

Town Board

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Protecting waterways and wetlands at issue

Town Board | Call to action for Peconic Estuary, mitigation on Osprey Lane in spotlight this week

BY CARA LORIZ | EDITOR

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Bruce Anderson and board members work out a location for a recharge swale on an Osprey Road property after a little give and take on the issue during Tuesday's work session.

Measures to protect the Peconic Estuary and Island wetlands dominated discussions during the September 7 Town Board work session. It was also announced Tuesday that a controversial special permit for a proposed house in Hay Beach will go to a second public hearing in October because one neighbor was not notified of the first hearing.

PECONIC ESTUARY PROTECTIONS

Board members got a preview of a "call to action" conference on the Peconic Estuary Program (PEP). The public as

well as town officials are invited to a September 20 conference in Southampton at which an agenda of actions needed to protect the estuary will be developed.

PEP coordinator Laura Stevenson of the state's Department of Environmental Conservation and Jennifer Skilbred from the Group for the East End described the panel discussions and panelist recommendations.

Town Supervisor Jim Dougherty will moderate a panel on eelgrass preservation, one of three main focal points of the conference. Other panels will discuss nitrogen contamination and stormwater management and funding. Panelists have already developed some recommendations towns can implement to provide for the estuary's future: development of eelgrass sanctuaries, elimination or reduction of pesticide and herbicide use on government property, reduction of turf, use of Community Preservation Fund monies to enhance environmental use of open space properties, and development of a funding program for town compliance with federal MS4 stormwater runoff rules, which Shelter Island officials have labelled "an unfunded mandate."

Those interested in attending the conference should call Ms. Skilbred at 765-6450, extension 212 by tomorrow, September 10, or register online at peconicestuary.org/CAC2010.html.

BEACH SHACK WETLANDS

The Town Board wants a property owner on Osprey Road to install a recharge swale and 30-foot wide native plant buffer to his property in order to secure a wetlands permit for additional house construction. Contractor Bruce Anderson was expected to present a plan meeting those conditions, but instead he argued against the mitigation measures.

"This isn't supposed to be a re-hearing of the matter that was closed," Town Attorney Laury Dowd said. The application was heard at the August 20 Town Board meeting. "The Town Board is prepared to act on this Friday," she said, but it wanted to give the applicant some control over how and where the mitigation measures would be installed.

"So far, we've heard 10 minutes on why you don't want to do it," Mr. Waddington said.

Mr. Anderson again rejected the swale plan, first recommended to the board by the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), and proposed a 10- to 20-foot native plant buffer.

The board explained that they wanted to adopt the recommendations of the CAC and the Planning Board, which suggested the 30-foot buffer as reasonable mitigation in light of the fact that a deck that encroaches in the wetlands regulated area was built illegally.

"It sounds like you're going to impose this, is that what you're saying?" Mr. Anderson asked. Confirming that, Ms. Dowd again emphasized that the board wanted to give him some control as to how it is done.



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Mr. Anderson eventually acquiesced but a permit will not be issued until the board sees a full mitigation plan.

BEVILACQUA SPECIAL PERMIT

The Bevilacqua special permit will go to a second public hearing. A proposal to build a 7,500 square foot house, about twice the average size of houses in the surrounding Hay Beach neighborhood, must be publicly heard again, Ms. Dowd said Tuesday. A neighbor was not properly notified of the August 20 hearing on the issue. A new hearing for October 1 is expected to be announced at Friday's regular Town Board meeting.