

LIST OF QUESTIONS and CONCERNS RAISED BY AREA RESIDENTS ABOUT TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN'S (TOB) PURCHASE OF 18 DYKE ROAD AS PARKLAND AND FUTURE AQUISITIONS

Strong's Neck Civics Association Meeting April 17, 2018

Residents asked:

1. Why was there no outreach to area residents about the proposed purchase of "Culper Spy Ring Farm House" property in 2017 before the 3 resolutions were submitted to Town of Brookhaven Board?

- a. Residents want to know why consideration was not given to them, both neighbors and the community, regarding the purchase of 18 Dyke Road, which is in a residential community, to be designated as Town of Brookhaven (TOB) "park land", to ascertain their feelings regarding this, especially since it's the neighbor's and communities' taxes that will be used for this purchase?
- b. Why did the TOB not openly and clearly identify this TOB land purchase specifically as "18 Dyke Road", as this resident felt that the wording of the TOB's three passed resolutions relating to the purchase of 18 Dyke Road, specifically referring to the property as the "Culper Spy Ring Farm House" was deceptive and evasive.
- c. A resident asked why the residents of the area were not notified of this by officials and why weren't they notified sooner?

2. On what grounds was a Negative SEQRA requested and approved?

- a. Residents want an explanation of TOB resolution No. 2017-0923 "SEQRA Negative Declaration - authorizing the acquisition of the Culper Spy Ring Farm House in Setauket, Town of Brookhaven, New York, SCTM No. 0200-062.00-02.00-005.000; Owner: Gennaro Iacomino" (TOB board meeting 12/19/17) and what is a SEQRA Negative Declaration and why this was requested and declared as such.
- b. Residents feel this is an environmentally sensitive area especially noting that on a property in proximity to the "Culper Spy Ring Farm House" there is a rare population of blue herons that the University of Connecticut wishes to study coupled with archaeological digs performed by Stony Brook University in relation to Native American Artifacts. It is noted that the blue herons are wary birds and nest colonies are highly sensitive to human encroachment and disturbance and the resident feels that this environmental sensitivity does not lend itself to people traipsing around the area.
- c. Residents who are adjacent to this "Culper Spy Ring Farm House" (which is really 18 Dyke Road) and is to be designated TOB "park land" feel that this action will decrease their enjoyment of their respective properties and will decrease their property values as this is a "change of use" of 18 Dyke Road.

- d. Residents feel that this action will intrude on the residential nature of their neighborhood and community.
- e. It is felt by residents that the TOB or NYS's behavior in buying these residential properties, especially the "Culper Spy Farm House" (which is actually a 1969 ranch house) represents an encroachment on its neighbors as this property is especially in close proximity to its neighbors and it's felt that this behavior sets a precedent that will further open the doors with no restrictions on this behavior to buy and encroach on additional residents who may wind up with "park land" as their new neighbors.
- f. Residents feel that the TOB's purchase of the "Culper Spy Ring Farm House" (which it is not, but actually a 1969 built residential ranch house) and designating it "park land" will have a negative impact on their existing community and neighborhood character and therefore should be taken into account in determining whether a SEQR is required, as "existing neighborhood character" is within the definition of "environment" of this review process and should be included in making a determination of significance and residents feel that this action will have a significant adverse environmental impact and represents a change in the pattern of land use of 18 Dyke Road.

3. Why wasn't the proposed purchase treated as a Change of Land Use?

18 Dyke Road is now a privately owned, single family residence in a residential community. The owner pays property taxes; he decides how he will use his property, subject to town codes, and how many people he will let on his land. When TOB purchases the property as 'TOB Parkland' it will be owned by a municipality. Public monies are being used to make this purchase. No property taxes will be collected and people have the right to use it. Once you have a building that is owned by a municipality, that building and its property has all the rights and liabilities of a municipality and whether this property be town, county or state owned, it is available for that municipality's public use. Not just a few people, all the residents of that municipality. How is this not a change of land use?

4. Questions About the Issue of Safety

- a. What will be the impact to this area from a traffic, fiscal, environmental, esthetic and quality of life standpoint?
- b. Who will provide security to this area?
- c. Who will be or what entity will be responsible for managing this "park land".
- d. How will you keep the area safe when a 'park' will bring in more traffic and Dyke Road is already a narrow, curving road where residents run, bike and walk their children? Accidents have already happened on this road.

- e. A recurring issue and concern is that with consecutive purchases of strategic available lots, by various municipal entities is that at some point in the near future, these lots will be connected not only providing a pathway to the Frank Memorial Park which has water access for possible Kayak launches but then to have even greater public access connections to Conscience Bay for further public activities, absorbing these lots and creating a large public park area, thereby encroaching upon the residential character of our community, decreasing the quality of life (and property values), and this bucolic quality of life was the impetus for resident's decision to make their homes and raise their families here in the first place.
- f. Resident's concern with these additional purchases of land, whether by the TOB, DEC or some other agency, is that it provides more public access areas to draw and increase the amount of hunters and hunting to the area which residents feel is conflicting and dangerous in a residential area, It was noted by residents present, that during Duck Hunting Season, hunters already park on Dyke Road (illegally) and walk across adjacent properties with shotguns in hand to shoot ducks that rest in Conscience Bay.

5. Questions about the Loss of Property Tax Revenues and Spending Public monies?

- a. A resident questioned as to where these government entities are getting all this money from to purchase these properties?
- b. What does the purchase of an A-I residentially zoned, private property have to do with funds (in the form of a grant to purchase this property) from the New York State Dormitory Authority (DASNY)?
- c. A resident asked if the funds to purchase 18 Dyke Road were approved and received from the Dormitory Authority as of yet, and if not, how long does it take for these funds to be approved and utilized.
- d. A resident questioned if the taxpayer money being used to fund these property purchases could be used more appropriately as the resident found it disturbing that there is no plan with the government agencies spending millions of dollars in taxpayer money on properties here and there? Currently New York State is in a housing crisis. Isn't your purchase of this property reducing available housing for people who need homes?
- e. Another resident questioned that, with these successive purchases of single family residential homes, knowing that they will be removed from the tax rolls as such, knowing that such removal will decrease tax revenue to the town and school district, will their property taxes go up to make up for the loss of taxes that had been paid by these previous residential property owners?
- f. A resident lamented being very upset that these government entities are buying up these parcels of property with taxpayer money, removing them from the tax rolls thereby increasing property taxes to make up the difference and especially by referring to the property on Dyke Road as the "Culper Spy Farm House" when in fact it

is a ranch house built in 1969 (18 Dyke Road), when in fact the foundation of the Woodhull farmhouse was on the property of 4 Bob's Lane which is not for sale.

- g. Resident felt that this is a big expense to buy this property (\$600,000) and questioned this purchase to accommodate 100 people to stand on the lawn.
- h. Residents want to see a copy of the grant application submitted to the DASNY for the purchase of this "Culper Spy Farm House" (18 Dyke Road).

6. What is your long-term master plan for purchases of land by municipalities from the Caroline Church to the end of Strongs Neck?

- a. A recurring question is that residents want to know what the long-range master plan is for all of these land acquisitions.
- b. A resident wants to know what the big picture is, what's the end game? This resident felt that Maria Hoffman's explanation of the purchase of 18 Dyke Road being used to encourage cultural education and as a space for local not-for-profits is the small picture.
- c. Residents are concerned that when Assemblyman Steve Englebright retires, (and Carrie Meek Gallagher is no longer director of the DEC's Region 1), a new guard will come in and with all these properties in their respective agency's possession, this new guard will have different visions and developmental ideas which will suit their particular needs at that time, not ours.
- d. Resident requests that we be given a solid vision of what these purchases (#46, #40 and #18 Dyke Roads and any other future land purchases) of residential properties (or vacant lots) are accomplishing and what the plan is other than purchasing a piece of property here and a piece of property there, as the resident felt that a solid vision of such is lacking.
- e. Does this purchase of 18 Dyke Road and/or the 2 DEC purchases of the 46 and 40 Dyke Roads and/or future envisioning purchases in this area lead to the establishment of a green belt trail now or in the future in this area?
- f. Will this envisioning process include Kayak launching and intermediate landing spots and if so, where will they be and where will designated parking be for these kayaking visitors and from what towns or counties will these spots be open to and how will residency to use these spots be regulated?
- g. Residents ask to be included in Assemblyman Englebright's visioning process. Residents ask that our ideas of what a community should look like be the deciding factor, as we are the ones that actually live here and our taxes pay for these land acquisitions in our community.

- h. A resident was annoyed and doesn't know what's going on in the long term, wasn't informed and should have been informed by our Brookhaven Town representative, Councilwoman Valerie Cartright.

7. Requests of Information from Mr. Englebright, Ms. Cartright and Ms. Hahn

- a. It is requested that, as a negative declaration has standards and thresholds and the agency declaring a negative declaration must document its reasoning for this in writing, a copy of this "negative declaration" be given to us, as it is a public document.
- b. A resident asked if Assemblyman Englebright, along with any other agency that may be involved with this transaction, to document in writing exactly what is to take place at the 18 Dyke Road property, now and in the future, and with respect to a time line.
- c. Residents request that Assemblyman Englebright draft an outline, in written form, as conversations do not lead to clarity, of his intentions and how all these pieces of properties are going to be utilized, which includes those of the DEC to enable us to understand the big picture.
- d. Residents asked Maria Hoffman (Assemblyman Englebright's Chief of Staff) if Assemblyman Englebright's office could prepare written bold points detailing his and other agency's long range intentions along with answers to our questions, to be addressed at the next month's meeting to include Assemblyman Englebright.
- e. Residents also requested that these bold-point explanations be given to us in advance, to give us time to read, research and determine our feelings in preparation for the future meeting with Assemblyman Englebright. The residents felt there were many unanswered questions and also want to know the big picture as residents stated that we are all taxpayers and the amount of money that the town and state receives from all our taxes entitles us to a voice and explanation.
- f. Residents want to know how we, as a community can stop this action by the TOB that we feel is an encroachment into our community?

PLEASE COME TO THE MEETING FRIDAY, JUNE 1ST 7:00 PM

EMMA CLARK LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM (LOWER LEVEL)

YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIALS WILL BE THERE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS