



Saint James - Head of the Harbor
NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION COALITION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GYRODYNE CHANGES REQUIRE ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

State Law Requires Supplemental EIS to Consider Impacts of Additional Development

Coalition Says Planning Board Can't Move Forward Based on "Flawed" FEIS

State law requires that changes proposed to the Gyrodyne mega development must be subject to additional environmental review before the Smithtown Planning Board can consider whether to approve a controversial plan to build a hotel, high-density housing and medical office complex on the Flowerfield Fairgrounds site, a coalition of Head of the Harbor Village officials and local residents said today. The changes, made without public notice, include 30 additional housing units, 45,000 additional square feet of office space, and a 4,000 square foot, 133 seat multi-purpose room, according to documents available on the Town website.

"These changes are significant and will require the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or SEIS," said Judith Ogden, Head of the Harbor Village Trustee and spokesperson for the Saint James – Head of the Harbor Neighborhood Preservation Coalition. "The fact that the changes were proposed without any public notice is troubling, but state law requires the additional traffic and groundwater impacts they would cause must be subject to environmental review."

The controversial proposal by Gyrodyne to build a hotel, assisted living facility and medical office complex on the 75-acre Flowerfield site has been the subject of fierce opposition from the Village of Head of the Harbor, local elected officials, and the Town of Brookhaven, who argue that the plan would completely overwhelm several two-lane roads that border the site, permanently alter the rural character of Mills Pond National Historic District, and pollute Stony Brook Harbor.

“What Gyrodyne has proposed could be a boost to the economy on a site bordered by four-lane highways, that is not part of a National Historic District,” said Ogden. “As a child of six can plainly see, there is no way a development this large can work at this location, because the infrastructure needed to support it just doesn’t exist here.” She called on the Town Planning Board to require the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) before considering whether the development plan should move forward.

“While there is considerable pressure being applied for the Town to move forward without doing so, state law requires that the environmental impact of the 30 additional housing units and 45,000 square feet of office space must be reviewed, so an SEIS must be prepared,” said Ogden. “The need is even greater in this instance because Gyrodyne’s development proposal is in direct conflict with the Town’s Draft Comprehensive Plan.”

On December 15, 2020, the Town released its first Draft Comprehensive Plan since 1957, which sets an overall goal of preserving, protecting and enhancing the historic, scenic, cultural and architectural character of the Town (p.14). The Draft Plan specifically recommends that mixed use developments should be allowed in downtown areas, and not along travel corridors like 25a (p.55). The Plan also states that Assisted Living Facilities should only be permitted in a newly created Multi-Family zone, by special exception from the Town Board (p.42)

Because the Gyrodyne proposal conflicts with significant recommendations in the Draft Comprehensive Plan, Village of Head of the Harbor officials have asked the Town Board to enact a moratorium on approval of major subdivisions until the Draft Comprehensive Plan is finalized. In addition, they have asked the Town Board to change the zoning on undeveloped portions of the Flowerfield site back to residential, like it was prior to a controversial vote by the Town Board to approve industrial zoning, which prompted a lawsuit against the Town and Gyrodyne by the Village and neighbors of the property.

The decades old controversy over the zoning and future use of the property makes it even more critical that the Town require a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Ogden said. “Gyrodyne has an inherent right to develop, but not the right to develop whatever it wants on the Flowerfield property. This massive development would be a textbook example of suburban sprawl that runs completely counter to current planning principles and the Town’s own Draft Comprehensive Plan,” said Ogden. “Zoning requirements are put in place to protect communities. Gyrodyne’s mega development plan includes uses that are not ‘as-of-right’, but are instead prohibited without special exceptions approved by the Town Board. We need our Town government to step up and make sure this plan receives the comprehensive review that the law requires.”