

IMAGINE AMENIA

NEWSLETTER

www.imagineamenia.org

AUGUST 2007

WHY CALL IT ImagineAmenia?

Imagination is the ability to see and think of things that are not immediately present to your senses.

Imagination is an active, rather than a passive ability.

Imagination makes it possible to plan.

Imagination allows you to think how things can be better than they are.

Imagination lets you predict what something done today will lead to tomorrow.

Without **Imagination** there can be no sense of horror.



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Come to ImagineAmenia's Annual General Meeting & BBQ!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2007, beginning at 1:00 p.m.
at the AMENIA FISH AND GAME CLUB,
ROUTE 22 SOUTH, AMENIA

All ImagineAmenia members and Amenia residents are cordially invited to attend. If you are not yet a member you are very welcome to join at the door, though membership is not required for attendance.

We will have reports on the year's work from ImagineAmenia's President and Treasurer, and plans for the future, followed by questions and discussion. There will be elections to fill four vacancies on the Board.

This year's featured speaker will be James Sheldon, Founder of "Little Town Views" and his topic will be: "Future Development in Amenia and Its Impact on Your Property Taxes."

James Sheldon is the founder and continuing motivator of Little Town Views, a community catalyst designed to inform the debates on issues affecting small towns in Dutchess and Columbia counties. He and his family live in the Town of Gallatin. He has worked as an investment manager and adviser, and financial journalist. His analyses of small town development and fiscal issues have become authoritative and compelling reading. He is a noted speaker on these issues. After his presentation, Mr. Sheldon will invite discussion and take questions.

Also, meet and greet the candidates running in Amenia's 2007 Town Board elections! We have invited all of them to attend and be presented (see page 2, inside for a full listing).

A BBQ will follow the adjournment (complimentary for ImagineAmenia members; \$5 per person for non-members), refreshments, and opportunity to meet and greet the candidates.

AMENIA'S TOWN BOARD ELECTIONS, 2007

Elections 101, for your information:

The Amenia Town Board has five members, including the Supervisor.

The current Supervisor is Janet Reagon. The other four Board members are: Vicki Doyle, Wayne Euvrard, Victoria Perotti, and Roger Russell.

The Supervisor's term of office is for two years. The other Board members serve for four years. All are re-electable (no term limits).

In 2007, the seats currently held by Janet Reagon, Vicki Doyle, and Roger Russell are up for election.

On September 18th we will have Primary Elections to determine who will represent the political parties in the General Elections (assuming there are more candidates from a political party than seats available).

On November 6 we will have General Elections for Supervisor and for two Board seats.

Who's Running? (and on which Party Lines?)

FOR SUPERVISOR:

Wayne M. Euvrard (Rep. & Working Fam.)
Janet M. Reagon (Dem.)

FOR TOWN BOARD MEMBER:

Norman R. Cayea (Rep. & Cons.)
Glenn Calderelli (Work. Fam.)
Michael M. Chamberlin (Rep.)
Victoria A. Doyle (Dem. & Rep.)
Evelyn F. O'Connell (Rep.)
Joel E. Pelkey (Dem. & Work. Fam.)
Robert H. Riemer (Dem.)

Because each party has only one candidate for the one position, there will be no Primary Election for Supervisor.

There will be Primaries to determine who will be the two official Democratic and two official Republican Party candidates to run in the General Election for the two Town Board seats. Only registered Democratic Party voters may vote in the Democratic Party primary. Only registered Republicans may vote in the Republican Party primary. Non-party and independent registrants may not vote in primaries.

IF YOU ARE A REGISTERED DEMOCRATIC OR REPUBLICAN PARTY VOTER IN AMENIA, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU COME OUT TO RECORD YOUR VOTE IN THIS YEAR'S PRIMARY ELECTIONS.

ImagineAmenia's Endorsements

The Board of IA recommends you cast your two Primary votes, as follows:

If you are a **registered Democrat**: vote for

- ✓ **Vicki (Victoria) Doyle**
- ✓ **Robert Riemer**

If you are a **registered Republican** vote for

- ✓ **Vicki (Victoria) Doyle**
- ✓ **Michael Chamberlin**

Heave a B-I-G sigh of relief!!!

The Amenia Town Board adopted the Comprehensive Plan and new Zoning laws on July 19!

Congratulations to all concerned — especially the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) that labored long and hard to produce the forward-looking, innovative Plan.

As far as ImagineAmenia is concerned, we're happy to award ourselves a pat on the back — we supported CPIC and the Board majority that voted for the Plan all the way.

And we intend to continue to do so.

There are those of us who believe that adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is the single most important event in the Town's recent history. But after the adoption comes the implementation — and there's the rub.

The Town Board was split — three members (Supervisor Janet Reagon, Councilwoman Vicki Doyle, and Councilman Roger Russell) voted For. But two members (Councilman Wayne Euvrard and Councilwoman Victoria Perotti) voted Against. Unfortunately, we're already seeing foot-dragging and nit-picking, as we move along the path of implementation, especially from Wayne Euvrard.

This is unfortunate. Maybe to be expected, but still unfortunate. In a democracy, we air our differences vigorously before the vote, but once the vote has resolved the issue one way or another, we give the majority a clear chance to make it work. We certainly don't need petty obstructionism.

In any case, we are incredibly fortunate in having Janet Reagon as our town Supervisor!

We don't think there's a smarter, more focused Town Supervisor anywhere. She taught history at Webutuck High School — now she's helping to make town history. She's a superbly intelligent decision maker. She cares about everyone in the town, but she belongs to no one. She is her own person. That's not to say she goes it alone. She's adept at asking for and taking advice. She listens carefully to opposing views. And when she hears a good reason why she should take a different line from her personal view, she's the first person to say, "That's good, that's smart, let's incorporate that — now."

Just in case you didn't attend CPIC meetings, we want to remind you why we wanted (and needed) that plan so much for Amenia.

[1] **In a nutshell**, the plan preserves what we have and lays out correct future growth: highest-density clustered around the town center...then next a band of Hamlet Residential and Hamlet Mixed-Use areas with less density, and then Suburban Residential, i.e., larger lots with fewer houses as you go farther out. So you end up with a Town Center surrounded by increasingly rural residences.

[2] **Introduces and puts into law**, the concept of Hamlet Scale & Character. Scale means no huge outsize "developments." Character means the right kinds of structure (like no auto repair facility or big box store stuck between two residential lots).

[3] **Preserves open space** and the green beauty of Amenia. The Site Plan Review will ensure that 80% (wow!) of the land in large developments be preserved as open space.

[4] **Fights mindless sprawl** and thus guarantees that our town will stay beautiful, also guaranteeing that our property values will increase in the future—not diminish.

[5] **It's far-sighted**, rather than giving quickie favors to a few squeaky wheels, this plan aims at an overall pattern of growth advantageous not only to us, but to our children and everyone else living here 20 years from now.

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A Message from the President of ImagineAmenia

How fortunate are we to live in Amenia. We have scenic views of open space that visitors comment on and artists from afar come to paint and photograph. We have store owners on Main Street that work hard to make their buildings and surroundings pleasant and inviting. We have volunteers that give willingly to our town, some we see every day, some we rarely notice.

Most recently we had a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee made up of a diverse group of citizens that came together at the request of a previous Town Board. They worked long hours, giving up personal and family time for almost five years. Some members are no longer with us. Together, they came up with a Plan for all of us. Thank you to those Committee members, and to the Town Board members who voted to pass a Comprehensive Plan for the future of Amenia.

We acknowledge our volunteers, working together for all of us, for Amenia.

www.ImagineAmenia.org


Susan Gregory, President

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The future isn't tomorrow or next year or ten years from now.

It's today. Without a structure, a masterful plan to guide us, we could end up like Brewster's ongoing malls on Rt. 22, or Rt. 7 in New Milford. Not all developers are bad people, some actually have taste and conscience. But they are inevitably looking at the bottom line – and so are their lawyers. Our MasterPlan says it very nicely: "Not so fast Buddy, this is who we are and what we want to be. Welcome to Amenia."

You don't vote here? Why not consider registering at least one member of your family to vote in Amenia. After all, you pay taxes here and you should have a say in town affairs.

But even if you don't wish to vote here, as long as you live here and intend to go on living here, we'd appreciate your help.

We'll do the work, the writing, the designing, the planning and distributing. But there comes a moment when ideas have to be printed on paper (you notice we're economical and use newsprint), and then there are going to be some right-to-the-point ads supporting those candidates for Town Board who are going to make life better. Think of it this way. For as little as 50 cents a week, you can make a critically important investment in the future of Amenia. Here's how:

1. **BECOME A MEMBER.** Our annual membership fee is \$15 for individuals; \$25 for families. Send your check made out to ImagineAmenia to PO Box 169, Amenia, NY 12501.
2. **BECOME INVOLVED:** Check one:
 - Sign me/us up. We'd like to be involved, attend meetings and help out!
 - We want to help out, but please keep our name(s) anonymous.
3. **SUPPORT POLITICAL ACTION** for the upcoming campaign, **which starts right now**, by sending a check or money order to support the **ImagineAmenia Political Fund**. Contrary to what some have said, it was scores of modest donations — many of which were from citizens who felt the need to remain anonymous — that enabled ImagineAmenia to present the facts and the issues to the voters in 2003. We hope to be able to do the same in 2007.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/TOWN

STATE

ZIP

TELEPHONE (day)

TELEPHONE (evening)

E-MAIL

So just who are the members of ImagineAmenia?

The members of ImagineAmenia have been tagged by opponents as *rich, overeducated*, and above all, *outsiders*, looking to Amenia as *their rural theme park*. In fact, nothing could be farther from the truth! Almost all of our members live here permanently, and most have lived here for decades, if not generations. Very few of our members are rich, and we certainly don't regard education as a negative. **We welcome all people to the group.**

ImagineAmenia members represent all segments of the community. Politically speaking we are red, blue, green, and all shades in between. In terms of national politics we represent the full spectrum. Our members are Democrats, Republicans, Independents, liberals, conservatives and moderates. Some of our members have college degrees, some do not. A few of our members are rich and a few work for minimum wage. Most of us are solidly middle class both in terms of economics and social values. We are a diverse group and by no means do we agree on everything.

What we DO agree on is the vision of the future for our town, a vision which rests on a safe, pedestrian-friendly small town atmosphere, a town where basic needs can be met, a town of smaller businesses which people can walk to, a town where economic and social diversity is treasured. We want a town in which seniors can live comfortably, a town in which young people feel they have a future. We want Amenia to be a destination, not a pass through. We may have differing views on the details, but we all agree on the vision we don't want. *We don't want our community to turn into Route 9 in Poughkeepsie, or Route 7 in New Milford. We don't want our town to become a reflection of Southern Dutchess.*

We are grateful for the democracy in which we live. We believe in dissent and debate, but not division. We all pull together to seek a balanced future for our town, a PROGRESS WE CAN LIVE WITH. We accept that the majority determines the outcome, but we do not want to be the pawns of developers or of a few people who are in power.

We love Amenia and appreciate the generosity of its residents. It is a place where hard times are overcome by the help of neighbors, even if they disagree with you. We appreciate Amenia's incredible resources, all of which must be preserved and treasured. Its ecosystem is incredibly fragile, located in a valley where a huge portion of available village land functions as wetland. Future development must be carefully planned so that this fragile ecosystem is protected — not just for the "bog turtle" but for the very water that we drink and the air that we breathe. Right now, in several Dutchess county communities, water has become a commodity that is delivered **and paid for** like fuel oil...by truck! This concern for the future of our town is what brought us together and what is keeping us together.

We respect and support the many volunteers who work to make this town better. ImagineAmenia works with them and local government to get done what needs to be done. In the end, we ALL want a "better Amenia." We all want more business, more opportunities for our children, more services for our seniors, more affordable housing and jobs so our children, if they wish, can live in the same town in which they grew up.

Won't you join us?

CARE ENOUGH . . .

To **care enough** is to be passionate without being disrespectful. Supervisor Reagon, as well as Council members Doyle and Russell have been targets of relentless, cruel personal attacks, not only at public meetings but also in letters to the editor and in blogs. Supervisor Reagon has been accused of felony, of being on the payroll of Alan Shope and of plotting with him to close the DDSO facility and develop it for her own personal gain. These attacks have been based on innuendo, misrepresentation and outright lies. We live in a democracy, and disagreements and dissensions are to be tolerated. Lack of decency and civility are not.

To **care enough** is to know the real facts before you take sides on an issue. Amenia is at a crossroads. There are major developments before the Planning Board. Go to Town Board and Planning Board meetings, read the Comprehensive Plan, ask questions, research the facts before you form an opinion.

To **care enough** is to get to know the candidates, their qualifications, their knowledge, their positions and long term vision for Amenia. Recognize the special interests for what they are. We have had the good fortune to have three hard working, knowledgeable, honest Town Board members in Janet Reagon, Vicki Doyle and Roger Russell. In spite of the endless character assassinations they have had to endure, they have continued to be civil, and positive in their discourse. To **care enough** is to recognize those who have already shown they care.

To **care enough** is to vote for future generations. Amenia's beauty, its rolling pastoral landscape is both a blessing and a curse. It has become a prime target for development. To date it has escaped the fate of Route 9 in Poughkeepsie and Route 7 in New Milford. The next election, beginning with the September 18 primary, will help to determine the Amenia we bequeath to future generations.

To care enough is not to care less. Vote in the primary, September 18.

**Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak,
Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.**

-Sir Winston Churchill, at a conference in Washington, DC

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