



WOODSTOCK LAND CONSERVANCY

November 16, 2009

LETTER TO EDITOR:

We at the Woodstock Land Conservancy are honored to accept the Comeau Easement from the Woodstock Town Board, as well as the amendment to create a Stewardship Plan for the property. Along with this honor, we are fully cognizant of the long-term commitment and substantial responsibility we take on in pledging to protect and conserve this treasured and well-used 76-acre parcel “in perpetuity.”

As most in Woodstock know, this is the culmination of a long process that began well before the November 2003 referendum, when the public overwhelmingly approved the easement. Many people have given generously of their time and energy to ensure that this land would be protected in its natural state for future generations, and we are all in their debt. Some of the people we specifically want to thank here include Marge Farnett and George Spiotta, for their leadership on the Comeau Advisory Committee; Attorney Bill Ginsberg for his pro bono work crafting the original easement document; Dale Hughes, former WLC Executive Director who worked long and hard on the easement; former Supervisor Jeremy Wilbur and the former Town Board members for their vision and leadership in the early stages of the process; WLC’s long-time counsel Jerry Wapner for his sage guidance throughout the course of the legal case and appeals; and attorney Jeffrey P. Siegel for his untiring efforts and inspired contributions to move the Comeau Easement to completion.

We also want to thank Supervisor Moran, the entire current Town Board and their attorney in this matter, Steven Barshov. In particular, we’re grateful that they immediately recognized the value of the Stewardship Plan amendment that we proposed. We believe this plan will be the best way to balance public uses of the Comeau property and the protection that the easement intends. Its adoption will both ensure compliance with the terms of the easement and also give the many people who love the Comeau a chance to step up and become involved in its ongoing care and use.

Woodstock Land Conservancy is committed to a partnership model of easement stewardship, and we recognize the tireless efforts and advocacy of such groups as the Comeau Advisory Committee, Comeau Trails Task Force, the Parks and Recreation Committee, the Comeau Users Group, the Woodstock Soccer League, Friends of Comeau, and many others. Their devotion and investments in working together to keep Comeau beautiful, environmentally healthy and accessible bode well, we feel, for our mutual efforts to conserve the Comeau property.

With the Comeau Easement and the Stewardship Plan as a framework, and with the support of our friends throughout Woodstock and beyond, we at the Conservancy look forward to working closely with the Town Board and citizens to realize protection of Comeau, a beloved and valuable Woodstock resource, now and long into the future.

Kevin Smith, President and John Winter, Executive Director
Woodstock Land Conservancy

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