

*North Sea Citizens Advisory Committee  
Town of Southampton  
164 Fish Cove Road & • 18 Pine Tree Road Southampton, New York  
11968*

*631-283-5978 or 631-283-3566*

*Lucille Dunne  
John Watson  
Co-Chairs*

**Minutes of July 8, 2014 Meeting**

*Barbara Fair  
Secretary*

The meeting opened at 7:40 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Minutes of the June 10, 2014 meeting were approved.

*Members*

*John Barona  
Joan Barra\*\*  
Mary Beatty\*\*  
Declan Blackmore  
Joan Brennan\*\*  
Sheila Comparetto  
John Clarke  
Daniel Gebbia  
Stephanie McNamara  
Ann Reisman  
Frank Palmer  
Arlene Schroeder  
Mary E. Topping*

**Guest Speaker:** John Merrill, a member of National Grid, (which no longer has a marketing group) presented the factors constraining availability of natural gas service, currently available in our area only on portions of Deerfield Road, Majors Path and Edge of Woods Road. Gas mains do not reach Noyac Road. And, while gas mains can cross water bodies where there are bridges, “it is tough for us”, Mr. Merrill stated. Unfortunately, the maps Mr. Merrill was able to provide did not clearly identify the location of existing National Grid gas lines north of the Village.

He explained that, as a regulated utility, National Grid is subject to prescribed tariffs. National Grid is required to extend the first 100 feet of a main for a residential customer plus a 100 feet service line from the main to the house at no charge; each foot of gas main thereafter costs \$100. The customer can opt to pay up-front for any required additional main extension charge beyond the allowed 100 feet, or pay it out over ten years with interest - an option that almost doubles the cost. As everyone on a street may not choose to switch to gas service, a potential customer may have to initially pay for the cost of the main that passes one or more neighbors’ homes in order to reach his own home. This can quickly become very expensive! However, if one or more of those neighbors later decides to connect to the gas main, there is a procedure for the original customer (who is still paying the surcharge) to get relief.

Other costs to consider are the \$5,000 - \$6,000 to convert from oil to gas heat and abandon an oil tank. Interior piping installed to reach individual appliances has to be 1 to 1½ inch black pipe which must be installed by a plumber. Some members did not agree with the suggested cost of conversions, citing it was possible to convert from oil to gas by using a “conversion gun” for around \$1,000.

Commercial establishments are entitled to 100 free feet of gas main in the public right of way only. They must pay the additional cost to run from the street to the gas meter.

Why go to this expense? According to the material provided by National Grid, gas heat costs 40% less than oil for the same number of BTUs, and there is less maintenance required for the heating equipment. In response to a member’s inquiry, Mr. Merrill stated that natural gas is less volatile than Liquid Propane. Another

\*denotes Seasonal Member  
\*\*denotes ex-officio member

member pointed out that electric dryers and hot water heaters also cost more to operate than gas-operated appliances. Other reasons to switch to gas: oil leaks from old fuel tanks can cost thousands of dollars to remediate and natural gas service is not prone to disruption from storms.

There was definite interest from the members and guests in pursuing gas service for our area, but the obstacles are daunting. For a gas main extension to be economically feasible, multiple individual homeowners and multiple developments in North Sea would have to sign on; however, Mr. Merrill said, people who express initial interest often drop out. Mr. Merrill pointed out local plumbers can “sell” gas conversions to additional homeowners once a gas main becomes available.

Some concepts discussed by the CAC were sending mailings to residents along North Sea and Noyac Roads and on Majors Path north of the intersection with Edge of Woods, to local homeowners’ associations, to CAC’s and to businesses to assess their interest in natural gas service.

### **Committee Reports**

**Housing.** There have been staff changes at the Housing Authority including departures of Richard Blowes and Ann Gajowski, naming Curtis Highsmith, Jr. to the position of Executive Director and bringing on Tamara George as Assistant to the Executive Director.

**Landmarks and Historic Preservation.** No report.

**Solid Waste.** Cardboard and other commercial waste are not supposed to be brought to the North Sea Transfer Station. A new problem is the apparent agreement by someone in the Town to allow wineries to dispose of glass at the Transfer Station at no charge. The Town has to pay to get rid of glass, so why allow this? According to Skip Norsic, many businesses have eliminated outside containers for glass. When the CAC member detailed to the Solid Waste Committee brought this to the Town’s attention, he received four phone calls asking him “what is your solution?” The NSCAC believes the Town needs to work with the Solid Waste Committee on this problem when they meet in August.

**Airport Noise.** It appears our legislators have succeeded in persuading the FAA to extend the current helicopter routes to East Hampton airport that require pilots to take a northerly route and go around Orient Point.

**Unimproved Roads.** The Town passed the resolution authorizing funds for an RFP to study a solution to upgrading unimproved roads.

**Disabilities.** The Committee will meet on July 25<sup>th</sup>; Bridget Fleming is the liaison to the Committee.

**Sustainable Growth.** Nothing to report.

**CAC Chairs.** No Meeting the past month.

## Old Business

**Sandy Hollow Road Housing Changes.** The Town Board unanimously passed the proposed PDD resolution providing for 28 apartments with the total number of bedrooms permitted stated in the law; two two-bedroom units are to be built according to principles of “universal design” and therefore are appropriate for handicapped individuals. Discussion turned to the Town Board’s seemingly arbitrary rule limiting to three minutes the time a member of the public may speak, noting that others, i.e. lawyers, get more time.

**Tupper Boathouse.** No report.

**Little Fresh Pond Association.** The Little Fresh Pond Association prevailed in the SLAAP lawsuit initiated by Mr. Jacobs. Mr. Jacobs was ordered to pay the LFPA \$48,000 for their legal fees expended to defend against his suit.

At Little Fresh Pond, the Camp has started to spray for mosquitos and ticks using a material so “lethal” that the counselors had to leave the site. The LFPA reported the spraying to the DEC because everyone within 500 feet of the spraying was supposed to be notified, and no one received notification.

There is a different camp director this year.

**Noyac Road.** Members noted the enhanced police presence on Noyac Road is still in place. The repaving and other work at Cromers is nearly finished, but customers are confused about the correct way to enter and exit from Cromers’ parking lot. While the work was underway businesses in the immediate area lost significant customer traffic and revenue.

## New Business.

**West Nile Hotline.** West Nile Virus has been detected in western Suffolk. To report dead birds such as robins and crows which may be infected with West Nile virus call the Health Department’s Hotline: (631) 787-2200 and select Option “8”.

**Flood Insurance.** Myron Holtz and Bernie Schwartz, both of whom have flood insurance on their properties, came to discuss how their flood insurance premiums have gone up because Town stopped participating in FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System.

The Town’s previous participation in certain voluntary activities earned residents a 10% discount on their Flood Insurance premiums. According to FEMA sources, the NFIP insures \$1.5 billion in properties in the Town and these property owners pay \$5.7 million a year in flood insurance premiums. When these property owners’ policies come up for renewal, they will find they have lost the 10% discount, collectively worth \$570,000. Presumably, the Town itself has Flood Insurance on some of its properties, such as the Tupper Boathouse and other facilities adjacent to water bodies or in a Special Flood Hazard Area.

The Co-Chair agreed to write a letter to the Town Board identifying the problem and asking how the Town was going to address it.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm

### **Attendance**

**Present:** John Clarke, Lucy Dunne, Barbara Fair, Dan Gebbia, Stephanie McNamara, Frank Palmer, Arlene Schroeder

**Excused:** John Barona, Mary Beatty\*\*, Declan Blackmore, Sheila Comparetto, Ann Reisman, Mary Topping, John Watson.

**Guests:** Justice Phillips, Myron Holtz, Bernard Schwartz, Sharon Carr.