



TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON

159 Pantigo Road
East Hampton, New York 11937

PETER VAN SCOYOC
Supervisor

(631) 324-4140
pvanscoyoc@eamptonny.gov

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EAST HAMPTON ORDERED BY COURT TO CURTAIL VEHICLE ACCESS TO NAPEAGUE “TRUCK BEACH”

In response to the recent court order, East Hampton Town is issuing and posting the following notification:

Please be advised that pursuant to recent court rulings, the area of beach between the eastern side of Napeague Lane to the western boundary of Napeague State Park, has been determined to be private property. Any Beach Vehicle Permit issued by the Town, regardless of when issued, does not authorize the permit holder to drive or park on this area of beach and driving or parking on these areas of beach is no longer permitted until further notice. Beach Vehicle Permit holders may still access and use all other existing permitted areas in the Town.

*Access restricted for now, by court order, as town pursues legal options;
Supervisor Van Scoyoc vows to fight claim of private ownership over beach, would pursue condemnation if necessary*

A February, 2021 Appellate Court decision ruled in favor of adjacent homeowners claiming private ownership of the beach, but allowed continued public access for fishing purposes

The approximately 4,000-foot stretch of beach in question, east of Napeague Lane in Amagansett and west of Napeague State Park, is popular with four wheel-drive users and became known as “Truck Beach.”

Following the February court decision in the homeowners’ favor, the Town recently posted signs notifying the public that vehicular access to the beach, under the court order, was for fishing and fishing-related purposes only.

However, on June 4 the court granted the homeowners a temporary restraining order demanding that the town “prohibit and prevent any and all driving and/or parking on the beaches owned by the Plaintiff Homeowners Associations,” or face being held in contempt of court.

“We need to take every step necessary in order to insure our traditional beach access rights, no matter where they are within the township, and I’m committed to using every possible means to do so,” East Hampton Town Supervisor Peter Van Scoyoc said at a town board work session on Tuesday. “But in the interim we’re asking the public to just be patient and comply until we get further clarification and chart our next step.”

The case of Seaview at Amagansett, Ltd. v. Trustees of Freeholders & Commonalty of Town of East Hampton stretches back for years. Four homeowners’ associations representing nearby residents claimed that the area of beach bordering the residential streets, landward of the mean high water mark, was included in an 1882 land sale by the Town Trustees to Arthur Benson, and that ownership was included in subsequent property deeds.

In 2016, the New York State Supreme Court rejected the homeowners’ claims and decided the case in favor of East Hampton Town and the East Hampton Town Trustees, upholding public ownership of the beach.

Based on that ruling, the Town suspended plans to initiate condemnation proceedings over the beach to insure public access by taking the land through eminent domain. Supervisor Van Scoyoc said this week that the town may once again pursue that option.

However, the 2016 decision was thrown out by the Appellate Court earlier this year.