

**Bridgehampton Citizens Advisory Committee
Post Office Box 1650**

Bridgehampton, New York 11932

cac@aboutbridgehampton.com

Fred Cammann, Chair - Tony Lambert Vice Chair - Richard Bruce, Secretary

July 7, 2010

**A REPORT ON THE BRIDGEHAMPTON CAC MEETING HELD ON
June 26, 2010 AT THE BRIDGEHAMPTON BANK**

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

Those present were Fred Cammann, John Daly, Cathie Gandel, Shira Kalish, Steve Long, Helene Mahoney, Weezie Quimby, Christine Smith, Alejandro Saralegui, Jeffrey Vogel, Peter Wilson

Guests : Rachel Verno, CoChair WaterMill CAC, Gloria Rabinowitz, Secretary Water Mill CAC, Councilwoman Nancy Graboski, Jeffrey Murphree, Southampton Town Planning and Development Administrator,.

B Minutes of the May Meeting were approved.

C. Presentation and discussion concerning a proposed PDD Site Development Concept for 56 Flying Point Road Southampton NY dated May 5, 2010.

Mr. Murphree presented the proposed site development as of May 16, 2010. He emphasized that all plans were premature and that applications have not been made to the Town Board as yet. The Town has presented the proposed development plans to the Water Mill CAC and, tonight, to the Bridgehampton CAC. In general the viewpoints expressed at this meeting were shared by the vast majority of those present. The planned site development, if approved by the Town, will require a change of zoning within the structure of a Planned Development District.

Comments on the proposal:

I would just say that I would hope that the scale of the project is no larger than to justify some "reasonable" return on investment...and that it must satisfy the majority of the immediate residential neighbors at the same time.

In this regard, I would recommend that the developer provide financial projections under various scenarios, including under existing zoning regulations. For example, projected profitability under the original proposal, a year or so ago, and under the new proposal. So long

as the older, smaller proposal looks reasonably successful, he might be required to scale back the project to its original size. The developer clearly must believe he'll make a good deal more money with this big project, rather than building a business that conforms with the existing zoning. But to allow him to build a super-large complex would increase his risk, and his chances of failure, I would think.

Also, it seems to me that there are such immense traffic problems already on County Road 39, that anything that significantly impacted traffic should be avoided. I'm sure we all agree on that score. Maybe part of the land should be devoted to some kind of bypass or some novel traffic solution. And I also think that the impact on all the other commercial businesses in Southampton Village needs to be considered. There are several empty storefronts in Southampton Village already.

However any substantial commercial development at that location could, depending on its nature, have severe effects on Route 27 traffic, which is already overloaded. If being PDD only means that part of it will be residential. I do not see that as a problem since the traffic consequences would be minimal. To my mind therefore the issue is what kind of commercial development

Numerous times the Town of Southampton has used this planning device to legalize and encourage the further over development of the outer town commercial zones in ways that the infrastructure cannot support and the existing residents oppose.

Our Town government seems to want to enable commercial and residential development without limits as it adds to the economic base and creates jobs in the construction industry.

The unincorporated hamlets, particularly those East of the canal are poorly equipped to deal with this strategy on the part of Southampton Town government. Having no formal or legal say in the matter our concerns, opinions and property rights are barely if at all weighted in the establishment of these PDDs.

It all goes to the larger issue of to whose benefit the Town resources are being utilized?

Of course the hamlets themselves are not without blame here, by remaining unincorporated and failing to often have a clear stated view as to what they want for the future of their hamlets (as opposed to a lot of conflicting opinions all "anti"), they leave themselves wide open to the Town taking over their development future.

So ultimately taking control of our land use and the how the future Bridgehampton will look and live rests on either establishing our own municipality or having a real enforceable hamlet plan that reflects the will and rights of the residents and can limit the actions of the Planning Board and ZBA.

To date we have taken neither of these steps and the results are visible every day.

Pretty decent discussion last night, but it takes a while to get to the meat of things. I would suggest more than one meeting on the highway corridor would be in order,

perhaps with a little more narrow definition of the subject to get and keep the discussion on track. People have a tendency to wander into their own area of preoccupation, which is fine in its way, but problematic with a limited time slot. The main issues found their way to the surface, but were not underlined enough.

The highway corridor seems to be getting pounded by opportunistic developers who have clever lawyers and other consultants, who show them how to manipulate the laws and system. Wayne Bruin, Charos's attorney, was a planner with the Town for years and I am almost certain had a lot to do, along with Doug Penny and Fred Thiele, with drafting the PDD law. I believe the law is well-intentioned and very useful in some cases. Its application is the problem!

I believe the issue here is not the PDD law itself, which has more good attributes than bad ones. Perhaps it could use some tweaking to improve or limit its abuse. It is designed to encourage good site planning and a richer and more interesting mix of uses. The key to its use is the **community cost/benefit clause**, which the Town Board must decide in each case. In the example of the PDD at the North Sea junkyard project, the virtues were more clear: much needed "affordable housing" for a junkyard in a relatively benign location. The final execution may be debatable, but the concept was clearly beneficial! An "easy" one!

The problem with Tuckahoe and Charos is that the sites are both located along an over-loaded highway corridor, encourage the spread of strip-type development, and are primarily commercial centers (the housing is a token effort at best). It is my opinion, and I think most residential stakeholders out here would agree, the last thing we need is more consumer-oriented commercial development. One of the problems is, retail space brings in double the income per square foot compared to rental housing of the apartment type.

One of the reasons I moved here from south Florida was to get the hell away from that type of mall-dominated lifestyle. We have a traditional village-center structure here. We should be encouraging and reinforcing that, rather than allowing willy-nilly opportunistic land speculation. (The elephant in the room with this is that parking in our centers is so limited) **But are we really interested in becoming a shopping area destination for non-residents?** That is the only way these retail businesses can make the limited season numbers work!

In the case of Charos, the site is already badly developed, in a somewhat central location, and the owner is saying "more will be better". The Tuckahoe site is mostly undeveloped and not at all central to an existing center. Both will bleed activity away from the existing centers by encouraging a quick, auto-convenient stop for weekenders and day-trippers. The prospect of jobs will also be dangled and of course the increase in tax base. These are shallow benefits. The real problem is what the developer will claim as his "right to use" and the fact that the courts will grant them if the Town resists. And of course the quandary for decision-makers is to have to take the least damaging option and hope for the best.

The politicians and their planners have probably already reached that foregone conclusion and are going to focus on tweaking the site plans to get the least impact and best mix of uses they can. They are simply not in a legal or financial position to question the very existential nature of these projects as they are being

proposed, which is what they should be doing. The traffic issue will be raised and cleverly swept under the rug in the environmental impact statement. It is too amorphous to be understood: it is a "death of a thousand cuts" problem. It has become too big to solve anyway, so why take it out on the individual land owner?

Planners are not in a position to choose, only to tweak! They have no choice but to play the game and see to it that everyone keeps his cards and hands on the table.

The problem is the initiative is with landowners, developers, and their hired consultant guns, not the planners and politicians. If you have ever watched what happens during the development of a community master plan, you will realize that. The result is hardly worth the paper and man-hours expended. It is a codification of the system as it is: land not as a community resource, but a commodity.

I would like to think that we could do something about these two proposals, but the best influence we can probably have is to pressure the Planning Board to simply strike the best deal they can by limiting the retail footage and getting as much housing and open space the developer will tolerate. If we have any traffic impact mitigation tools available, which I am not aware of at the Town level, that might soften the blow. The Town has little jurisdiction over County roads. Frankly, I am more interested in encouraging good mixed uses in our Village centers, such as housing above stores, than this kind of sprawl.

Very well put...almost like you knew what you were talking about! Thanks for the thoughtful writing. I think you were getting to my question about what really motivates the town planners? So many people have moved here to avoid congested suburbs/cities but no one in town hall seems really to care. They are talking about taking an ugly intersection. But that haphazard development is probably better (I like that '50s car dealership on the south side for instance) than some over-sized development with an entrance on what is essentially a small residential road (Flying Point). And let's not forget that more development means more energy consumption Unless some green elements are introduced.

I am sort of shocked that the intersection isn't being treated as a whole especially when one considers that it really is the entrance to Southampton and a lot of traffic moves through there. Also let's not forget that The Parrish breaks ground in the Fall I think on a new museum....my guess is they're hoping for lots of visitors and that can only mean more traffic.

I wonder if the Town would ever consider a PDD for the entire intersection?

I agree completely. I was shocked to hear that they paid some consultant \$100,000 to draw up that early Charos site plan. What the hell was that all about? Did I hear that correctly? Usually the developer bears such costs and then some, in the form of impact fees.

By the way, the suggestion for a roundabout at that intersection is very interesting. Perhaps Charos and the outfit across the street could fork over something toward the improvement of that intersection, since they would be contributing so heavily to its congestion. Would that not be the very minimum one could expect?

You know, if we cannot stop this type of development cold in it's tracks, which would be my first choice, why can't we find a way to make it so expensive for them with impact fees and mitigation, that they think twice about investing here and go to Brookhaven or some other Town that loves this type of commercialization?

The Town's leadership is just too easy on these developers! If we can't just say "no", let's make them pay plenty for asking, rather than bending over for them ,which is what I see happening.

I recall the discussions with Suskind, et al, concerning the Barnes & Noble proposal, and although there were competitors against the plan for obvious reasons, I did not discern any community support (other than Suskind if I recall correctly) for the PDD proposal.

The Supervisor's position may be politically savvy, but it is a prescription for monkey business and abuse. Thus, I do not believe that PDD should be a planning device, period.

There was plenty more, but a summary would be accurate if it reported that the reaction to this PDD and indeed to the whole concept of using PDDs as a planning tool was mighty dubious.

D. TOPICS FOR A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BRIDGEHAMPTON CAC on MONDAY JULY 19 AT 7:00 PM AT THE BRIDGEHAMPTON BANK .

A CAC member went to the Planning Board meeting on June 25

. Kopp LLC has shrunk the size of that agricultural barn on Mitchell Lane to 4000 square feet from 14,000 square feet. Still lots of questions about purpose of this and one of the neighbors was there to raise some objections.

The Citerella item was withdrawn. I'm not sure what they want to do now. Does anybody else know?

Richard Warren from Inter-Science Research Associates of Southampton made a presentation about the new BNB building on the corner of the turnpike and Montauk Highway. They have really changed the design, pushed the building back further and done a pretty good job of listening to community comments. Rick Warren of Inter-Science is happy to come to the CAC in July and give a presentation. We have 30 days to comment on these plans. Note this is the corner of the intersection that encompasses the Beverage Center, Starbucks, and other buildings Further development on this corner will have a severe impact on that intersection.

Fred Cammann Chair Bridgehampton CAC