

EAST HAMPTON TOWN

BIG PLANS, SIZABLE OPPOSITION

Proposal for largest-ever commercial development facing community pushback

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Plans for the largest commercial subdivision ever proposed in East Hampton Town are pending, with critics expressing environmental concerns and proponents saying it would support the East End's growing population of second-homeowners.

The 50-lot proposed development, called the Wainscott Commercial Center, would transform a former sand mine south of the town airport into a mix of tenants that could range from storage facilities, to a building supplies distribution center to a fitness studio.

The controversial plan, which has been under consideration for several years, is undergoing a lengthy environmental review as the applicant seeks East Hampton Planning Board approval for the development.

Critics, meanwhile, maintain the proposal runs contrary to an adopted outline for the hamlet's future and will worsen traffic and threaten groundwater — particularly nearby Georgica Pond.

Sara Davison, who heads the nonprofit Friends of Georgica Pond Foundation, told Newsday she's worried about environmental impacts to the 290-acre body of water she said is susceptible to harmful algae blooms and fish kills caused by excessive nitrogen from septic systems.

The pond's health has improved in recent years, the East Hampton resident said, adding: "We don't want to go back in the wrong direction."

Dozens of people voiced opposition to the proposal at a February public hearing on a draft environmental impact statement that an engineering firm for the applicant, Wainscott Commercial Center LLC, prepared.



GORDON M. GRANT

Sara Davison of Friends of Georgica Pond is worried about environmental impacts to the body of water.

The planning board and developer likely will spend several months reviewing public comments to compile a final statement as the next step of the process, according to town planners.

East Hampton Supervisor Peter Van Scoyoc said the town went through a long process to develop a study for Wainscott that outlines future development goals for the hamlet — a study adopted into the town's comprehensive plan in 2020.

He also told Newsday the proposed subdivision "does not relate in any way to the hamlet plan."

The supervisor brought those concerns to the Suffolk County Planning Commission, which recently found the development application incomplete.

The county commission's March 1 staff report outlines more than a dozen recommendations, such as an examination of

Subdivision proposal

- The Tintle family has owned the **70-acre property** since 1984.
- The plan seeks to subdivide the land for **commercial or industrial uses**.
- Residents have voiced concerns that it would worsen traffic and harm **Georgica Pond**.

whether to install a sewage treatment plant as opposed to individual on-site septic systems.

Van Scoyoc said the planning board would need a majority-plus-1 vote to overturn any commission vote.

Attorney David Eagan represents the Tintle family, who has owned the property since 1984. He said the application has been a five-year process of "give and take" and believes the draft impact statement adequately addresses the main concerns.

Eagan said their market analysis shows an "overwhelming demand" for tradespeople who would support "the second-homeowner economy" and the development wouldn't "maximize every square inch of the property" — 70 acres in all.

Eagan added that the property owner has offered a "significant number of lots" to the town to buy for municipal purposes at the site.

Wainscott resident Carolyn Logan Gluck, who heads a town advisory committee for the hamlet and belongs to a coalition that opposes the subdivision, said industrial and commercial uses could work at the site, "but it needs to be limited and it needs to be thoughtful."

Gluck added: "I hope the applicant will understand how strongly people feel about the impact that the redevelopment of this property will have on not just the immediate community but on all of East Hampton."