

Hamton Bays Citizens' Advisory Committee  
Meeting Notes  
May 16, 2024

In attendance: Colvin Cumberbatch ("CC"), Victoria Firemark ("VF"), James Mackin ("JM"), Michael McCullough ("MM"), Gail Shepard ("GS"), Erin Spellman ("ES"), Christine Taylor ("CT").

Missing: Sarah Doud, Rick Martel, Phillip Metzger, Amy Schmersal-Paradise, Linda Wells.

Guests: Paula Godfrey ("PG") and Bill Pell ("BP").

GS opened the meeting at 7:09pm.

GS: McDonald's is seeking a variance this evening. They want another drive through lane.

GS: Hamptons Supermarket have changed their name, and they now have a circular with prices.

GS: Michael and Cindy sent me responses to the agenda items. On taxation, the last administration had a property tax hold and a reassessment. That hold is still on.

BP: There is a bill that Fred Theile put up that you can't go up more than 5%.

GS: HB is at 63 or 64% of assessed value. People in HB are questioning why. We do have a mortgage on the Middle School, but the average percentage is much higher than 25% that other pay. The school is moving money around and looking at the taxpayers. Nobody minds paying for the school building and the teacher salaries, but the administration salaries are high.

BP: When the re-assessment happens then smaller houses might get a break.

JM: School taxes and other taxes are balanced by State law. The re-assessment will balance the burden by different sized homes. The school budget has a separate vote.

GS: On the LIRR bridge, we now understand that they are thinking of doing the project this summer.

BP: This is a County project, currently in holding pattern due to funding issues. County will let us know when it's back on.

GS: Sidewalk project on Foster and Shinnecock Road. Residents want a sidewalk. Town now says there will only be a bike lane.

BP: Yes, I am working on that project. The plan is to have a bike lane on Ponquogue that runs down Ponquogue to Shinnecock Road to Foster Road to the bridge.

GS: People on Lynn Avenue are afraid to walk their dogs. The speeding cars are a problem.

GS: Any update on BelAire?

BP: As soon as we get an OK, we will start. Hopefully done in the middle of the summer.

SG: What about the diner?

BP: This is private property; they want to demolish it ASAP. Still with the Planning Board.

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GS: On the Shinnecock gas station, the State wants the billboards removed before any access to the highway will be considered. Is there any update?

BP: The decision on the monuments is still being considered by the appellate division of the courts. Not much activity has happened since the new leadership has taken place on the Tribal Council.

GS: There is a cell tower being built on the dock.

BP: It will be done sometime in the fall. Everything is being scaled back.

CT: Please review the bike lane situation.

BP: The plan is to have a bike lane on Ponquogue that runs down Ponquogue to Shinnecock Road to Foster Road to the bridge. Lighthouse will be a one-way road southbound but that will require a public hearing.

CT: A sidewalk is safer. Bikers will have to contend with people walking in the bike lane. It won't work.

BP: Sidewalks take more time. It takes engineering plans and it cost three times the amount a bike lane. There is not enough money.

CT: When will this be done?

BP: This summer. Some of the easements will have to be taken back. There will be bike lanes on both sides.

GS: You have to stand on what other people think is their property to stay out of the road.

GS: People drive too fast on Foster near the park. The neighbors want a speed bump.

BP: Speedbumps bring liability. Speed lights are a better option.

CT: What was the update on BelAire and the diner?

GS: Approvals for demolition are still not through on the BelAire. RFP went out, due 6/20. Demo should be done by the end of the year.

CT: There is no lease on the second building on the diner property. I wish there was still a possibility of a land swap to have the Zwanger more to another spot so we can have a welcome center and roundabout in that spot.

GS: We asked Maria Moore about the roundabout, and she said it was off the table.

GS: McDonald's wants to expand to two lanes for their drive-through. It's a big application.

CT: Turning out of the Stop & Shop parking lot is difficult.

ES: Most fast-food places have more than one drive-through these days.

GS: The building next to McDonalds is still storing heavy machinery.

CT: The service station is demolished. Is that where the 7-11 going?

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GS: Yes, but we don't know if it's the same owner as the other 7-11.

CT: Community supermarket is now Hamptons Supermarket. They are a Latino owned business, and they are not part of the Chamber of Commerce. They should close one entrance in the front because it is dangerous.

PG: They want to open the parking lot with the Post Office.

CT: You can't get a parking spot in the Post Office.

PG: They are going to redesign the parking lot spaces.

CT: Doesn't seem that you can re-configure the parking to make it work.

GS: Will there be more parking in Post Office lot?

PG: It's going to be different. The Community Market was looking at the flow.

CT: Will there be one exit?

PG: I don't think it's finalized and is still with the planning board.

GS: Hamptons Supermarket put out a flyer this week. Now they have posted prices. It's not fair that the businesses on Main Street won't have access to the parking lot if the supermarket patrons use all the spaces.

ES: The market is allowed to do things that other businesses cannot. The owner is getting preferences.

CT: The bakery is getting pushed out of the space. Same for the dry cleaner. Code enforcement needs to get on top of enforcing rules on businesses. There is no reason for this.

ES: Brookhaven and other towns have shut down businesses with window coverings. This is a code violation.

PG: Put a list together a list of properties and send it to Michael and Cindy. If nobody tells the town board or code enforcement, then they don't act.

ES: Neighbors have put up fences and are keeping trailers and trucks.

JM: Town code allows one car for each bedroom and one additional car. Commercial vehicles are allowed if less than 10K lbs. and no longer than 25 ft in length.

CT: We should compile a list. We should start with downtown.

ES: Downtown plan is great, but nothing is being done with the existing businesses on Main Street.

PG: The idea is to create a new vibe downtown. The existing properties are being overlooked if the landlords are not there or don't care.

CT: New buildings will push the older buildings to upgrade because they will rent for the same price and nobody will want an older building.

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PG: When the sewer happens, the old buildings can connect.

CT: Any progress on downtown?

PG: No.

CC: What are we focusing on? Which violations?

PG: You can list any violations.

CT: You should focus on the main issues.

BP: Start with 10 properties a month. Don't do too many at one time. The list helps people stay on track.

GS: We'll copy Bill on the list.

VF: Are we emailing downtown issues to everyone or just Gail?

GS: Send them to all of us and I will send a letter out.

JM: We should all know about the issues, and I can take photographs of the violations.

GS: Good Ground Cleaners has to put up with a lot of issues and she is being pushed out. She has a long-term lease, and her life is miserable. The supermarket is parking truck in front of her store to unload.

BP: The truck can get a ticket.

ES: The police are not helpful with parking issues at the Community Supermarket.

BP: The Fire Marshall can give a ticket if the truck is outside of the parking space. The police cannot do this.

GS: The SOS is not a friendly system because it's difficult to find the house on a map. For example, there was an unlicensed day-care, and it took 6 months to be removed. If businesses don't want to cooperate then they need to be fined.

CT: Did you get a response to your letter to Anne Welker?

PG: The Suffolk Parks Department is moving the sand around on the shoreline and the fence will be put up and the signs will be put back up.

GS: Ponquogue Beach is gone. People will be disappointed with the beach this summer.

PG: I have not heard anything about the beach.

PG: Set up a new Zoom link for the next call, so there is no confusion.

PG: Send the list of things to do about commercial vehicle violations and businesses being run out of those properties.

GS: Closed the meeting at 8:14pm.

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