

**Bridgehampton Citizens Advisory Committee  
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**Fred Cammann, Chair - Tony Lambert Vice Chair - Richard Bruce, Secretary**

**June 10, 2010**

**A REPORT ON THE BRIDGEHAMPTON CAC MEETING HELD ON  
May 24, 2010 AT THE BRIDGEHAMPTON BANK**

**A. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM**

Those present were Richard Bruce, Fred Cammann, John Daly, Jenice Delano, Cathie Gandel, Ian MacPherson, Phyllis MacPherson, Jeffrey Mansfield, John Millard, Christine Smith, Alejandro Saralegui, Jeffrey Vogel, Gerry Lynch

**B. Affordable Housing Authority**

Richard Blowes, the Executive Director of the Town of Southampton Housing Authority and Ann Gajowski, the Business Manager of the Authority came to discuss with us the role of Affordable Housing in the Town of Southampton. The Housing Authority is a newly formed agency assigned to develop a plan for Affordable Housing throughout the town. Because the various villages and unincorporated hamlets of Southampton enjoy a wide variety of population demographics, Mr Blowes and Ms Gajowski are endeavoring to meet with each CAC and other local groups to discuss the needs for local Affordable Housing and to identify possible locations for Affordable Housing projects . Mr. Blowes emphasized that the town has yet to develop a comprehensive plan but has constructed a few Affordable Housing projects, although on a pretty limited scale. Therefore the data arising from these projects, although useful, is still pretty sketchy. .

It is accepted by all present that in Bridgehampton, as well as in the rest of the town, there appears to be a need for Affordable Housing. The question arises where do you build it? In Bridgehampton, as on the rest of the South Fork, the major obstacle to building Affordable Housing is the extraordinary high assessed value of parcels leading to high property tax assignments in most of the villages and hamlets. Therefore the availability of lots for affordable housing projects is severely limited. As a result in Bridgehampton many of our younger residents, especially those who seek to raise a family, simply cannot afford to rent or purchase housing within our community.

In the climate of the present economic downturn there may be an opportunity to obtain parcels of land through tax foreclosures, although this prospect is pretty unlikely on the South Fork. It offers a certainly an un-cheerful solution, since it infers that one family

must leave the premises to make room for another family to move in. On a more positive note, the construction of Affordable Housing units may prove a boon to local contractors and subcontractors if the Housing Authority is permitted to limit construction bidding contracts to local businesses; however, such limitations are difficult to come by and in the past our local contractors have been underbid by businesses from the West who come from areas where the property assessments are less onerous.

Rehabilitating existing run down properties for potential Affordable Housing does not end up adding to the density of available housing and may well cost more per square foot than tearing non code structures down and starting from scratch.

As it has happened in other communities, it may be possible for the Town to rent Affordable Housing units to qualified tenants while encouraging a future purchase program with the town sharing in any capital increase in the value of the properties..

At this time in our local economy the main obstacles facing an Affordable Housing program include the cost of obtaining land, particularly on the South Fork and the availability of funds for Affordable Housing projects coming from the local government facing huge budget problems. The local banks, although supportive of any programs to promote Affordable Housing, remain reluctant to jump into the residential mortgage business even for those who have high credit ratings.

Mr. Blowes and Ms. Gajowski will return to our CAC, as they develop the data for possible provision of Affordable Housing throughout the town as well as on the South Fork.

**C Jeffrey Vogel asked for suggestions about the CAC website: [aboutbridgehampton.com](http://aboutbridgehampton.com).**

The site is rarely used, but it should be an important venue for comments from residents of Bridgehampton. We need to find some way of contacting our fellow Bridgehampton neighbors about zoning, code, budget, traffic and other issues that we discuss at our meetings. Otherwise we lack the influence necessary to inform the Town about how these issues are affecting our community.

**D. The debate concerning the formation of a Regional Transportation Commission continues.**

This is one of the main issues facing Bridgehampton as well as all the other Southampton Town communities. We need feedback from Bridgehampton dwellers. Ian MacPherson reported that there is still a bill pending in the State Assembly recommending an expensive bus/rail program directed towards easing the traffic problems. He points out that this approach appears to be the sole measure being considered. The CAC has doubts that the concept is physically or financially feasible. In its April meeting the CAC passed a resolution expressing its hope that other concepts for traffic easing be investigated by the planned Commission. The CAC feels that the proposed bus/rail concept besides costing a lot of money, will do very little to reduce traffic congestion on the East End.

Once again some members ask that the building of bypasses be investigated. Other members feel that clearing a route for an additional South Fork highway interconnected with North South roads is probably impossible. The required pathway is simply not available without purchasing large amounts of private property for a right of way. The actual cost of constructing a fourth road on the East End would be well beyond any presently conceived budgets.

**E The next meeting of the Bridgehampton CAC will take place on Monday June 28 at 7:00 in the bank meeting room. The main subject of this meeting will be a review of a Planned Development District proposed by the town for the intersection of the Montauk Highway and County Road 39 .**

The Watermill CAC is studying this program and has many reservations which the Bridgehampton CAC may share. The impact of an extensive expansion of commercial buildings and businesses at this location will have an enormous effect on the traffic problems we presently face on the South Fork. Ms. Rachel Verno, the Chair of the Watermill CAC and other members of the Watermill CAC have kindly agreed to meet with us to discuss the proposed PDD at our next meeting and will bring maps and other supporting documents . We will also invite a town representative to attend the meeting to hopefully identify the required community benefits that the Watermill and Bridgehampton communities will reap from this PDD in spite of its obvious contribution to the already serious traffic problems.

Fred Cammann, Chairman Bridgehampton Citizens' Advisory Committee