

Kings Park, Hauppauge grapplers in fight to finish

-see story, page 26



A yellow rectangular advertisement with two red pushpins at the top corners. It features the Ford and Lincoln logos at the top, the word "Smithtown" in a cursive script in the middle, and the phone number "631-265-2340" at the bottom.

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Civics: Gyrodyne in conflict with new master plan

By DAVID AMBRO

As the Town of Smithtown moves into the final phases of updating its master plan, opponents of the industrial development plan for the 75-acre Gyrodyne property in St. James are expressing mounting concern that the development plan and the Gyrodyne proposal are out of sync.

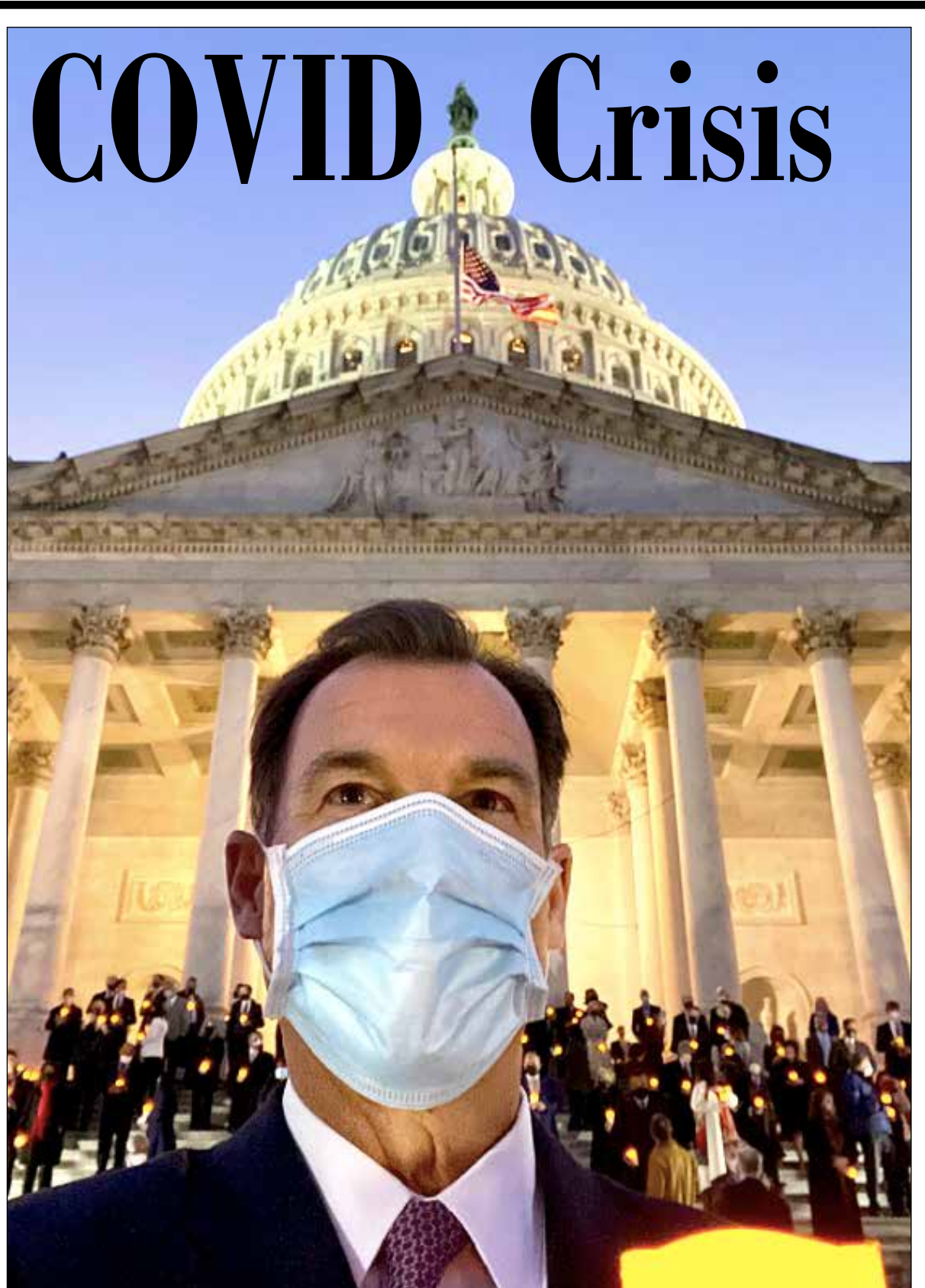
"The new [master] plan sets important goals to guide future development throughout the town, and keeping density projects away from well-traveled highway corridors is a key recommendation in the plan that should prevent the Gyrodyne project from moving forward," Head of the Harbor Village Trustee Judy Ogden said.

James Bouklas, president of We Are Smithtown, a townwide civic association, was more graphic with his assessment. "Smithtown's Gyrodyne mega-development scheme violates the proposed comprehensive [master] plan like a naked jaywalker on Broadway," he said. "The Gyrodyne deal sticks out like a mustache on the Mona Lisa, and is in one hundred percent conflict with the town's own master plan proposal. Numerous provisions of the newly released master plan would be violated if this elephantine development is allowed to move forward."

The Gyrodyne property is on the southeast corner of Route 25A and Mills Pond Road in St. James. In a controversial move that engendered litigation, it was rezoned by the Smithtown Town Board in 1960 from residential to light industrial under the condition that there remain a 200 foot vegetated buffer along Route 25A and additional vegetated buffers around any parking lots built on Mills Pond Road.

Gyrodyne has a pending application before the Town of Smithtown Planning Board to subdivide the land for the development of a hotel/conference center, two medical office buildings, two assisted

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Congressman Thomas Suozzi at the United States Capitol Tuesday, February 23 to mourn the loss of more than 500,000 Americans to the coronavirus (COVID-19). In the meantime, schools are reopening, and the county is stepping up vaccination efforts. **See stories, page 3.**

Civics to host March 1 forum about master plan

By DAVID AMBRO

As the Town of Smithtown continues to develop its comprehensive master plan update and the associated

generic environmental impact statement (GEIS), We Are Smithtown, a townwide civic organization, is planning a community forum of its own to discuss the town's plans.

The town has been working on the master plan for nearly a decade, first in house and then in earnest after it hired the outside consulting firm H2M of Melville to assist in the process. A draft of the master plan was approved by the town board December 15. Since that time the town has undertaken an exhaustive public outreach program to solicit comments and suggestions about the draft on a hamlet-by-hamlet basis: Commack January 13, Hauppauge January 14, Nesconset January 19, Kings Park January 21, St. James January 28 and Smithtown February 4. Videos of those forums are available on the town website, smithtownny.gov.

find a Zoom link at wearesmithtown.org.

"We have taken a look at the master plan. We are happy to see the community getting involved to some degree with the public sessions. Now we think the community will be better served by having a presentation about the plan that highlights the process, looks at its strengths and weaknesses, and makes further recommendations in line with what the community has already been saying about it," We Are Smithtown President James Bouklas said during an interview Tuesday, February 23.

Mr. Bouklas said he hopes the event is widely attended and he encouraged residents to participate.

"We looked at the policies that will impact traffic and the aesthetics of the town and we want to focus on making walkable, livable communities with de-emphasis on density and the apartment complexes that the plan really seems to promote," Mr. Bouklas said.

According to Mr. Bouklas, the civics will display various news clippings of projects that are being undertaken by the town and will make a presentation about the draft master plan. "It should be a fun presentation, I think," he said. "Thousands of people answered the town's survey about the master plan and said what they wanted and I don't think the plan is in line with that and this is going to be an opportunity to talk about that."

The town board is expected to hold a public hearing on the draft plan in late March. In the meantime, the public is still able to submit questions and comments to: Smithtown Planning Department, Attn. Allyson Murray, Principal Planner, 99 West Main Street, Smithtown N.Y. 11787 or online at smithtownplanning@smithtownny.gov.

The town also intends to hold a separate public comment period about the draft GEIS during March and April and to revise and finalize the draft master plan and the GEIS in May with a vote on the final adoption in June.

In the meantime, We Are Smithtown announced this week that it will hold a virtual forum March 1 at 7 p.m to discuss the master plan. Anyone interested in attending the meeting can

Culling out Gyrodyne conflicts with town master plan update

(Continued from page 1)

living facilities, and a sewage treatment plant. The town is de facto committed to the project by having already installed a \$4 million sewer main on Lake Avenue that it hopes to connect to the Gyrodyne sewer plant, which has been criticized by opponents of the development plan.

The opposition is also citing several findings and recommendations of the draft master plan which they believe conflict with the Gyrodyne project.

The draft plan recommends (page 55) that the most appropriate location for mixed-use developments, such is that which is being proposed at Gyrodyne, is in downtown portions of Smithtown Boulevard in Nesconset and areas of the Hauppauge Industrial Park. "The Gyrodyne proposal is in direct conflict with that recommendation," the coalition said in a recent statement.

The draft plan also notes (page 56) that commercial development deceleration lanes that can cause traffic to slow and detract from the roadway's original intent. Critics allege that vehicle trips from the Gyrodyne project will overwhelm Route 25A, a winding two lane roadway that is part of the New York State Heritage Trail, and Mills Pond Road and Stony Brook Road, forcing drivers to seek shortcuts on the narrow side streets in Head of the Harbor.

As for assisted living facilities, the draft master plan (page 42) says the town should prohibit them in most residential zones, allowing them only in newly created multi-family zones approved by the town board. The critics contend that in direct conflict with this proposal the Gyrodyne plan calls for 220 assisted living units on industrially zoned land.

The draft plan also recommends (page 71) that the town support higher density and traditional mixed use development near transit stations while preserving community character. The critics contend the Gyrodyne plan conflicts with this recommendation.

Finally, the critics contend that the Smart Growth section of the draft master plan (page 160) the town can take positive steps to discourage sprawl and to better environmental conditions by reviewing existing zoning codes and policies as they relate to supporting or inhibiting smart growth. Opponents argue that Gyrodyne is an example of massive development sprawl that is contrary to both the recommendations of the master plan and Smart Growth principles.

The master plan update and the Gyrodyne draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) are available on the Town of Smithtown website, smithtownny.gov.

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