

Minutes of April 9, 2024 NSCAC Meeting

The Meeting of the NSCAC opened at 7:07 pm

Members Present: Ray Clair, Sheila Comparetto, Barbara Fair, Perry Guillot, Myron Holtz, Dieter von Lehsten, Mark Matthews, Bruce McGowan, Stephanie McNamara, Mary Topping

Guests: Deputy Highway Superintendent Marc Braeger, Harry Braunstein, Linda Clifford, Councilmember Michael Iasilli, Highway Superintendent Charles McArdle, Town Trustee Joseph McLoughlin, Councilmember Bill Pell, Curtiss Schaefer, Deputy Town Supervisor Francis Zappone

Present on ZOOM

Stephen Kiely, Jessica McCarthy, Larissa Popachuk

Minutes. The Minutes of the March 12th meeting were approved as submitted.

Agenda

North Sea Road Improvement Concerns – The County legislation concerning “Complete Streets” does not require sidewalks be installed in conjunction with roadway improvements; community views are to be taken into account.

There was a discussion of the content of the public meeting held between County officials, the Town Highway Department staff and the Town Board. Town Board member Bill Pell stated there were many questions “unasked, unanswered”. Councilwoman McNamara was said to have asked excellent questions. Another member opined that the Town Board meeting and discussion should not be construed as meeting the statute’s requirement to obtain public opinion on the matter of sidewalks. Councilman Iasilli suggested the County should provide schematics so that people can actually visualize the proposed results. He thought the public meeting was a “good step” by the County and suggested there would be a follow-up meeting here at the NSCAC.

Returning to community objections to the sidewalks, Charles McArdle stated it would be the Town’s responsibility to clear and maintain the sidewalks, however the Highway Department doesn’t have the necessary equipment to carry out the task, nor is the purchase of it in their current budget.

Other objections and concerns included destruction of old trees and private landscaping along the proposed roadway improvements; the need for generous driveway curb cuts; inadequate provision of parking for business establishments and overall aesthetics. A member who visited two similar County road improvement

projects stated the various elements under discussion had been included in a “nuanced” way.

A member queried why the County couldn’t create “a meandering pathway for walking and bicycles on one side of the roadway, preserving its rural aspect.” Mr. McArdle responded that he was in favor of such multi-use lanes similar to those that have been created in Watermill and on Foster Avenue in Hampton Bays.

A member asked if there were federal standards regulating speed limits in areas improved with pedestrian sidewalks and bike lanes. Another member observed the proposed street-side design for parking meant that a driver would open their door into the path of traffic. Returning to parking concerns, a member noted that the “County is trying to keep drivers from backing out into the roadway – but the plan did not adequately accommodate truckers’ need to pick up food and coffee”.

The conversation turned to bringing our concerns to the attention of the County before the planning “passes the point of no return” with the engineering work done before the community has the opportunity to weigh on the matters that concern us. A member asked, “Does the Town Board support this plan?” Councilman Iasilli responded that the follow-up remains to be seen; there definitely needs to be more input from the community. It was suggested that we reach out to County Legislator Ann Welker.

Highway Barn: New Structure Built in Wetlands. - Residents whose homes are adjacent to the Town Highway barn on North Sea Road expressed dismay over the sudden appearance of the very large white tent overshadowing their rear yards. Mr. MacArdle stated the tent is the least expensive way to house “millions of dollars worth of equipment” out of the weather and “Green Giant” evergreens would be planted along North Sea Road and neighbors’ properties. The existing Highway Department building will be taken down. While using the former Ambulance Barn for equipment storage had been mentioned at one time, the old ambulance facility may now be re-purposed as a site for equipment repairs east of the Canal.

Members commented the Highway Department use of the site - part of a contiguous wetland deserving of preservation - was completely inappropriate and in conflict with other priorities. (In fact, the Town recently purchased a nearby site on Mary’s Lane to protect this wetland.) The potential degradation from fuel storage and washing salt off trucks, as well as plans which may include installing black top surfaces, are of great concern.

Stachecki Property. The property is currently being offered as zoned for twelve homes.

Bartlett Tree Company Site. The Planning Board approved addition of several buildings on the site for chemical storage. The new structures do not resemble buildings so much as shipping containers, are protected by a chain link

fence, and one is connected to electric power, suggesting the contents require a temperature-controlled environment. This raises significant new questions over the quantity and type of materials being stored, and any potential fire or environmental hazards. Beyond those issues is the incongruous industrial appearance of the installation, all the more evident now that surrounding trees and shrubs have been stripped away.

Strong's Marine. Why has the Town not moved against the operator's ongoing use of an adjacent residential property for boat and trailer storage contrary to the zoned usage? Boats are moved in and out as they are made ready for use. A member reported that as of the date of the Meeting, there were 8 boats, 2 trailers, a van and a truck on the residential site. Another Member reported that when Dave Bofill had his business in the area and stored boats on his property, the Town said it was illegal to do so.

Possible Illegal Trailer on Residential Property. A couple living in a house across North Sea Road from the Tupper Boathouse reported the people occupying the house adjacent to them are using a trailer onsite for food storage.

Solar Array/North Sea Landfill. Deputy Supervisor Frank Zappone addressed concerns about noise possibly emanating from the solar installation at the landfill. The ground-mounted panels will not produce noise from wind. The inverters at the end of each panel will produce modest noise that should be inaudible outside the landfill; decibel monitors will be installed around the perimeter. Once the system becomes operational, measures can be taken if sound becomes an issue. The noise produced by the inverters will not be as loud as the equipment currently operating at the landfill.

Some of the electricity produced can go to income-qualified local residents as a credit of 10% on their electric bill (exclusive of taxes and fees) for the life of the project. A member asked if not-for-profits and small businesses could qualify for the credit. Mr. Zappone responded that the rules were set by the Public Service Commission.

Mulching Operation at Landfill. The NYSDEC asked the Town to reduce the volume of the mulching operation. The Town can only produce "so much" mulch; a portion will be moved to Hampton Bays. Residents could/should be encouraged to do on-site mulching.

North Sea Maritime Center. The NSMC will have a booth and give out information at the 25th Community Preservation Fund Anniversary event to be held at Good Ground Park, 9 Squiretown Road, Hampton Bays on May 11 from 11am to 2pm.

Adjournment.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:14pm.