

## Community Board 8

# The Chapel Farms Proposal Was Denied

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Bronx Journal Staff Reporter

During their May 8th meeting, Community Board 8 announced the Chapel Farms proposal was denied, a decision perhaps influenced by claims the land is needed to build a park for Fieldston residents.

Chapel Farms in Fieldston, Riverdale, meant to be a million dollar development for thirteen single-family homes, was ruled against by Bronx Borough President, Fernando Ferrer.

According to Ferrer, the land, owned by Chapel Farms developer, John Fitzgerald, could be put to better use, "optimal use of this site would be its preservation as perpetual open space."

Ferrer's statement raised questions as to whether Chapel Farms would be turned into a private park for Fieldston residents. After being voiced by a board member, this query was addressed at the meeting when Charles Moerdler, chairman of the board for the Land Use Committee said, "consideration is being given to the idea."

Although the Community Board 8 office stated the allegation was "just a rumor," it is not without a basis since in 1997, Fitzgerald was approached by the Riverdale Nature Preservancy who offered to buy the land to turn into a park. This offer was later dropped.

The thought of making a park for Fieldston residents offends many since there is already a private pond for Fieldston

homeowners on Indian Road.

Susan Bell, a 19-year-old student and Riverdale resident, has long resented the privacy of this pond. "There are no other ponds nearby," she said. "Since I can't go to the pond in Fieldston, I just have to make do with puddles."

Others, such as Marna DeWitt, a 52-year-old psychologist, see nothing wrong with private ponds and parks. "Residents pay a lot of money to live in Fieldston," said DeWitt. "As far as I'm concerned, they pay for their privacy."

Regardless of whether the land will be used for a park, it is clear that the Chapel Farms development is no longer an issue.

However, Fitzgerald's lawsuit, filed against Community Board Eight and Charles Moerdler, must still be resolved.

At the board's last meeting, Moerdler is said to have treated Fitzgerald unfairly, not allowing him to defend Chapel Farms to the board.

"Fitzgerald didn't even get freedom of



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speech," said Priscilla Ademson, a 30 year-old teacher. "Moerdler wasn't listening, barely let him talk."

"As I see it, the issue is settled; Fitzgerald's lawsuit was the end of reaching any 'common ground' between us," Moerdler said denying any guilt in his handling of the subject.

Whatever the case, the fate of the Chapel Farms land remains to be seen.

"Worrying over parks seems foolish to me," said 29-year-old Bronx resident Malcolm Pold. "Why count your chickens before they hatch?"

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