



## Fightfire in vacant KP house

-see story, page 3

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# The Smithtown News

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## Gyrations with Gyrodyne plan

### Development plan revised before town planners vote on environmental review

By DAVID AMBRO

The controversial development plan for the 74.98-acre Gyrodyne LLC site on the southeast corner of Route 25A and Mills Pond Road has undergone revisions meant to address public comment and concerns and the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the project was expected to be accepted by the Smithtown Planning Board at press time Wednesday, March 10.

Opponents of the Gyrodyne project have urged the Smithtown Town Board to impose a moratorium on approvals of development applications until the town approves its master plan update later this year. Opponents argue that the Gyrodyne development application is in conflict with the recommendations of the master plan update.

The town board has not entertained the moratorium, and the Gyrodyne application to subdivide its land for development has continued to move through the planning board development process. To comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the town approved a positive declaration requiring a full environmental review of the project. Under SEQRA, once the FEIS is accepted by the planning board, there will be a 10-day public consideration period simultaneous with a 30-day period to write and approve the final findings statement that will conclude the SEQRA process.

Once the finding statement is approved by the Planning Board, the SEQRA environmental review process will be considered completed. At that point, the planning board will be able to vote on the

*(Continued on page 14)*



## Black and blue...

Suffolk County police separate two conflicting groups of protesters at the Smithtown firehouse on Elm Avenue Saturday, March 6, L.I. Peaceful Protests who support the Black Lives Matter movement on one side (right) and blue-line flag/Trump supporters on the other (left). The two groups spent more than an hour hurling insults at one another, leading to the arrest of three protesters. **See stories, page 2.**

-Joseph Sperber photos



## Editorials & comments

# Blue-line flag symbol of Trump, not pro police

Just to be clear, the people who were protesting in Smithtown Saturday, March 6 in favor of keeping the blue-line flag on the Smithtown fire truck were aggrieved supporters of former President Donald Trump.

They are the people who drove around Long Island in Trump caravans in September and October and they are people who remain unwilling to accept the fact that Donald Trump lost the 2020 presidential election. Although their rally cry is to defend the blue-line flag as a show of support for the police, who knows if they really support the police. But if they truly do it is secondary to their underlying purpose.

They were here to rally for Donald Trump, unwilling to accept that he lost the 2020 presidential election and was overwhelmingly rejected by a majority of Americans. Although there are a lot of people in law enforcement who seem to support the former president, it's hard to understand why. Mr. Trump was the worst president this country has ever had for law enforcement.

Anybody who wants to support the police can do that by being good, law-abiding citizens who do what they are told by a police officer if they are pulled over, and do it politely. That's law and order.

Standing on the street corner screaming and yelling into the traffic while waving "Trump 2020" flags, "F\_\_ Biden" flags, "My Governor's an Idiot" flags is a political protest. That's not a display of support for police. From this vantage point the two are not even close to synonymous.

And, the blue-line flag has been so co-opted by this political gang of Trump supporters that it has lost any value that it may have once had as a symbol of support for police. Remember, after all, that this flag was the predominant symbol of the pack of rabid insurrectionists who attacked the United States Capitol on January 6, killing one Capitol police officer, Brian Sicknick, gouging the eyes out of another, and injuring over 140 police officers, the blue-line flag front and center.

These aren't people who care about the police at all. They are holdover zealots of Donald Trump.

It should also be said that most of the people who were in Smithtown to protest Saturday had nothing to do with Smithtown. They were from out of town and here to advance political causes that have nothing to do with the Smithtown Fire Department or the blue-

line flag on the back of the Rescue Company #9 fire truck. They could really care less about that.

Just consider the people in the forefront of the conflict and you can see this was not local. The three men arrested during Saturday's protests were Matthew Baranski, 46, of East Norwich, Derek Bolster, 45, of West Islip, and Brandon Felton, 47 of East Meadow.

The Trump supporters left Smithtown Saturday convinced they stood up for law and order, and proud they stared down the Black Lives Matter

protesters. This had nothing to do with supporting the police or doing anything in the best interest of Smithtown.

If anything, the events of Saturday provided more evidence that the blue-line flag should be removed from the Smithtown fire truck. It has become a political symbol, one that is divisive to all and disturbing to many. Again, the way to support police is to be law abiding and respectful of their authority, not loud and obnoxious and putting them in harm's way.



A truck with two Trump 2020 flags circles past the Smithtown train station Saturday, March 6.

## Be our guest

### Lake Ave. sewer main a debacle...

By JUDITH OGDEN

At a time when many businesses are struggling to survive the economic disruption caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the last thing that hard working small business owners deserve is to be misled about important issues that could significantly impact the future of their businesses.

Regrettably, at a time when the hard working owners of small businesses on Lake Avenue need honesty and transparency from government officials, they are instead being victimized with vague but decidedly inaccurate information by people who they should be able to trust, but can't. What they deserve is straight talk and a real plan to connect Lake Avenue to sewers.

There are important facts which seem to be deliberately obscured in public discussions. They are:

- Gyrodyne has not agreed to allow businesses on Lake Avenue to connect to its sewage plant within the proposed mega development. What the company has said in official documents is that it cannot be required to do so, but would be willing to discuss the possibility "under certain conditions... at a future time" (Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Page 9-10). No one has ever suggested that Gyrodyne would pay the cost of sewerage Lake Avenue.

- Gyrodyne has made clear that it plans to build a sewer plant sized only to meet the needs of businesses on its own property, not a larger plant sized to accept sewer flows from Lake Avenue businesses currently, or an even larger plant for the anticipated growth that a Lake Avenue renaissance would create.

- No one has ever suggested that Gyrodyne would agree to pay for the larger plant to accept sewage from elsewhere, or for the expensive network of pipes that would be needed to connect individual businesses and pump sewage from Lake Avenue businesses to the Gyrodyne site.

- Because financial analysis of costs to business owners or affordability of connecting Lake Avenue

businesses required pursuant to Section 209-C of New York State Town Law has not been completed, business owners have no idea how much their taxes would increase if they were connected to a sewer plant at Gyrodyne. They deserve to know, and they deserve to know now.

- Two separate media accounts in recent weeks have quoted a Town official as saying that the alternative to connecting Lake Avenue businesses to Gyrodyne by building a separate plant would cost \$157 million. The problem is that there is no financial analysis, feasibility study or engineering report to support this statement. Instead, it appears to have been made out of convenience and without any facts to support it. If the Town has information to support this assertion, business owners on Lake Avenue and the general public deserve to see it immediately. If not, the Town should acknowledge that there is no basis for the \$157 million figure and apologize.

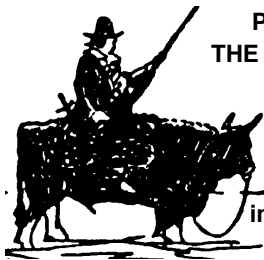
The hard-working small business owners who make our community special deserve honesty and transparency from government officials, and straight talk from the media when it comes to issues that can significantly impact their financial future – like what they would have to pay for sewers. Regardless of what option is ultimately selected, connecting Lake Avenue to sewers will cost tens of millions of dollars. There is no "sewers for free" scenario, and business owners deserve to be told the truth about the costs they will be expected to pay to be connected to sewers.

The Lake Avenue renaissance is much needed. The potential that a well-planned renovation could provide is exciting to look forward to. The idea that Lake Avenue is dependent upon the Gyrodyne mega-development is a myth. One exists independently from the other. Let's not put the cart before the horse, a clear well thought out plan is what is needed.

**(Editor's Note: Judith Ogden is an elected trustee of Village of Head of the Harbor, a member of the St. James-Head of the Harbor Neighborhood Preservation Coalition and a resident of St. James.)**

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# Gyrodyne plan modified in advance of environmental review vote

(Continued from page 1)  
proposed subdivision plan.

The St. James-Head of the Harbor Neighborhood Preservation Coalition was formed during the Gyrodyne SEQRA process to oppose the development plan. Over the past several years the organization has been raising money, and once the FEIS and findings statement are approved they intend to file a lawsuit against the town, challenging the process and the subdivision approval.

According to the coalition, a large portion of the Gyrodyne site is in the Mills Pond National Historic District. "Gyrodyne's plan is in direct conflict with the Town of Smithtown's comprehensive plan and will destroy the character of our community forever," according to the coalition. "We need to make sure the Gyrodyne mega development is not snuck through while the comprehensive plan is being approved. The town board must enact a moratorium on the approval of major development projects until the comprehensive plan is completed."

Rather than support the proposed development plan the coalition is also asking the town board change the site back to residential zoning. The land was rezoned from residential to light industrial (LI) in 1960. A group of area residents sued the town in New York State Supreme Court to block the zone change, a case that was settled in 1964 with the Gyrodyne agreeing to a 200-foot natural buffer along Route 25A and additional vegetated buffers around parking areas on the site.

According to the proposed FEIS being submitted to the Planning Board for acceptance this week, several revisions have been made to the plan. The revisions include a reconfiguration of the proposed number of lots, the most significant part of which is that the preservation of 15.2-acres of open space, including a 200-foot vegetated buffer along Route 25A will be its own separate lot. The proposed 100,000-gallon-per day sewage treatment plant—which does not include capacity for the \$4 million sewer main the Town of Smithtown installed last year on Lake Avenue with the hope of connecting to the Gyrodyne plant—will be on its own separate 7.3-acre lot. In the original plan the open space and the sewer plant were proposed to be one lot.

In addition, the revision includes an increase of 45,000-square-feet in proposed medical office building space from 130,000-square-feet in the original plan to 175,000-square-feet in the

proposed FEIS; and an increase of 30 units in the assisted living component of the development plan, from 220 units in the original plan to 250 units in the proposed FEIS.

The revised plan also calls for a significant modification to the hotel that is being proposed for the site. The number of rooms will be reduced by 25 rooms from 150 in the original plan to 125 rooms in the FEIS. In addition, the 150-seat restaurant, the 10,000-square-foot day spa, and the 500-seat conference center associated with the hotel have been eliminated from the plan and in their place there will be a 4,000-square-foot, 133-seat multipurpose room included in the hotel.

According to a traffic analysis included in the proposed FEIS, the morning weekday hourly peak trips to the site will increase by 7%, from 357

to 382 trips. It is expected, though, that the evening peak will decrease by 6%, from 538 to 507, and the Saturday peak will decrease by 6%, from 323 to 308. "The PM peak hour is the critical hour for traffic analysis, so the slight morning peak hour trip increase is not a significant change that warrants further analysis," according to the proposed FEIS.

As for the overall configuration of the subdivision, Lot 1 will consist of the existing light industrial buildings on the site; Lot 2 will consist of the existing Flowerfield Celebrations catering hall; Lot 3 will be the existing 21,890-square-foot Flowerfield Building 1, which will be repurposed as a general office space; Lot 4 will be 153,110-square-feet of a mix of medical office and general office or research and development space; Lot 5 will be 250 units of assisted living; Lot 6 will

be the 125-room hotel; Lot 7 will be the 15.2-acres of open space, which is proposed to include natural buffer, open space and managed green space, the internal road network, walking/biking trails and utility infrastructure; and, Lot 8, the seven acres for the on-site sewer plant, which will include the 8,000-square-foot sewer plant building, as well as the land for the 200-foot Route 25A setback, mandated by covenants and restorations imposed on the site in 1964, and land resulting from the irregular shape of the site boundary.

According to the proposed FEIS, the proposed revisions will result in a slight reduction in the amount of nitrogen loading into the groundwater from 32.4 pounds per acre per year to 32.1 pounds. The project also calls for the development of 269 more parking spaces than the

town requires. The town code requires 2,255 spaces, the most of which, 1,021 are associated with the medical office buildings. The development plan calls for the more parking spaces than are required by the code, 2,524 parking spaces, most of them, 1,027, for the medical office buildings. The existing buildings account for 1,012, the assisted living 293 and the hotel 192.

According to the proposed FEIS, the full development is expected to generate 87,591 gallons per day of wastewater that will be treated on-site, of which 20,292 gallons per day is associated with the existing uses on the property and 59,336 gallons per day is expected from the new development. There will be an estimated 12,409-gallons per day of excess capacity in the plant, which is an insufficient amount for the Lake Avenue sewer main.



## Help Heritage museum Opportunity to join sponsorship pages

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In an effort to continue our progress, we seek financial support. The heritage museum is self-sustaining, but not a 501c3. It is under the supervision of the Kings Park Central School District municipality, but the school district does not fund the museum. We are respectfully asking for individual, family, corporate and grant sponsorships to help reach our growth goals, proceed with projects of restorations and improvements and to continue making the Leo P. Ostebo Kings Park Heritage Museum one of the most recognized and respected history museums.

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