

NASSAU-SUFFOLK HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

13 January 2010

Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of Hempstead
1 Washington Street
Hempstead, New York 11550

Ladies & Gentlemen:

We are here today to voice support for the variance applications, before this Board, by Lakewood Ranch Estates, LLC. Their requests seem crucial for the preservation and continuance of Lakewood Stables, formally known and venerated by us as "The Lakeside Riding Academy". This is the last remaining service of its kind operating in the Town of Hempstead.

The origins of the original Lakeside Academy reach far beyond the living memory of most here, when park trails and bridle paths supported a number of other stables as well. Those ranged along what is now Peninsular Boulevard and elsewhere nearby. Development and suburban sprawl has left Lakewood the last one standing. The bridle path still exists, well maintained, at Hempstead Lake State Park.

It is a constant source of amazement, to hear from all sorts of people, now living far and wide, that they got their first experience with horses at the old Lakeside Academy on Eagle Avenue, usually as young children. The magic that a connection with horses creates, and the lessons of commitment and discipline it imparts, remain for a lifetime. It runs deeper and lasts far longer than most other childhood experiences and activities. It explains why many of us will continue to ride well into our senior years, why some of the presentations in support might be somewhat emotional and nostalgic, and why our hopes for Lakewood Stables future are so strong. It is important to all of us now and for future generations. A renovated and financially healthy Lakewood Stables will be the best of community neighbors.

We are now at a point where we recognize, as a relief from an increasingly "urbanized" suburbia, the importance of preserving what remains of: open space, small farm operations, historic structures and traditional, historic, cultural and recreational opportunities. Many of these are now at variance with the zoning and building code regulations that were instituted during the past decades of enthusiastic development and expansion. We now rely on your judgment and foresight to help this last treasure, survive and continue.

Very sincerely yours,

C. William Uhlinger
President Emeritus
Nassau-Suffolk Horsemen's Association