

Why every taxpayer in White Plains should oppose the French American School's Plans for the former Ridgeway Country Club Property:

All taxpayers in White Plains should oppose the project because all White Plains taxpayers will have to pay for the French School's plans now and in the future.

You will be paying ...

- **\$284,000+ in real property taxes each and every year.**
 - The French School is tax exempt.
 - It will not pay real estate taxes to the City
 - It will not pay real estate taxes to the School District
 - It will not pay real estate taxes to the County.
 - In 2010, Ridgeway Country Club paid \$284,000 in real estate taxes. Since 2005, the Club has paid \$2,364,000 in real estate taxes.
 - **The tax burden for the property will now be spread to the other taxpayers of White Plains.**

- **\$600,000+ in estimated lost sales tax revenue annually.**
 - The French School's tax exempt status means that it will not contribute any sales taxes to the City, County or State. When the property was operated by the Club, all membership dues, food, beverages and supplies were subject to sales taxation. Not so for the French School.
 - **The taxpayers of White Plains will have to make up the difference in lost sales tax revenue.**
 - If the French School's application is denied by the Council, the property could be sold to a taxpaying enterprise such as another golf course operator.

- **\$1,000,000+ in estimated infrastructure costs.**
 - The French School's multiple building educational complex will bring 1,200 students and 200+ faculty and staff to White Plains each school day.
 - The local storm and sanitary sewer systems will likely have to be expanded and upgraded.
 - The water supply system will also potentially need an upgrade.
 - Ridgeway will have to be widened with additional turning lanes and a new traffic signal installed.
 - Public Safety (fire and police) will have to protect the new complex and the 1,400+ people using it.
 - Although the City can demand that the French School take on the cost of some of this expense, **the taxpayers of White Plains will need to bear the remaining financial burden.**

- **Plus, any land the French School will not (and likely cannot) develop will be the responsibility of the White Plains taxpayer to manage, maintain and secure.**
 - Currently all of the 128 acre property is privately maintained.
 - The French School plans to transfer the obligation of maintaining 60+ acres of the property to the City claiming it will be a "gift" to the City.
 - The French School does not want this so-called gift of open space because it is largely undevelopable and costly to maintain – it prefers for White Plains taxpayers pay for these expenses.
 - The property cannot simply be left to return to its "natural state". A golf course is a manufactured environment. At the very least, the existing extensive irrigation system would have to be reconfigured or dismantled and the serious flooding problems addressed at taxpayer expense.
 - **The taxpayers of White Plains will be paying for the maintenance and management of the property and the security of the property and the surrounding neighborhoods.**

Every White Plains taxpayer will be paying additional taxes, each and every year, to accommodate the French School's plans for the former Ridgeway Country Club property.

This is not just about additional financial burdens at a time of unusual economic strain on the City's taxpayers' resources. Please also consider:

Violation of the City's Comprehensive Plan –

- The French School's construction of a multiple building complex would significantly increase the density of the use of the property and would violate the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- The density of the proposed school is more comparable to a university which is not permitted in the current zoning for the golf course property.
- Converting the open space of Ridgeway Country Club to an active regional educational complex sets a precedent for the potential conversion of other open spaces in the future. Westchester Hills Golf Club, Burke Hospital and New York Presbyterian Hospital could be developed which will irreparably alter the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods and the City.
- The Comprehensive Plan calls for the property to be used as a golf course. There are many well managed golf courses throughout the county. The property could be a financial success as a golf course under proper management.
- The proposed educational complex will be much larger than other existing regional private schools in White Plains:
 - The German School and Solomon Schechter School each have fewer than 400 students: one third the size of the proposed French School.
 - Archbishop Stepinac High School has fewer than 600 students, half the size of French School's 1,200.

Environmental Impacts -

Ground Water Hydrology and Storm Water System:

- The property cannot accommodate additional impervious coverage given the existing well documented flooding conditions on the golf course.
- There is little or no excess capacity left in the municipal storm water piping system in the Mamaroneck River Drainage Basin.

Sanitary Sewers:

- The sanitary sewer system are currently at capacity and is infiltrated by storm water during heavy rainfall causing basement flooding and overflow of raw sewerage into basements and local streams.
- The system is approaching 100 years of service; to accommodate the French School's regional educational complex will require an extensive public works project to rebuild the system to accommodate the "spikes" from this new facility.

Water Supply:

- The public water supply system is based upon low density residential development: the addition of 1,200 students plus teachers and staff will place significant new demands on the system.
- Protecting against diminished water service and compromised fire protection is likely to require the costly installation of new transmission mains connecting to other parts of the City and drawing water from these locations to service the French School.

Traffic Impacts –

- The introduction of cars and buses carrying 1,200 students plus faculty and staff onto the neighborhood's streets twice a day, every school day, will certainly cause unmanageable traffic congestion and pollution.
- The prospect of an increase of 700 new vehicles in and around the neighborhood, as represented by the French School's own consultant, will irrevocably transform Ridgeway from a neighborhood street to a regional arterial roadway.
- Even staggering arrival/departure times, as proposed, can't possibly alleviate this added volume sufficiently.

Special Use Permits Can Be Denied –

- Contrary to what you may have been hearing from the French School's public relations campaign, it is not entitled to a Special Permit.
- The French School must apply for a Special Permit in a residential zone. It must comply with the provisions of the City's Zoning Ordinance. If their proposed plans do not conform to the provisions, the Common Council can and should deny the application.

Please let the Mayor and the members of our Common Council know what you think of the French School's plans for your tax dollars. For more information and to donate to our efforts to stop the French School's plans, please visit our website gedneyfarms.net.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Terence

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