



Annual Meeting of FHIA

The annual meeting of the Forest Home Improvement Association will be in November. The specific date of the meeting will be announced very soon

Update on Forest Home Traffic Calming



On Wednesday, October 3, thirty-three Forest Home neighbors gathered in the Chapel basement to discuss the Forest Home Traffic Calming Plan. After going around the room twice collecting comments, clear themes emerged regarding what was liked and what was of concern in the report. It was apparent by the end of the meeting that Forest Home wants the Town to proceed immediately with uncontroversial traffic calming features.

Speed tables were well received—many want to see them implemented as soon as possible. There was also overwhelming support for improving pedestrian and bike safety. Although people were glad that the plan was done and were impressed by the amount of work reflected in the document, concerns did emerge around specific recommendations. Many thought cobbles and narrow roads would endanger bicyclists. While all agreed that pedestrians need safe paths, several people felt that replicating the Judd Falls configuration on other streets might not be the best solution. (A complete summary of comments from the meeting will soon be made available on the FHIA website.)

Those in attendance agreed that the best course of action is to deliver the report to the Town without revisions. I will write a letter of transmittal stressing the importance of moving forward and inviting the Town to work with the FHIA and community as it proceeds toward implementation.

As we move into a new stage of Forest Home Traffic Calming, I would like to take one last opportunity to thank all the members of the former Traffic Calming Committee for their years of work and their dedication to Forest Home.

On a personal note, as president, I have spent much of the past year in conversation with the Town and Cornell about traffic calming. My goal was to gather as much information as possible regarding how the specifics of our report fit with the Town of Ithaca Transportation Plan, the transportation-focused Generic Environmental Impact Statement (t-GEIS) for Cornell, and the Cornell Comprehensive Master Plan. What I found is that there are many points of overlap which will help Forest Home achieve its goal of safer roads in the immediate future. I look forward to sharing those details with you at the annual meeting next month.

Darcy Binns

President, Forest Home Improvement Association



Forest Home & Cornell's Plans

Cornell is nearing the end of two major planning efforts to manage its growth over the coming decades. It's also moving forward on an ambitious slate of construction projects and changes to its infrastructure. All of this, I think, should be of interest to Forest Home.

Master Plan and Transportation Plan

The Comprehensive Master Plan "will guide the long-term physical development of the Ithaca campus... over the next 10 to 25 years." The transportation-focused Generic Environmental Impact Statement, or t-GEIS, seeks "to identify, examine, and evaluate the transportation-related impacts on the surrounding community of hypothetical population growth at Cornell University over the next ten years... [and] explore possible mitigations to these impacts."

The FHIA has taken advantage of every opportunity for public engagement in both processes, and has been very clear about our neighborhood's desire to remain a quiet, safe, beautiful, family-friendly residential area far into the future. Although neither plan is complete, the signs so far are encouraging.

Cornell expects to add about 1 million square feet of floor space per decade. The Master Plan will call for increased density on central campus rather than sprawl. (The exceptions are proposals to create a new multi-use complex in the East Hill Plaza area and expanded athletic facilities near Game Farm Road.) As it now stands, the plan leaves Forest Home untouched. In fact, it seeks to divert some traffic away from us by reconfiguring the intersection of Pleasant Grove Road and Cradit Farm Road so vehicles coming from Community Corners would have to make a hard left turn to go down the hill toward the downstream bridge. This could be a real benefit for our own traffic calming efforts.

On the subject of traffic, the t-GEIS planners have told us that their overarching goal is to reduce (or at least not increase) the number of vehicles moving to and from campus as the Cornell population grows. Among the measures they are looking at are more park-and-ride lots, improvements to walkways and road crossings, construction of new off-road bicycle and pedestrian trails, creation of dedicated bike lanes and bike centers, incentives for bus riding and telecommuting, and vanpools and carsharing for staff living in outlying areas (a pilot carsharing program is starting up soon).

The Master Plan should be presented to the University's Board of Trustees in March 2008. The t-GEIS is scheduled for completion by February. Both projects will hold more public meetings as they move toward producing final recommendations. We will keep you posted about those. Meanwhile, please take a look at their websites and let me or any FHIA officer know if anything concerns (or excites) you:

Cornell Comprehensive Master Plan -- <http://www.masterplan.cornell.edu/>

t-GEIS Project -- <http://www.tgeisproject.org/>

Communication Between FHIA & Cornell

The FHIA has been in almost constant communication with Cornell administration about issues of concern to our neighborhood. FHIA officers and members have participated actively in all public hearings, workshops and open houses for both the t-GEIS and Master Plan, and we have had numerous conversations with individual planners and administrators. We have organized and attended public and private meetings about deer management, and have met (and will meet again shortly) with the vet school about the proposed Animal Health Diagnostic Center.

The most regular opportunity for communication about Cornell's plans and projects is through the University Neighborhoods Council (UNC), where residents of Bryant Park, Cayuga Heights, Cornell Heights, Ellis Hollow, Forest Home, University Hill and Varna meet with University administrators to discuss a wide variety of issues of shared concern. Meetings, which are open to the public, are the third Tuesday of every month at 7 pm, generally at the new East Hill Office Building, 395 Pine Tree Rd., Room 140. It would be great to see more Forest Homers there!

Please contact me or any other officer if there are other issues you think the FHIA should be addressing. And please plan to attend the FHIA's annual meeting. It's a great place to discuss whatever is on your mind, and to volunteer to get involved.

Jon Miller
FHIA representative on the UNC
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Please Control Japanese Knotweed



Forest Home is about to be taken over by one of the most aggressive invasive non-native plants ever introduced to the northeastern United States: Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*). It threatens to do to the Northeast what kudzu has done to the South. It is sometimes called Japanese bamboo or Mexican bamboo, but it is not a bamboo at all, being a dicot and a member of the buckwheat family.

Once established, Japanese knotweed is extremely difficult to eradicate. If you have it on your property, I urge you to pull it or cut it off, and spray new sprouts with herbicide. It will still come back, but with persistence it can be eliminated.

If you are not familiar with the plant, the largest stand of it in Forest Home is along the creek beside the upstream bridge. It has 4-inch heart-shaped sessile leaves and clusters of cream to white flowers. Seeds are small and are spread by the wind. It also spreads by underground runners. Smaller stands of it can be seen on several Forest Home properties—undoubtedly spread from the said very large stand of it. If we don't concertedly attack it, it will surely take over Forest Home. It is a far more treacherous invader than garlic mustard or purple loosestrife, making them look like amateur invaders.

I don't know it for sure, but I would bet that the administrators of the Cornell Plantations are looking across the creek at the very large stand of Japanese knotweed with trepidation, because it will soon be growing on the Plantations, if it is not already.

Please kill any Japanese knotweed that appears on your property, for the benefit of your neighbors, if not for yourselves. The plant just doesn't have any virtues!

Alan Mark Fletcher

Call for a Forest Home Historic Preservation Group

Forest Home is rich in history. There is much important work that should be done to preserve this history, including securing old mill foundations, interviewing residents, collecting photographs and other family documents, and identifying houses that should be on the National Historic Register. In addition, it would be a great benefit to the community to be able to disseminate this historical information by building models of how the hamlet once looked, creating a working mill, and developing other similar projects.

If you are interested in helping to establish a working group dedicated to such preservation and historical education, please contact Karen Westmont, 227-2954.

More Ways to Contribute!

The FHIA needs your energy and ideas! Here are some ways you can contribute:

- Volunteer to be an officer (see below)
- Help organize a community event
- Share your ideas about issues of concern
- Give a talk or presentation
- Organize a work party
- Write an article, poem or essay for the newsletter
- Attend meetings of the University Neighborhoods Council

Send an e-mail to foresthomenews@gmail.com and let us know what you'd like to do!

FHIA Candidates Needed

The FHIA is preparing for the election of officers at the upcoming 2007 annual meeting. According to the By-Laws, officers are the President, Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer. In recent years we have had both a Secretary and Treasurer, which has worked very well.

The officers represent the FHIA before public officials and Cornell administration; keep the neighborhood up to date on issues of interest; organize community meetings as needed; and organize social, cultural and educational events. Responsibilities include occasional meetings and frequent e-mails and phone calls.

Two of the current officers have expressed an interest in running again, but two are leaving. If you'd like to toss your hat in the ring, please contact Jon Miller at mil@twcnny.rr.com or 266-0962.