

WAINSCOTT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Meeting of April 1, 2023

Members of the committee:

Carolyn Logan Gluck, Chair
Jose Arandia
Lori Anne Czepiel
Dennis D'Andrea
Hersey Egginton
Barry Frankel
Anthony Liberatore
Pamela Mahoney
Barry Raebeck
Bruce Solomon
Sally Sunshine
Phillip Young

Excused Absence:

Hersey Egginton

Elected Official:

Sylvia Overby, Town Councilwoman, Liaison

Invited Speaker:

David Eagan, President, Wainscott School Board of Trustees and Deborah Haab, Wainscott School Superintendent on the Wainscott School

Members of the Public:

Tori Butt and Pat Loret de Mola
Doug Carey
Mary Luster Carpenter
Catherine Casey, Executive Director, East Hampton Housing Authority
Ellen Corwin
Tracy Coyle
John Cullen
Barbara D'Andrea, Wainscott Sewing Society, Chapel
Jim Daigle
Cynthia Del Mastro
Michael Daly, Sag Harbor

Sara Davison, Executive Director, Friends of Georgica Pond
Michael Diesenhaus, Amagansett CAC Member
David Doty, East Hampton CPF Citizens Committee. Commissioner, Suffolk County Planning Commission
Lynn Cronin and Howard Fine
Abigail Fleming
Ron Franklin
Bryony Freij, East Hampton Housing Authority, Commissioner; East End YIMBY, Leader
Alex Gertsen, Director, Airports and Ground Infrastructure, National Business Aviation Association
John and Annie Hall
Chris and Melanie Hayward
Bradley Howe
Geoff and Marie-Jose Hunter
Rona Klopman, Chair, Amagansett CAC
Bud and Phyllis Leventhal
Irwin Levy
Marian Lindberg
Michael Mahoney
Carol Mandel and Vincent Covello
Jaine Mehring, Founder, Build.In.Kind
Bonnie Myers and Richard Myers, WCAC Chairman Emeritus, Town of East Hampton Architectural Review Board Chairman Emeritus
Richard and Tanya Nevins
Carole Slater, WCAC Chair Emeritus and Marty Boorstein
Daniel Spelman
Lisa and Mitch Solomon
Jon and Julie Stoner
Jen Tanzmann
Jon and Candace Wainwright
Christopher Walsh, East Hampton Star
Lori Weinstein
Michael Wooton
Mike Wright, The Press News Group

WCAC Minutes April 1, 2023

The meeting was opened at 9:06 AM by Chair Carolyn Logan Gluck. The minutes of the March 4, 2023, meeting were approved.

David Eagan, Wainscott School Board President, addressed the meeting with an update on the proposed affordable housing. An update to the project in December would change the earlier plan for 50 one-bedroom units to one that would provide 50 secondary bedrooms, 18 two-bedroom units and 16 three-bedroom units. That would translate to an occupancy rate of 1 person minimum to 2 people maximum per bedroom with no age limits. This plan could potentially strain the Wainscott School, causing the school to eliminate grades, send students to other schools or force the need for a new facility. It is estimated that 35 children could be added to the rolls and this number may well be understated. Currently, there are 72 households with 28 students in the schoolhouse. The number of students would peak in the beginning, causing immediate action and then drop off over time.

The school is asking for “reasonable relief” and greater accuracy with the numbers. 211 new residents are anticipated by the town, which would translate to a 64% increase in Wainscott’s population. There is a concern about the impact on the community without adequate services. An Impact Analysis can be found on wainscottschool.org.

Deborah Haab, District Superintendent, indicated that costs are driven by students’ needs including tuition, other needed services, and transportation. The state budget aid increases do not apply because of the size of the district. An increase of enrollment this year caused considerable impact and wasn’t budgeted for. Public school districts must take all students and 68 percent of the budget now goes towards students not attending class in the schoolhouse. The district is looking at a budget increase of \$1,000,000.

Dennis D'Andrea stated that there would be a strain on the community and local people need to be listened to. Chair Carolyn Logan Gluck indicated that housing is a nationwide debate now. Barry Frankel said that the additional housing will push us to the limits of resources. Communities need a heterogeneous population, but the risk needs to be assessed. Barry Raebeck stated that the community needs more affordable housing and young people but that the impact will be extraordinary. Youth with special needs requirements will increase. There needs to be a cap, Wainscott has little to say about it and estimates don't work. The town should accept the excess. Lori Anne Czepiel asked why Wainscott should be responsible for busing students long distances and felt that the town needs to provide needed facilities. Town Board Liaison Sylvia Overby indicated that it would be taken under advisement.

Bruce Solomon asked how new development impacts Wainscott. Developers are mining the Hamptons and particularly Wainscott. He wondered if a developer tax would ease the burden of expenses as we need revenue other than the tax base. Sylvia Overby indicated that it might not be constitutional. Deborah Haab indicated that a tax levy is just about the only way. David Eagan stated that the student population is dropping overall, however year round rentals are bringing in students and multiple families are living in one household as people have to leave sold rentals. Many communities impose land use fees and state aid or tax levies are the only accepted alternatives.

There was further discussion about taking the building of a new school off the table and limiting the number of students, although it was acknowledged that affordable housing is needed and more is coming. Carolyn Logan Gluck asked what would happen if there was a cap in place and the number of new students exceeded that cap. David Eagan felt that there will always be room and that there does not need to be a hard cap. However, he felt that the potential housing could be age restricted and the number of secondary bedrooms could be adjusted. There were several questions about the legality of age restrictions.

Lori Anne Czepiel asked about the possibility of changing the school boundaries to include more participation. David Eagan indicated that could be a possible solution with Sag Harbor. Bud Leventhal asked if there was a study of the potential impact of non-English speaking students and asked if construction could be done in stages to help minimize the impact. Deborah Haab felt that there was no way to easily predict. Sylvia Overby indicated that it was not cost effective to build the project in stages. Melanie Hayward lives on Route 114, has a child attending the Wainscott school and would like to see more options. She doesn't want to overcrowd the school or see large tax increases. She sees Sag Harbor as a viable alternative. Michael Daly offered that the population of East Hampton has increased 33% in ten years (2010-2020). He felt that the town has a responsibility to increase housing and schooling and that the discussion will be continual one.

Lori Anne Czepiel asked how our tax increase compares with other areas. David Eagan indicated that Wainscott's is the lowest, but this year's increase is dramatic, and that state aid is less for Wainscott because of the higher property values. Sylvia Overby stated that the residents of Gansett Meadow all work in the community and that the high price of housing is negatively affecting the job market.

Town Board Liaison Sylvia Overby

Re: the airport DGEIS, Anthony Liberatore talked about the need to take potential closure or a slot system at the East Hampton Airport seriously. He does not want closure to be an afterthought. The benefits of closure were not emphasized and the effects on other areas were. Barry Raebeck agreed and is getting weary of writing letters. He wants to see closure emphasized in discussion of any environmental impact. Sylvia Overby indicated that nothing is written in stone, that the attorneys are looking for balance of opinions and town board isn't looking for status quo. Anthony Liberatore reported that the helicopter traffic was awful the weekend before the meeting and asked if there have been any route changes. He feels that all flights should not be heading over Wainscott.

Sylvia Overby reported on South Fork Wind progress. The contractor continues to wrap up cable work and grading on access road. They have requested an extension of time to resurface Beach Lane instead of patching.

A special permit was deemed required of the Wainscott Commercial Center and it was asked if there will be another session later in the season as there weren't enough people attending the first. Sylvia indicated that the hearing was closed and that the comments were terrific. Jaine Mehring stated that timing was a concern, that there may be another chance to comment, and numerous people submitted written comments. David Doty said that the application was sent back from the Suffolk County Planning Commission as incomplete and that it will come back at some point in time.

The Gun Club is in the lawyers' hands right now. Anthony Liberatore indicated that he did not like the article in the paper. The emphasis was wrong. The town should have done an environmental review as soon as they wanted to renew the lease. The town is on the wrong side environmentally and the Gun Club attorneys are awful. Thankfully, a review is in process now. Barry

Raebeck felt that the town was hypocritical. He indicated that the lease states that there can't be environmental impact but feels that the users are the ones most affected by the presence of lead. Also, he is worried that some people won't admit that stray bullets are coming from the gun club. He mentioned that the town supervisor is a member, that the police can practice in Calverton and that the lease should not be renewed. Carolyn Logan Gluck offered that this has been in discussion for a long time, interested parties have spoken to the town board, but not enough has been accomplished. If all parties could have constructive dialog, talks would be better. Barry Raebeck stated that people's lives are in danger and property values have been negatively affected while about five aspects of the lease have been violated.

The meeting ended at 12:04 PM.