

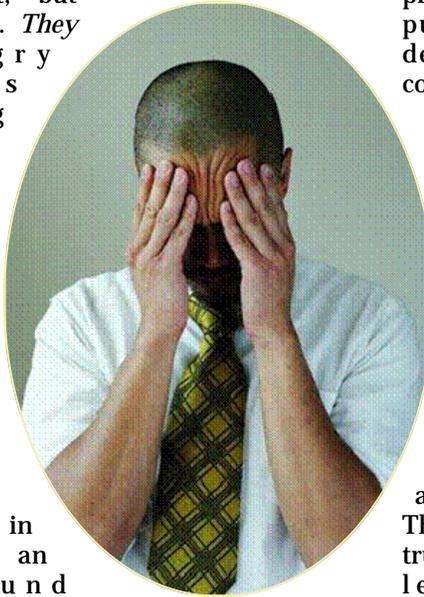
SURVIVING THE NIMBY NATION

They are everywhere, but hardly noticed. They're vocal, but largely ignored. They're honest, but rarely respected. They are angry homeowners screaming NIMBY (Not-In-My-Back-Yard) from the shores of San Diego to the beaches of Miami, from the Mile High City to the City of Brotherly Love.

NIMBYism in America is an underground industry tearing up real estate projects from one coast to another. This national phenomenon is mobilizing countless citizens, generating thousands of news

stories, and costing developers billions of dollars every year.

At first glance, this



seems improbable: most NIMBY activists operate with no budget, no office space, no public relations consultant, no media training,

and no experts. However, it's well documented that NIMBYists cripple thousands of land use projects with negative publicity, project delays, expensive concessions, lawsuits, and political rejection.

Fallout from the NIMBY industry has gotten so bad that if you mention the word NIMBY to a land use professional, you will see pupils dilate, arms cross, and lips purse. That's not entirely true, but the stress level in the development community is at an all time high thanks to the rise of the NIMBY nation.

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FLORIDA HOMETOWN DEMOCKERY: PLAYING THE NIMBY CARD

Florida Hometown Democracy, a grassroots group petitioning a constitutional amendment for voter approval on proposed amendments to comprehensive plans, is a NIMBY organization attempting to exploit

community fears of change and promote status quo attitudes.

In a recent *St. Augustine Shores Civic Advocate* guest column by Hometown co-founder Leslie Blackner, she stated: "The FHD Amendment will

ensure that changes to comprehensive plans are supported by a majority of community: Voters will reject bad plan changes that wreck their home-towns and unleash all the problems Floridians know all too well."

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Quote of the month:

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the level of thinking that created them."

- Albert Einstein

This is highly impractical at best and grants vocal minorities unchecked power at worst. A majority of voters are too busy with daily struggles and raising their families to bother with local government affairs,

Continued on pg. 3

NIMBY OF THE MONTH

As gas prices continue to soar toward record-breaking prices, more Americans are considering alternative sources of energy to reduce their dependency on foreign oil. Wind farms are one source of renewable energy that environmental groups would love to see take off as a supplement to fossil energy.

The \$700 million Cape Wind project is one example of renewable energy. According to media reports, when completed, the Cape Wind project could produce 75 percent of the energy needs of Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard. NIMBY groups such as the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound are opposing the wind farm project claiming it would harm tourism.

Well-known oceanfront property owners such as David McCullough, Walter Cronkite and the Kennedy family have enlisted the help of GOP Gov. Mitt Romney and Democratic Sen. Ted Kennedy, to "blow Cape Wind off the map."

Ted Kennedy, the liberal left's environmental champion, said in a

recent AP story, "The interests of our state have been basically submerged to a special interest developer."

The truth is, Sen. Kennedy has chosen his oceanfront view and unimpeded waters for yachting over renewable energy.



Senator Ted Kennedy

Kennedy used a back-room political maneuver to file a provision to a Coast Guard bill in an attempt to kill Cape Wind without public debate.

His action has infuriated and mobilized an alliance of 55 energy, labor, and environmental groups, according to a Boston Globe report.

The provision has a fair chance of passing, because the Coast Guard bill has already been approved by a House-Senate conference committee.

Senator Kennedy's assault on wind farms reeks of hypocrisy making him the NIMBY of the Month. However, before we completely condemn him, we should take away a lesson. Each of us carries a little bit of NIMBY inside, which can be energized, if the winds of change blow a certain way. ■

NIMBY TIPS

The more you know about the dynamics of the community and the potential "hot spots" the better chance you have of avoiding potential trouble:

- ◆ Talk to the government planner and ask who in the community could become a threat
- ◆ Pull the bios of the elected body. You may find affiliations with special interests
- ◆ Assess the bios of advisory board appointees. Who appointed them?
- ◆ Google the reporter - chances are they have used the David vs. Goliath formula
- ◆ Identify HOAs and their leaders in proximity to your project
- ◆ Play devil's advocate: What can be deemed a threat by the community? The answer may show whether the NIMBYist is a homeowner or special interest
- ◆ Ask elected officials the question, "Who in the community do we need to talk to?"

If you carry out these NIMBY tips during the earlier phases of your project, you will secure strategic high ground to launch your outreach campaign. ■

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FOR THE PEOPLE



In 2002, the City of Longwood became the first and only Florida city to enact a "Citizen Awareness and Participation Plan" ordinance. The ordinance requires developers to prepare and carryout a citizen participation campaign prior to formally filing an application.

The results have been positive according to City Manager, John Drago, "For the developer time is money. The average time for application to be processed has gone from 6 months to just 45 days due to in part to our CAPP ordinance."

The citizen participation program sets developers up for success. For example, a developer is required to meet with citizens, before and after a site plan is drawn up. In many cases, nominal concessions are identified and potential NIMBY issues are either defused or noted.

Developers submit a CAPP report on who they met, when they met, how they were approached, and what was the outcome. This information is included in the application and elected officials read it very carefully. So if a few residents shout NIMBY at a public hearing, the elected body can decide with confidence that the developer and residents have already come to a consensus.

The Longwood ordinance is very similar to the ordinance of Glendale, Arizona's citizen participation plan. Both cities prove that pro-active outreach can secure positive social and political results. ■

Patrick Slevin is a nationally recognized, award winning public relations expert who specializes in NIMBYism. Mr. Slevin, a former mayor of Safety Harbor, Florida, is founder and CEO of the Slevin Group, a full-service public relations consulting firm headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida.



ABOUT THE EDITOR

Mr. Slevin has been profiled as one of the country's top "Movers and Shakers" in *Campaigns & Elections*, a nonpartisan monthly trade publication for the political campaign industry. Mr. Slevin is also the recipient of the prestigious PRSA Silver Anvil Award of Excellence, the public relations industry's highest honor representing the best in strategic public relations, crisis communications and issues management.

Mr. Slevin is well published on the topic of NIMBY. After years of writing about and consulting on the NIMBY issue, Mr. Slevin determined the time was right to provide land use professionals a monthly publication that exposes and examines the mysteries behind NIMBYism in America.

Feel free to write him directly with any thoughts or comments, slevinreport@slevingroup.com. ■

HOMETOWN DEMOCKERY *CONT.*

let alone voting on local land use issues. Our elected officials are put into office to make decisions on such matters and then answer to voters on election day.

Typically, elections are geared toward polarizing segments of voters with divisive rhetoric and negative campaigns.

Placing land use changes on the ballot will subject the community to political communications that do not

bring people together, but rather drive a wedge precluding meaningful citizen participation. This scenario plays into the strengths of NIMBY's who consider themselves adversely affected by change.

Admittedly, Florida Hometown Democracy's initiative calling for more citizen participation and involvement is noble. However, the group distorts the notion of citizen participation.

On the one hand, FHD calls for citizen-based decision making, but on

the other it's selling a "community veto" to those voters who consider development a threat to the environment, as well as to their status quo beliefs.

Citizen participation under the banner of this ballot initiative can be considered exclusive and not open to meaningful public dialogue and involvement.

Editor's Note: The founders of FHD should leverage their political capital to get stakeholders to the table, instead of agitating for reform benefiting of select few at the expense of the many. ■

NEED A SPEAKER?

Schedule Patrick Slevin to speak at your next meeting or conference. *The Art of NIMBY* presentation will show you how to “keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer.” For more information call 1.800.290.2770 or email slevinreport@slevingroup.com.

THE SLEVIN REPORT

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PATRICK SLEVIN

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«THE ART OF NIMBY»

“Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer,” is a classic line from the movie, *The Godfather*. However, the quote belongs to a famous Chinese general and military strategist Sun Tzu, known for, *The Art of War*. In the case of NIMBY, both fit.

Land use professionals would be wise to consider this Machiavellian method when considering counter-NIMBY combat. The Art of NIMBY is modeled after Sun Tzu in the sense that NIMBY activists are considered “the enemy” by many in the land use professions. More often than not, land use professionals keep their allies close, while ignoring or even inciting the wrath of an angry public.

In order effectively keep your NIMBY enemies from gaining the upper hand, you need to sniff them out and meet them before the application is submitted. In many cases, a potential NIMBY doesn't know they are one until after the application is filed. If you follow these 5 rules of engagement, you will successfully keep your friends on the reservation and mitigate the enemy's ability to strike a mortal blow:

1. Acknowledge NIMBYism begins with a lack of knowledge and misinformation, which produces community gossip
2. Strategic Mapping – know thy NIMBY
3. Actively listen to public input
4. Resolve conflict at the lowest level - public hearings are too late
5. Establish goodwill impressions - secure political capital

If you follow these best practices, you will win NIMBY battles without ever going to the mattresses. You do not have to take my word for it, take General Tzu's,

“The best victory is when the opponent surrenders of its own accord before there are any actual hostilities...It is best to win without fighting.” That's the Art of NIMBY.

Note: The Slevin Report will expand upon the 5 rules of engagement in future Art of NIMBY segments. ■

Many of our subscribers are experts in their fields. “Ask an Expert” leverages their knowledge capital as an added benefit to our readers. “Ask an Expert” puts you in touch with experts in the fields of public relations, crisis communications, grassroots lobbying, planning, land use law, political marketing, public affairs, conflict resolution, facilitation, visioning, internet marketing, and opinion polling.

Here's how it works: If you're

ASK AN EXPERT

located in San Francisco, CA and you're wondering if the upcoming open house you've organized will be a flop or a hit, send the question with event background to “Ask an Expert”. We will then forward your anonymous question to NIMBY experts in your market or state. If you find an expert's answer satisfactory and want to connect with that expert, we will then issue a referral.

If you have a question for an expert or you are an expert who would like to register and expand your marketing reach write to slevinreport@slevingroup.com, attention Patrick Slevin (Subject line: Ask an Expert). You must be a subscriber to participate in this service.

If your question and the expert's solution offer lessons for Slevin Report readers, it may be showcased in a future edition of “Ask an Expert”. ■

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NIMBY NATION *CONT.*

Prof. Dr. Paul Rosch M.D., President of the American Institute of Stress offered this advice, "Find what things you can have some control over, and come up with creative ways to take control."

The good news is land use professionals can have more control over the NIMBY factor. The bad news is many do not have the desire, knowledge or resources to change, which creates a "blind spot" enabling NIMBYists to ambush vulnerable applications.

Land use professionals such as planners, engineers, lawyers, builders, communicators, and the developers who hire them, must abandon the idea that ignorance is bliss in order to survive in the NIMBY nation. The key to success is realizing that it's not the

sophistication of the NIMBY industry, but more the absence of best practices.

The absence of an authoritative resource examining NIMBYism has undermined the industry's ability to grow.

The Slevin Report is the first publication dedicated to empowering its readers, while helping them gain a home field advantage in *their* own backyards by pre-empting, countering, and defeating NIMBYism.

Editor's Note: Subscribers will not only learn best practices that will help them to survive, but also become a better corporate citizen in the NIMBY Nation. ■

JULY PREVIEW

- ◆ Public NIMBY No. 1 — Interview with Al Norman, founder of Sprawl Busters
- ◆ The Politics of Citizen Participation
- ◆ NIMBY Tips: Media Crisis, Do's & Don'ts

JOIN THE NIMBY WATCH NETWORK



The Slevin Report is currently looking for individuals to be a part of a nationwide NIMBY watch network. We're not interested in sightings of UFOs or Bigfoot, although if you have photos, we'll take a look. But seriously, we're on the look-out for news stories, reports, releases, citizen groups, special interests, and individuals representing the NIMBY phenomenon.

Periodically, *The Slevin Report* will issue an email alert to subscribers summarizing what the network has identified in regions, states, and neighborhoods from coast to coast. We believe subscribers will benefit from this information, especially if a NIMBY group has been sighted and cataloged in a market of interest.

If you see or hear about NIMBYs lurking in your community, we want to know about it. If you're interested in joining the NIMBY network and help a nationwide effort to learn more about NIMBYism in America, please email your name, email address, city, and state to slevinreport@SlevinGroup.com.

Your participation will greatly enhance our efforts to catalog the information in our database for future reporting. ■

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