

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes



The CPAC meeting was Hybrid and YouTube Live Stream

CPAC Members Present: Jo-Ann Robotti, Sean Clark, John Kerr, Jay Card Jr.

Excused: Rebecca Mundy, Wendy Turgeon

Comprehensive Task Force Members Present: Meg Larsen (*Councilwoman*), Amber Brach-Williams (*Town Supervisor*) **Excused:** Julia Weisenberg

Town Officials Present via Zoom: Benjamin Dyett (*Councilman*)

Zoom Attendees: Lori Beard Raymond, Karen Kiaer, Jan Sudol, Kim Noland, Ed Hydeman, Pam Demarest, Sandra O'Connor, Stella Lagudis, Kathleen De Rose

Press via Zoom: Julie Lane (*Shelter Island Reporter*)

1. Call to Order 6:31 pm: Meg Larsen

2. Minutes

- January 18, 2024 CPAC Meeting Minutes In-Progress (Review at the next CPAC Meeting)

3. Chapter 8 (*Parks, Open Space & Waterways*)

Public Comments: Consider the replacement of the anchorage area at Reel Point and Shell Beach with a mooring field. Advantages would be possible income for Bayman, control the capacity of the area, and preventing overuse.

The inspection of vessels and island waters to determine whether holding tanks are present and functioning properly should be performed on a regular and increased bases. (NOTE: that is the purview of the Police Department and Bay Constables).

When testing indicates levels of Enterococcus the next level testing should be considered conducted to determine whether the bacteria is from human or animal sources, without the information of testing is a waste of time and money since it does not provide us with the information necessary to establish remedial steps.

CPAC Discussion: This is typically after a heavy rain. When we do our water testing, there's higher bacteria levels because the scat from the shore and land run into the bay, and also fertilizers and things like that run into the bay. To Be Determined: Does it matter if it is from an animal or human.

Public Comments: The current town code does not take into consideration the extremely diverse nature of the island shoreline. One set of criteria is inadequate to address the needs and requirements of each portion of the shoreline which consists of creeks, etc.

There has not been an increase in the use of the West Neck anchorage for the past 10 years that often reaches capacity on peak weekends, but most days of the year it's empty. What has increased is the number of boats outside of the anchorage area, which needs to be addressed with tickets, not just repeat warnings.

Seaplane traffic: flights of a seaplane is considered a vessel and is subject to comply with all pertinent maritime regulations, which include speed limits in town waters. (NOTE: CPAC has recommended the enforcement of seaplane usage on the inside waters)

The number of permanent moorings is down, the Town should consider letting commercial entities with internal grids such as the yacht club, or Coecles Harbor Marina & Boatyard manage their own moorings.

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Much of the erosion of Reel Point is caused by the bulkheads to the north which prevent material drift, reflect wave energy and worse plus turbulence that increases erosion to the south at Reel Point, and the idea that the township armor or hardened Reel Point shall be to protect the homes and businesses that are within those harbors and who benefit from it and take the risk to build their properties by the water are because of their proximity to the water seems misguided.

CPAC Discussion: The Town has reviewed the recommendation from Army Corps outlining that Reel Point was a natural shoreline that was creating a more real enforced natural way with grasses, etc. Now there's a push from the Peconic Estuary Partnership to make living shorelines easier to get through the New York State (Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). There is no history of the DEC reviewing and approving permits for living shorelines. People aren't allowed to put in a bulkhead if there hasn't been one previously existing, but they're allowed to maintain and replace the ones that currently have. The Town does have a recommendation to follow up with the shoreline access Task Force's recommendations and to make sure that there is a policy and procedure for continued maintenance of all the access points on the island.

Public Comments: Recommend moratorium discussion by the town board with WMAC on both new and changes to existing docks. Applications are very complicated and more clarity and restrictions need to be implemented. Overall study and review should take place including how to coordinate wetlands issues with dock permits. (NOTE: A dock moratorium is currently being debated).

4. Chapter 9 (Quality of Life: Historic, Cultural & Community Resources)

Public Comments: A lack of a town planner plus the general disdain for planning speaks volumes about our island culture. Islanders take pride in the do it yourself and local knowledge culture. A significant improvement to Island governance and island use approvals could be achieved by hiring a town planner. The town board favors locals for committee positions over experience, the results is a Planning Board that tries to find rationale for granting wetlands permits and provides no capabilities that traditional Planning Boards provide as a resource to town government. A planner with facilitator skills would be a tremendous asset versus paying big dollars to the town attorney to enforce decorum in town meetings and entering into countless lawsuits.

CPAC Discussion: CPAC has recommendation to town government to increase the capacity for planning and implementation which includes the potential for a town manager, a town planner, and a water specialist for hydrologist.

Public Comments: The historic burial grounds located in the Presbyterian church property should have a historic designation. Not only does it have nine revolutionary patriots, but many of the islands early settlers.

CPAC Discussion: There is a section on promoting the town's history and cultural resources under the charge of the historical Advisory Commission plus continue to maintain and preserve historic records. Stone records and the headstones would be considered historic records for preservation. If the Town wrote and activated the Historical Advisory Commission, and they would work as a liaison to either the historic district floating zone and preservation or historic preservation kind of activities.

Public Comments: The Town already has the Historical Society that is a state of the art history center already in place that stores and preserves over 100,000 documents, photos and historical records. They have already done a historical timeline oral histories and have many programs and events in place to educate. Why would the Town want to spend time and energy duplicating was already in place with limited resources?

CPAC Discussion: The Town was hoping to work in collaboration with the Historical Society, in keeping records and collecting information, and that would help updating properties on the House registry as part of what we

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have listed. The Historical Society has a lot of binders with the hundreds of listings of information. How can we get a digital file that's readily available when it needs to be looked at. The Town should get this information in GIS. All permits are listed in GIS. The Building Department is using Muncicity software that collects more information for referencing and sharing info with the Assessor's Office.

Public Comments: There should be better coordinated and expanded mental health services on the island. The mental health needs of seniors are well served by the senior center when issues come to their attention. Similarly, the school does its best to assist our children. However, there is a gap in services for the adult non senior population. It's well known that there is substances abuse, domestic abuse, financial issues, and housing challenges. Also the non-American born residents language barriers may affect significant numbers of the island adult community. It is unusual and commendable that the town hired a social worker to assist with mental health crisis and to provide referrals for ongoing counseling however her hours are extremely part time and she has not been given permanent confidential office space to adequately perform her duties.

CPAC Discussion: The Town lists DASH program (Diagnostic, Assessment, and Stabilization Hub) in Suffolk County. The program is available to Suffolk residents who struggle with mental health and substance use disorders including assessments, counseling, and care management. The Town Social Worker has been meeting clients at the Library and at Justice Hall. There is a lack of mental health resources for teenagers. Consider producing a Shelter Island mental health brochure.

Public Comments: The plan proposes replacing the objective noise ordinance with an equitable approach rather than better enforcing and strengthening of the current ordinance.

The chapter devotes insufficient attention to town governance addressing.

There are no recommendations for increasing public participation in town government and making government more transparent, such as by scheduling meetings at times were convenient to working people releasing complex sets of relevant documents long before a hearing or meeting concerning them so that the public can review them.

The Town should make all meetings hybrid whether or not legally required.

No attention is made to avoiding conflicts of interest, or at least the appearance of them were for example, a committee head or contains a member someone who frequently has an interest in matters before the body.

Before the effort was suspended by the town board there's a long standing and serious substance problem on the island that should not be shoved under the rug mental health services have commendably been receiving greater attention than in the past more can and should be done as noted in Nancy Green's comment.

CPAC Discussion: Noise ordinance comments were already discussed. The noise recommendation is to strengthen the current noise ordinance not to relax it. There is a description of how excessive noise can impact quality of life for residents. Sometimes it is open to interpretation when it reads: at property line to or beyond. There's a lot of confusion as people will download apps on their phones and think that that is accurate noise level but you have to be able to cancel out the ambient noise. Sometimes the background noise is actually louder than the music and that is unenforceable from an amplified music standpoint. Weddings usually are the cause of complaints.

Public Comments: The Town needs more transparency.

CPAC Discussion: CPAC recommended utilizing new tools for communication and transparency, as well as improved record keeping technologies, which will make it easier to get information out to the public. The town

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has invested in a new website that will be available in mid-February, that has features that will make it easier to communicate with the public at large.

Public Comments: The community dynamics have changed. The plan needs to reflect the priorities and values of the current community and support the wellbeing of its residents. Recent growth and population and summer visitors has led to problems such as traffic noise like pollution impacts on the water supply, overcrowding of beaches, littering and an erosion of small town traditions and shared community purpose. As the island becomes more developed and the seasonal population wealthier and more transient, it has become increasingly challenging for those with low or moderate incomes to afford to live on the island as property values and costs of living rise.

CPAC Discussion: It's become increasingly challenging to afford to live on the island for residents with low or moderate incomes.

Public Comments: The Shelter Island Library is a wonderful community resource and should be open on Sundays.

CPAC Discussion: There is not a high demand to have the library open on Sundays as it has been tested.

Public Comments: Shelter Island Heights supports the appointment of the historical Advisory Commission to review projects before being sent for permits included historic landscapes in the heights as historic original historic district creation relied heavily on parks and open space. The Heights strongly supports preservation guidelines and protections codified, which do not use surf zoning or wetlands codes. However, we do not recommend Nantucket like regulations, preservation guidelines may be accomplished with the historic district overlay zone. And the regulations must be enforced by the town.

The Heights suggests that the town incorporates review by the New York State Historic Preservation Office as part of permit reviews for projects on historic structures and or in the Heights Historic District.

CPAC Discussion: The Heights may have to develop their own committee to deal with these items. The Heights would probably have a member on the historic Advisory Commission.

***** NOTE: To hear all the Comments and Discussion topics please view the meeting by clicking here:**

<https://www.youtube.com/live/u5J4NAGCITY?si=De0cHnmH6ChkHBTa>

Next Steps: Continue review of Chapters 9, and review Chapters 10 and 11.

Adjourned at 8:34 pm

Submitted by,

Coco Lee Thuman

CPAC Clerk

(Approved February 9, 2024)