

**Williston Citizens for Responsible Growth (WCRG)
Records, 1988-1998
Doc 786-788, Size B**

Introduction

This collection contains the files of Williston Citizens for Responsible Growth (WCRG), which was formed in the late 1980s to oppose the construction of a large shopping center in Williston, near Burlington, Vermont's largest city. It includes materials in opposition to a second "big box store" development in Williston in 1994-1995. The collection was donated to the Vermont Historical Society in 2017 by Fred "Chico" Lager and Elizabeth Skarie. The collection is housed in three document storage boxes and consume three linear feet of shelf space.

Institutional History

Williston Citizens for Responsible Growth (WCRG) was an incorporated non-profit group founded in 1988 to oppose the Maple Tree Place project proposed by developer Ben Frank and the Pyramid Mall Companies of Syracuse, New York in 1988-1989. Early leaders of the group included Fred "Chico" Lager, Betsy Rosenbluth, and Herb Painter of Williston. The Williston Planning Commission rejected the proposal for an enclosed mall and a revised mixed-use project with smaller buildings around a "town square" was eventually approved after negotiations between Ben Frank and WCRG.

WCRG was also involved in the unsuccessful effort in the 1990s to prevent Taft Corners Associates (TCA) from building a Wal-Mart/Home Depot project in an existing commercial/retail development across the street from the proposed Maple Tree Place site. The Vermont State Environmental Board affirmed TCA's Act 250 permit in 1994-1995 and both stores were constructed.

An earlier iteration of the group led the effort that successfully defeated Pyramid Mall Companies' first attempt to build an enclosed mall at Taft Corners in Williston between 1978 and 1982. Pyramid was denied an Act 250 permit by the District Environmental Commission, and the decision was upheld by the Vermont Supreme Court in 1982.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the records and files of the Williston Citizens for Responsible Growth (WCRG) a group founded in 1988 to block proposed commercial developments at Taft Corners in Williston, Vermont, in 1988 and 1994. WCRG was central to the effort to fight sprawl surrounding Burlington in Chittenden County, Vermont.

The collection is arranged roughly chronologically. The first series contains organizational materials filed by the group in 1988. There follow two series on the 1988-1989 period. The second series includes group documents, outreach, informational materials, and documents from town of Williston regulatory boards. The third series includes legal documents

filed with state agencies and courts. The fourth and fifth series are organized similarly and represent the 1994-1995 effort.

The collection includes many newspaper clippings from the controversy. Some have been photocopied and arranged by date, but a large number remain unprocessed.

Related Collections

Selected copies of the *Williston Whistle*, the community newspaper that covered the debates over development in that town were moved to the Leahy Library's printed collection. More complete runs of this newspaper may be housed at other libraries.

Videotapes and bumper stickers from the anti-sprawl struggles of the 1980s and 1990s can be found in the VHS Library collections for those material types.

T-shirts from the anti-mall campaigns are in the VHS museum collection, as is a large sign made to look like a wall and signed by various citizens opposed to the construction of Wal-Mart in their town.

Abbreviations

General:

TCA: Taft Corners Associates

WCRG: Williston Citizens for Responsible Growth

Environmental Boards:

VSEB: VT State Environmental Board

DEC: District Environmental Commission

Municipal Boards:

WS: Williston Select Board

WPC: Williston Planning Commission

CCRPC: Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

Judicial:

CCSC: Chittenden County Superior Court

VSC: Vermont Supreme Court

Inventory

I. Williston Citizens for Responsible Growth, organizational materials

- Doc 786:01 By-laws
- 02 Certificate of incorporation, Articles of Association
- 03 Membership lists
- 04 CRG Newsletter 9/1989-8/1995

II. 1988-1989

- Doc 786:05 Press releases
- 06 Newspaper ads, 1988-1991

- 07 ToW correspondence re tax assessment, 2/9/1989
- 08 "Photos", Various correspondence, 1988-1989.
- 09 Wilbur Smith Associates, notes, Traffic Study, 1987-1988.
- 10 Traffic Testimony, 1989.
- 11 Ads and Info created by Pyramid, 1987-1988.
- 12 WCRG press releases and correspondence, 1988-1989.
- 13 Robert Burley, architect, testimony to WPC, 1977.
- 14 Minutes—WCRG minutes, 1987-1989, 9/92, 2 folders.
- 15 Interim Zoning—WS, 9/3/1987
- 16 Williston Zoning Info
- 17 Miscellaneous WCRG info
- 18 Ad ideas, 1988
- 19 Clippings, 1987-1988 (see also Doc 786: 31.1, 31.2, Doc 788:11).
- 20 Mahan Option, information regarding sale of Mahan property to Pyramid.
- 21 Poughkeepsie, information on Pyramid Mall in Poughkeepsie, NY
- 22 Other Pyramid Projects, News clippings, 1988.
- 23 Miscellaneous, 1989.
- 24 Hearing notes, WPC, 1989.
- 25 Debate, Town forums, 1988.
- 26 Hearings, 1989.
- 27 Sewer allocation, 1988.
- 28 Advertisements, copy and ideas, 1988-1989.
- 29 Miscellaneous, 1988-1989.
- 30 Petition to Williston Planning Commission opposing Pyramid Mall, 3
photographs, Dec 1989-Jan 1990
- 31.1 News clippings and articles, 1988-1989 (see also Doc 786:19, 788:11)
- 31.2 _____

III. 1988-1989 Documents

- 32 VT Environmental Commission, District #4, minutes, memorandum, 6/1/1989
- 33 Pyramid Act 250 Application, 1978.
- 34 Pyramid Act 250 Application, 1988.
- 35 Act 250, documents, text of Act 250.
- 36 Lawsuit, *WCRG v. MTP Associates*, Chittenden County Superior Court,
related information and documents, 1989.
- 37 Regional Plan, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
- 38 Sewer allocation, 1988, agreement between town of Williston and Maple Tree
Place, with Sewer, Erosion, Drainage site plans, January 1988. MS Size B.
- 39 Williston Planning Commission, testimony, minutes, Oct. 25, 1988
- 40 Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, Williston-Taft Corners
Transportation Study, October 1987
- 41 Williston Planning Commission, Continued preliminary public hearing, RE:
Maple Tree Place, Jan. 17, 1989

- 42 Resource Systems Group, A Review of Area and Regional Traffic Impacts from the Proposed Maple Tree Place Shopping Center, Prepared for CCRPC February 1989.
- 43 Williston Planning Commission, Continued preliminary public hearing, RE: Maple Tree Place, March 21, 1989
- 44 Humstone Squires Associates and Muller, Thomas, Fiscal and Economic Impact Maple Tree Place Mall on Chittenden County Municipalities, Prepared for CCRPC, April 16, 1989
- 45 Williston Planning Commission, Continued preliminary public hearing, RE: Maple Tree Place, April 18, 1989
- 46 Wilbur Smith Associates, Traffic Impact and Access Study for Maple Tree Place, May 1988
- 47 State of Vermont District Environmental Commission #4, RE: Maple Tree Place, Prefiled testimony of Dr. Michael J. Munson, August 2, 1989
- 48 State of Vermont District Environmental Commission #4, RE: Maple Tree Place, Motion to reconsider City of Burlington's party status..., Aug. 8, 1989

IV. 1994-1995

- Doc. 787:01 Muller, Tom. Preliminary Report on Economic Impact of Sam's and Wal-Mart..., Humstone Associates, Burlington, VT, June 19, 1992. Includes VT Environmental Board Memorandum of Decision, 1992.
- 02 Vt. State Environmental Board, correspondence, 1994.
 - 03 Town of Williston Town Planner, correspondence, 1994.
 - 04 Internal Memos re lot size.
 - 05 Williston Planning Commission, minutes, 1992, with related minutes 1983-1989.
 - 06 Correspondence Atty. Tarrant and Vt. State Environmental Board, with attached exhibits, 1994.
 - 07 Correspondence, reports, clippings. Includes "Retail Sales Impact of Proposed Wal-mart on Franklin County, Oct. 15, 1993" Summer 1994.
 - 08 Legal correspondence, misc., 1994.
 - 09 Miscellaneous documents, 1992-1993.
 - 10 Articles-Wal-Mart, various articles re Wal-Mart, Boston Globe, Chicago, WSJ, 1992-1993.
 - 11 WPC, June 4, 1991, minutes.
 - 12 Miscellaneous correspondence and articles, 1991, 1993.
 - 13 City Council elections, 1993-1996.
 - 14 Letter, research summary from Sen. Leahy, Jan. 25, 1994.
 - 15 Legal correspondence, documents, and articles, 1994.
 - 16 Studies Re: Wal-Mart (studies of impact of Wal-Mart in other states, (Chestertown, Iowa)
 - 17 1993 municipal election, WCRG election sub-committee reports, materials.

V. 1994-1995 Documents

- 18 Dartmouth traffic study, Fax to attys 3/2/94, January 1978, Resource Systems Group, Traffic Impact Study, February 1989
- 19 Trudell Traffic Study, 1986.
- 20 Taft Corners Associates Act 250 Land Use Permit, District Environmental Commission #4, 1987.
- 21 WCRG appeal to Chittenden County Superior Court, 1993. 2 folders.
- 22 WCRG Testimony to Vermont State Environmental Board, July 1994.
- 23 WCRG Appeal to Vermont Supreme Court, 1994.
- 24 _____
- 25 Briefs *In Re: Taft's Corners...*, Vermont Supreme Court, March 3, 1994.
- Size B Engineering drawings & 3/29/94 cover letter from Gerald R. Tarrant to Chico Lager
- Taft Corners, Lot 21 Development Study, Wal-Mart, 3/21/94 (one sheet)
- _____, Lot 36 Development Study, Sam's Club, 3/21/94 (one sheet)
- Maple Tree Place, Storm Sewer Plan, Exhibit C4.2 (three sheets)
- _____, Erosion Control Plan, Exhibit C.4.4 (two sheets)
- 26 VT State Environmental Board decision, land use permit, WCRG correspondence, July 1994-Nov. 1995
- 27 Two motions to Vermont State Environmental Board to alter TCA land use permit, 1994.
- 28 WCRG Motion to Vermont State Environmental Board, 1995
- 29 Taft Corners Associates pre-filed testimony to Vermont State Environmental Board.
- 30 Vermont Supreme Court, Printed case, 1994.
- 31 Vermont Supreme Court, Brief of WCRG as Appellant, 1994.
- 32 Vermont Supreme Court, Supplemental printed case, 1994.
- 33 Vermont Supreme Court, Reply brief of WCRG as Appellant, 1994.
- Size B TCA Exhibit 69, Site plans (12" wide) [Where is this? Not found 11/20/19. pac]
- 34 TCA Environmental Board Hearings, RE: Traffic, 1986-1993, sections 1-7
- 35 _____, _____, _____, sections 8-14
- 36 _____, _____, _____, sections 15-18

VI. Non-print material and miscellaneous

- Doc 788:01 Advertising
- 02 Bumper Stickers
- Video C-490 Are Pyramids Foreign to Vermont? A Look at Maple Tree Place, 33 min., 1988, VHS.
- Video C-491 WCAX, "You Can Quote Me," re: Pyramid Mall, VHS
- Video C-492 Williston Selectboard Meeting, 6/10/1993, VHS
- Video C-38 Back to the Pyramids, The Sold Americans, VHS
- 03 _____, _____ Studio Tape

- 04 Lager, Fred. 12 color slides of site.

VII. 1996-1999

- 05 "Preserving community Through Neighborhood Design". Williston, Vermont Neighborhood Design Charrette, February 6, 1997.
- 06 "Creating a Community at Taft Corners, Williston, Vermont, May 17, 1999. Sustainability and Growth Center Team of the Champlain Institute, "The History of Sprawl in Chittenden County, March 1999.
- 07 "The Case for a Healthy Community: The History of Sprawl in Chittenden County," Sustainability and Growth Center Team of the Champlain Initiative, 1999.
- 08 Budell, Timothy. Cost Implications of Residential Subdivisions, July 15, 1997.
- 09 CVUHS student letters to Williston Planning Commission, November 1998.
- 10 Miscellaneous, 1996-97

VIII. Newspaper Clippings

- 11 Clippings, 1987-1990 (see also Doc 786:19, 31.1, 31.2)
- 12 _____, 1992-1994
- 13 _____, 1995
- 14 _____, 1996
- 15 _____, 1997
- 16 _____, 1998
- 17 _____, 1999
- 18 _____, 2000-2001
- 19 _____, No Date

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