

Shinnecock Hills/Tuckahoe/Southampton CAC Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2012
(Approved May 1, 2012)

CAC Mission Statement

Our charge is to represent the concerns of our communities to the Town Board and to provide input and recommendations

CAC Members in Attendance: Lorraine Duryea, Lyn Fitzgerald, Frances Genovese, Bonnie Goebert (chair), Valerie Harte, Diane Sadowski, Bob Schepps, Susan Van Olst.

Absent CAC Members: Evelyn Boxer, Bill Dalsimer, and Ken Moffa are on seasonal break.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve January, 2012 minutes by Bob Schepps, 2nd by Susan Van Olst. All in favor.

Motion to approve February, 2012 minutes by Lorraine Duryea, 2nd by Bob. All in favor.

Motion to approve March, 2012 minutes with these changes: Addition of Bob Schepps' comment to page 3, paragraph 4, "The community needs to be wooed." Motion to approve minutes as changed by Bob, 2nd by Susan Van Olst. All in favor.

General Discussion of CAC membership and distribution of CAC minutes to other CAC's. Bob noted that some "members" of our CAC are actually not "members" according to the CAC Bylaws which state that no more than 3 meetings can be missed. Specifically, if a "member" misses more than 3 meetings, he or she should not be eligible for voting privileges.

Discussion centered on these issues:

- Since the CAC is supposed to represent the opinions of citizens within the hamlets that they represent, anyone can come to any meeting at any time and offer their opinions whether a member or not.

- Even though CAC members might miss a number of meetings, each may have a particular expertise that could shed additional light on an issue that could be valuable. Hence, all should continue to be members so that they can contribute their expertise.
- Letters could be sent to members who do not regularly attend meetings to see if they are still interested in being members. Bonnie said that she could do this.
- The CAC is, after all, a group of volunteers who are interested in various community matters. Need the “rules” be exercised to the “letter of the law?”
- What may the CAC lose by adhering to the “rules of membership,” if it is finally reduced to a small cadre of “members” rather than a larger body of interested and involved citizens?
- It may all boil down to who can vote on matters and who cannot.

After considerable discussion on what makes a “member in good standing,” Bob was asked by the Chair to take up the matter of membership with the Town Board. Bob said that he would do so.

On the question of distribution, our CAC minutes are distributed to Water Mill, North Sea, Hampton Bays and Sag Harbor. We feel that their minutes should also be distributed to our CAC. Additionally, we feel that the Bridgehampton CAC should be included in the distribution plan. As noted by Valerie Harte, “Everything that happens along CR-39 affects all other hamlets.”

Bob countered that when he signed up for the CAC 10 years ago, the purpose of the CAC was to present individual concerns and issues from individual geographic areas to the Southampton Town Board. “There’s not supposed to be communication between the individual CAC’s,” said Bob. Other CAC members disagreed saying that it’s exactly communication and cooperation that gets things done.

After discussion, our CAC agrees that we should see minutes from other CAC’s as noted above. Bonnie said that she would get in touch with other CAC’s to see if this could be accomplished.

Tuckahoe School District Vote on School Budget on May 15, 2012

Lyn Fitzgerald reported that NYS law capping annual increases in local school district property taxes to 2% or the rate of inflation (whichever is less) is effective in local fiscal years beginning on or after January 1, 2012.

Six local school districts (Montauk, East Hampton, Springs, Pierson, Southampton and Tuckahoe) agreed to jointly apply for a grant to study a range of school district cost savings options.

Tuckahoe Common School District is preparing the 2012/2013 School Budget, mindful of the 2% tax levy cap. TCSD wants peoples' comments on the possibility of creating a ninth grade level at Tuckahoe School, researching the feasibility of creating a high school, or considering school consolidation.

Lyn distributed a list of people to whom comments on this issue could be sent.

Frances reported that in the East Hampton Star there was an article about 2 Wall Street executives who live in the East Hampton school district and did a cost analysis of the \$30,000 per student cost in their district vs. the \$19,000 per student mean across Long Island. Frances will forward this article to the CAC membership for our consideration.

Bonnie said that she had emailed Keri Loughlin, the Business Officer at Tuckahoe School to invite her to come to our meeting and had not heard back, probably because the email went into SPAM. She will call to invite Keri to the May meeting.

Bonnie said that she is interested in seeing if Sebonack Golf Club couldn't be persuaded to contribute some of their profits from the 2013 LPGA to Tuckahoe School either into the Tuckahoe School Foundation, or to pay for the purchase of some durable goods like computer tablets.

Bob noted that even if this happened, it would be a stipend and would not lower our taxes.

There is a sense that many residents of Tuckahoe School District do not even know that golf courses don't pay taxes. Perhaps we need to write a Viewpoints on the matter.

In summary, the burden of school taxes within the Tuckahoe School District continues to be a major discussion point in our CAC with an emphasis on the school taxes and the golf courses.

2013 Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) at Sebonack Golf Course on Sebonac Road

Susan remembered that when the U.S. Open had last played in our neighborhood, they had agreed to give free passes to community residents to make up for the disruption in the community. She said that maybe we should look at the LPGA for this perk since the traffic and the busses and the trucks, etc. all careen through our neighborhood.

Bonnie noted that the Sebonack Golf Club is “at the end of a little, country, rural road that ends at Peconic Bay.” The only way to get into the Sebonack Golf Club is through their big iron gates. Which means that all residents’ lives along Sebonac Road are going to be compromised before, during and after the event. Also to be considered: the impact on the ecosystems that exist along this fragile roadway.

Frances countered that local businesses want the LPGA. Discussion revealed that in actuality, because there are so few transient lodging venues in our neighborhoods, spectators will be staying in Riverhead and other hamlets West of where the action is. So, will Southampton village, or Tuckahoe, or Shinnecock Hills see any of the revenue generated from this 130,000+-person spectator event?

Bob remembered that when the U.S. Open had been here, Southampton Village didn’t benefit on a fiduciary basis. His opinion is that local businesses don’t benefit from events like this, although it will bring a lot of prestige to the area because it is a national event that will be televised and will help promote Southampton as a brand.

Diane said that she saw nothing wrong with approaching the LPGA and Sebonack Golf Club and having them understand that the community will not be benefitting from this event, and so, for good will, a donation to our local Tuckahoe School should be considered as part of their operating expenses.

In summary, some members feel that the LPGA should be asked to make a contribution; others disagree. Some feel that while Sebonack should not be asked for a donation to Tuckahoe School, we should continue to promote the reality that Tuckahoe taxes are very high, and part of this has to do with the existence of 4 golf courses in the district and the fact that golf courses don’t pay their “fair share” of taxes.

Lyn summed up her own feeling this way: The golf courses are on property that is zoned residential, but they are not being taxed at the highest value because of the precedent established in a Nassau County ruling a number of years ago. They are being taxed at a special golf course rate as an improved property. So, if they want to be taxed as golf courses for their property, their property zoning should be changed from residential to "golf course." If these golf courses ever decide to sell, they would have gotten through all these years paying a reduced rate on property that they could then turn around and sell at the highest value.

Bonnie closed down the discussion by asking the group how they would feel if the LPGA coordinator, Laura Caleal, was invited to one of our meetings when she moves here in September, 2012, to hear how we feel about the event. The group agreed that this was a good idea.

Update on Morrow's Tuckahoe Center

Short discussion on the IGLH property that Mr. Morrow owns and which is currently zoned residential: He wants to re-zone a 50-foot swath of this land for his driveway off Magee Street. We wonder what will become of the rest of the land? Even though covenants may be put in place, these covenants have a strange way of being overlooked after the fact. Also, it is "down zoning," just like the half acre property he owns on CR-39 and currently has a house on it.

Short discussion of impact of all previous studies of CR-39 including the 1970 Master Plan, the 1999 Comprehensive Plan and the CR-39 Corridor Study (draft form) all of which make it quite clear that any development along CR-39 should be low-volume traffic-generating ... and that building size should be kept at 15,000 sf or smaller to maintain the character of the hamlets. How can the re-zoning even be considered as it so obviously is counter to all of these recommendations?

Short discussion on summer traffic and how Tuckahoe Center will impact on CR-39 traffic which is already at peak. Obviously, shoppers will begin using residential streets and Magee will become a major North-South artery. Based on their experiences, Bob and Diane feel that traffic will not be a problem.

We hope that the traffic consultant who is hired to do this study will be impartial and objective.

Diane feels that HB zoning is not as benign as it may seem based upon her experience living behind Tortorella Pools. Bonnie countered that there are a

couple of new restaurants going in on CR-39 (including a wood-burning pizza oven place in the Sleepy's Mall) and that CR-39 might turn around in spite of itself if left alone.

Short discussion of pro's and con's of hosting a community meeting like we did in 2010 when Mr. Morrow was asking for a PDD.

Net-out: The Tuckahoe Center application continues to be controversial and we will continue to discuss the pro's and con's of it.

Respectfully submitted by Bonnie Goebert, acting secretary.

cc: Supervisor Throne-Holst
Town Board members
Town Attorney
Freda Eisenberg
Tom Neeley
Town Clerk
Tax Receiver
Hon Mark Epley, Mayor, Village of Southampton
Water Mill CAC, Sag Harbor CAC, North Sea CAC, Hampton Bays CAC,
Bridgehampton CAC