

CAC West Meeting

Thursday, May 2, 2013

Attendance: *Hank Beck, Janet Beck, Douglas Adams, Joyce Flynn, Mike Anthony, David Blaustein, Carol Corcoran, John Bouvier*

Guests: *Kevin McAllister, Peconic Baykeeper; Brad Bender; and from Southampton Town, Christine Fenton, and Rachel Longobardi.*

The CAC meeting opened 7PM at the Westhampton Beach Library.

Hank Beck gave a brief run-through of the Speonk Solvent Plume Working Group that occurred earlier this evening. Community representatives, including Fred Theile, Jay Schneiderman, Anna Throne-Holst and representatives from the NY State Dept. of Conservation met together to discuss the future handling of the Speonk Plume, the implications of the underground movement of the water, and possible remediation efforts.

Hank introduced Kevin McAllister, the Peconic Bay Keeper, who made a computer-aided presentation about the state of our local waters and the critical issues that must be resolved. Kevin's background in Marine Biology, as well as his depth of knowledge of local and federal laws allows him to bring strong resources to the battle for our surface waters.

He spoke about the problem of the explosive housing development boom that began in the 50's and 60's followed by increased coastal development, reaching the future (now) consequence of septic runoff leaching into the bays.

He pointed out the long-term effects of the destruction of native marshes and plantings along the shore line that used to serve as natural pollution filters. Compounding these changes are the huge increase in the use of fertilizers and pesticides also flowing inexorably into our bays. He briefly spoke about the use of more sophisticated septic systems in larger developments.

About 2006 the coastal areas used for nurseries of young eels and crabs, began feeling these devastating cumulative effects compounded again by the loss of eel grass and its replacement with undesirable sea lettuce.

Kevin's key point is that the updated septic systems proposed are grossly insufficient to help resolve these problems and that immediate action is needed to develop very high standards if our tourist economy is to survive as our basic economic engine.

Hank updated us on the Strebel Senior rental project. It is no longer being proposed with the developers that made a presentation to us about a year ago. That does not mean that there are no plans for this property, it just means that this particular project will not go forward as planned.

Serenity Estates, began in 2004, is now being developed as of right. Because to it's location near the Speonk Plume we are asking that a vapor barrier or positive air flow system be installed for

the 13 new homes. We also thought it would be better for one septic system be shared by the 13 homes, rather than 13 separate septic systems.

Rubio Premier Motors purchased the former Chevrolet dealership on Montauk Highway across from Bailey's field. Carol Corcoran asked about the lighting on the property which used to light up the night sky. The good news; they installed dark sky lighting which now directs the light down. That is a wonderful improvement. The parking lot has been newly paved as well.

There is a vacant five acre piece of property on Seabreeze, across from the Bailey property. Hank wrote a letter from the CAC to propose it for purchase by the town. It would be a nice addition to the acres already owned.

Clare Bisceglia will be leaving the PAC after an 11 year stint. She is planning to leave the area and head south towards warmer climes. Clare has been the lead in supervising and growing the Performing Arts Center - a great mark of accomplishment.

Arma (Ham) Andon, former Mayor of Westhampton Beach, former Commodore of the Westhampton Yacht Squadron and a long-time member of Westhampton Rotary is resigning as Commander of the local VFW after 19 years in that post. Ham is a living treasure of a fixture in Westhampton Beach. He is 94 years old and has quite a history locally. Ham wrote a book about his exciting life here and his donations to our town. Ham survived the Battle of the Bulge in WWII with an injury he still carries. During the 1938 Hurricane he escaped from Dune Road by sailing his boat across the bay. Ham served as Mayor of WH Beach from 1986 to 1994. Ham will be speaking at the WHB Library about the book he wrote.

Our last speaker was a representative from the Town of Southampton, Rachel Longobardi. She is a Southampton Town intern working with Christine Fenton the Southampton Town Director of Municipal Works. The Town is offering an energy audit of your home, to assist homeowners in reducing the amount of energy usage. The audit can help find areas in your home where energy is wasted. The audit is free. Should you decide to make modifications, low-interest financing may be provided to help with any recommended modifications.

They will provide a list of ENERGY STAR Contractors for making modifications. The audit will take a few hours, and there is no commitment required. For more information, visit SHGREENHOMES.ORG or call 631-702-1753.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday June 6, 2013 at 7:00 PM at the Westhampton Free Library.