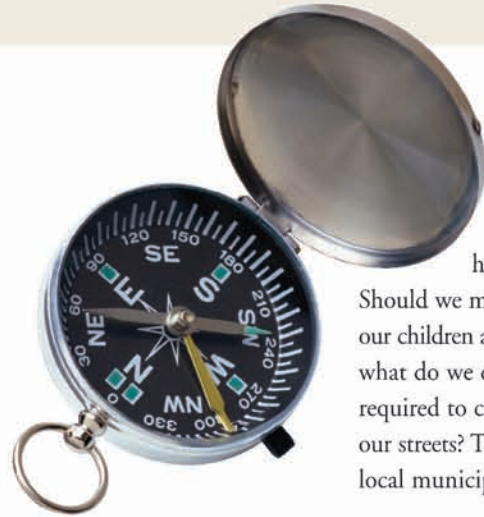
Sincerely,

Anne Gold, Executive Director
PEPA

PEPA Board of Directors

- Michael Tokarz, Chairman
- Richard Berman
- Earl Doppelt
- Peter Flannigan
- Fran Klingenstein

The Role of a Master Plan



The rural, open nature of Purchase is threatened, and we must define and enforce our vision for the future to preserve it. Ultimately, we must decide how to approach economic development.

Should we maintain public open spaces and parks for our children and grandchildren? If a country club closes, what do we do with the land? Should builders be required to construct access roads instead of clogging our streets? The Town/Village of Harrison, like most local municipalities, makes these land-use decisions.

For the common good, general land development laws, special permits and variances must be prepared and adopted through a public process. Lawmakers establish a Master Plan with citizen support as the first and most essential step in this process. The Plan serves as a road map of future growth for the planning

Harrison's Master Planning Committee invited Anne Gold, Executive Director of PEPA, to attend a meeting on October 27, 2005 to talk about the Purchase sector. After thorough discussions with the town planner, the Mayor's office, consultants from BFJ Planning and other Purchase residents, she realized current regulations could be used to prevent building on "Parcel B" and preserve the historical Ophir Farm Estate. Specifically, before any additional development may be considered along Manhattanville Road, it must first be closed at Purchase Street and connected to Corporate Park Drive with an egress to Westchester Avenue.

This requirement was discussed at the meeting and recorded in a letter sent to all participants from the Mayor's office on November 22, 2005. For a copy of the letter or a free booklet about the historic Ophir Farm Estate, please contact PEPA.

board, zoning board and town council. It can outline appropriate buildings and land uses for every parcel in Harrison and will issue rules for all development.

Builders, typically, ask for amendments but the burden of proof shifts to them, and these proposals are often mired in controversy. That's why PEPA is focusing so intently upon the Plan's revision. PEPA urges Purchase residents to attend the upcoming town meeting to discuss Harrison's Master Plan.

We will publicize the date of the town hearing as soon as it is scheduled. Please feel free to call the PEPA office at 914-323-5360 for more information about the Master Plan. For an update on hearing dates and other events, or to receive an online version of the PEPA Perspective, please send your email address to info@pepany.com. ■

Townhouse Zoning and Development

In Spring 2005, a developer appeared before the Harrison Planning Board for permission to build a townhouse complex called "Riverbend" near Mamaroneck Avenue and Winfield Road.

Upon further study, the planning board realized there was no precedent for this type of structure, making it difficult to render a decision. Therefore, the board asked the applicant/developer to conduct a comprehensive study of the economic and environmental impact of townhouse development. The resulting treatise, "Harrison Corridor Studies Potential Townhouse

Development," was presented to the Town Board on March 28, 2006 and contains many inaccuracies.

PEPA believes townhouses should only be allowed if specifically permitted in the Master Plan. Accordingly, we have submitted a written request to Mayor Malfitano's office to postpone hearings on townhouses and the current developer's application until it is addressed in the new Master Plan. Mass-produced residential units could destroy the special nature of our town through crowded building lots, dense traffic, reduction of open spaces and architectural conformity. ■



Construction Yard Looms Over PEPA Beautification Sites

Responding to community complaints, PEPA has been working to close the construction yard at the intersection of the Hutchinson River Parkway and Purchase Street.

Originally, the yard was established to support renovation of the Parkway up to the Connecticut line. PEPA was surprised, therefore, when it remained after completion of the project two years ago and became a satellite location for myriad DOT construction projects, many of them miles away. The bucolic residential area remains marred by cement barriers piled over 15 feet high.

The yard is particularly disconcerting because businesses, residents and PEPA have beautified the area in many other ways. Across the street, MasterCard is landscaping their entrance and installing new unobtrusive signage. A few yards away, residents have planted trees and bushes on their property along both sides of Purchase Street. In addition, PEPA, the Town of Harrison and Morgan Stanley have worked together to create a beautiful, triangular village entrance at the intersection of Purchase Street and Westchester Avenue.

In July 2004, PEPA contacted Robert Dennison, the regional director for the DOT, regarding the construction yard. A written reply promised the area would be returned to its original condition last Fall. The DOT recently vowed the yard would be restored by the end of October. PEPA hopes they will meet this self-imposed deadline, but we remain skeptical based on past performance and the lack of any cleanup to date. ■

