

WAINSCOTT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Wainscott Citizens Advisory Committee (WCAC)
Meeting of May 4, 2019

Member Attendance:

Carolyn Logan Gluck, Co-Chair
Susan Macy, Co-Chair
Dennis D'Andrea, WCAC Chair Emeritus
Rick Del Mastro, WCAC Chair Emeritus
Lori Anne Czepiel
Frank Dalene
Michael Hansen
Anthony Liberatore
Bruce Solomon
Phil Young

Excused Absences:

Jose Arandia, WCAC Co-Chair Emeritus
Barry Frankel, WCAC Co-Chair Emeritus
Sally Sunshine
Cindy Herbst

Elected Officials:

Jeff Bragman, Town Councilman, Liaison to WCAC

Invited Guest Speakers:

David Egan, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Wainscott School
Deborah A. Haab, Supervisor of Wainscott School

Members of the Public:

Si Kinsella
Francine Lembo
Michael O'Neill
Daniel Osborne
Judith Prause
Carole Slater
Mike Wright (East Hampton Press)

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Carolyn Logan Gluck, Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 9:10 am.

April 6, 2019 minutes

The April 6, 2019 minutes were seconded and approved.

Wainscott School – Update, Budgeting, Challenges and Needs

Chair Emeritus Dennis D’Andrea introduced David Eagan and Deborah Haab from the Wainscott School. Chair Emeritus D’Andrea noted that he has records for the school dating back 150 years and shared some anecdotes and other thoughts about the unique importance of the Wainscott School to the community. He also noted that the annual school social occurred yesterday at the Wainscott Chapel. Chair Emeritus D’Andrea presented Wainscott School book bags to WCAC Co-chairs Carolyn Logan Gluck and Susan Macy, and Councilman Bragman.

Mr. Eagan, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Wainscott School, began his presentation with some background of his involvement with the Board of Trustees since 2004 when Nancy McCaffrey and Iris Osborn asked him to help with construction of the new school building.

Mr. Eagan then turned to the school’s budgeting process and challenges. He reviewed how the school prepares and funds its annual budgets and discussed the current and upcoming budgets and a proposed tax levy increase, emphasizing the context of the proposed increase (including that the district does not receive state support) and the dual goals to right-size the budget and reduce the year-end unrestricted fund balance that the Board has traditionally maintained. He provided some background on the Board’s prior approach to unrestricted funds, including the need for some financial flexibility given the small aggregate budget size and the swing in student-age resident populations increasing mid-year, balanced by state requirements which were recently brought to the board’s attention in an audit process.

Mr. Eagan also discussed the significant and unexpected recent increase in school-age students in Wainscott, and the impact on school crowding and staff as well as the budget for the required tuition payments by the Wainscott School District to the other schools Wainscott resident students attend. He noted that this trend, particularly when coupled with possible future increases from affordable housing being discussed by the East Hampton Town Board to be placed in the Wainscott School District area, present the Wainscott School Board with the difficult options to build a new traditional size school in place of the existing facility, which would be costly given current requirements and change the nature of the school and community, or close Wainscott School and become a tuition-paying school district with no actual facility or staff.

Member Frank Dalene asked from where the new students have come. Mr. Eagan noted that there are 30+ students new to the Wainscott School District that the district did not anticipate, who he understands reside at the Cozy Cabins Motel. He stated his understanding that some relocated from other motels in East Hampton that were closing or being converted. He also compared Sagaponack, noting that while Sagaponack and

Wainscott have the same year-round population as a result of the recent changes Wainscott now has 137 students compared to 38 students in Sagaponack.

Mr. Eagan stated that neither the Wainscott School nor the Board of Trustees has been consulted or involved in any of the discussions about possible affordable housing being added to the Wainscott area and the impact on the Wainscott School District. He then drilled down further in the budget, the state audit process and findings and the cost per student. Members of the WCAC then posed additional follow-up questions to Mr. Eagan, and Members Dalene and Michael Hansen emphasized the unique and fine education their children received and are receiving at the Wainscott School.

Mr. Eagan closed by restating the two options the Wainscott School faces and requested that the Wainscott School and School Board have a voice in the East Hampton Town discussions about affordable housing. Chair Logan Gluck proposed that the WCAC submit a letter to the East Hampton Town Board making such a request.

Chair Emeritus Rick Del Mastro then posed questions to Councilman Jeff Bragman about the legality of the Cozy Cabins conversion from motel to full-time residences, and a discussion ensued among the members and Councilman about what are the relevant regulations and oversight relating to such a conversion in use, particularly in light of the Hamlet Study and the LBO district.

Liaison Report: Councilman Jeff Bragman

Wainscott Sand & Gravel

Councilman Bragman noted that he had participated in a call with the DEC where the DEC stated that it will conduct the site characterization rather than the owner. It is expected to begin in a week or so.

Peak Savers Proposal to EH

Councilman Bragman then reported back about the program proposal that had been presented to the Town last week by Peak Savers, and questions posed to him last meeting by the WCAC and public about the use of diesel generators in the proposal including in Wainscott. He noted that the May 1 deadline presented by Peak Savers to the town has passed/been extended, and that the East Hampton Town Board was planning to meet in Executive Session to discuss the proposed contract.

Wainscott Green

Councilman Bragman noted that the town is working on a management plan for the park and is trying to move more quickly. He also noted that there may be a public hearing after the management plan is developed. He noted that he will be attending a subcommittee meeting tomorrow with Chair Emeritus Del Mastro to discuss developments and plans further.

Wainscott Pond

Councilman Bragman next asked member of the public Si Kinsella to address the news reports about Mr. Kinsella's efforts to clean up Wainscott Pond. Mr. Kinsella updated the meeting, and Chair Logan Gluck thanked Mr. Kinsella for his initiative and efforts.

Scenic Conservation and Agricultural Easements

Councilman Bragman reported that the amendments to the Town Code he had discussed at the April meeting were going before the Town Board Work Session at the coming Tuesday meeting. Chair Logan Gluck thanked Councilman Bragman for his efforts.

Member Anthony Liberatore asked for an update on the Deepwater test borings that had been expected based on discussions at prior meetings, and Councilman Bragman stated that the testing was not done and that he did not believe the Town Board now would approve any activity or testing until the Article 7 process was completed. Chair Logan Gluck updated the meeting on her discussion with Jen Garvey of Deepwater on this matter and noted that there will be a public hearing on June 11 about the Deepwater proposal before the Public Service Commission which includes the landing site.

Speed Sign

Chair Emeritus Del Mastro then asked for Councilman Bragman's assistance to move the process along to obtain Town approval of the funds donated by the WCAC for purchase of the digital speed sign that the Police Chief has approved.

Sub-Committee Reports

Environmental Sub-Committee

Chair Logan Gluck referred to her discussion with Ms. Garvey of Deepwater.

Member Liberatore then asked about pothole damage, particularly near Wainscott Sand & Gravel. Member Dalene noted that he was at a conference with some DEC members and briefed them on the Wainscott Sand & Gravel situation and issues.

Member Phil Young then asked the WCAC to consider asking the State Highway Department to lower the speed limit on Montauk Highway to 30 mph from 40 mph. Chair Logan Gluck suggested that this be raised once the Hamlet Study is approved, and the sense of the WCAC was to agree.

Hamlet Sub-Committee

Member Young reported on the April 16 Town Board Work Session on the Hamlet Study. The Study will be revised to include mention of the water contamination in Wainscott and the \$10 million grant received from the state for installation of water mains. By a 4-1 vote, the LBO recommendation will remain in the Hamlet Study. The creation of a new zoning designation that covers a middle ground between Central Business and Limited Business Overlay should be considered.

Affordable Housing Sub-Committee

Member Dalene reported on his meeting with Councilperson Sylvia Overby. He expressed that there should be an effort to decentralize this type of housing in order to avoid the impact of increased density on the environment. There should be town funds for next generation purchases and fewer impediments for accessible apartments.

Traffic Sub-Committee

There was no additional report beyond the speed sign discussed earlier.

Airport Sub-Committee

Member Hansen reported on a recent meeting he attended that discussed what would happen if the airport is closed in 2021. Councilman Bragman discussed a meeting he had with air traffic controllers regarding the mix of uses – planes, helicopters, and jets -- and the plan for landscaping to be added around the fuel farm.

Other

Dan Osborn gave an update on the lawsuit brought by Wainscott residents against the Town in order to recoup costs involved in hooking up to public water.

Community Awards

Chair Emeritus D'Andrea presented members a list of candidates for the Community Business Award. Chair Emeritus Del Mastro then discussed the history and theory of the awards and shared a list of prior award winners. Discussion among the members ensued. Any additional suggestions should be sent out to the entire WCAC so all can benefit from the ideas of others.

Annual Cookout

The annual cookout will be June 1 after the WCAC meeting, and Members were reminded to volunteer to bring food and other contributions.

The meeting concluded at 12:25pm.

Next Meeting: June 1, 2019, 9am, Wainscott Chapel