

## Editorials & comments

# Address Brookhaven concerns about Gyrodyne

The concerns raised this week by Brookhaven Highway Superintendent Daniel Losquadro about the proposed industrial subdivision of the 75-acre Gyrodyne property in St. James offers serious cause for concern that has to be addressed by Smithtown town officials.

The Town of Smithtown Department of Environment and Waterways (DEW) should offer a public response to the charges being leveled by Mr. Losquadro prior to the Smithtown Planning Board acting on the Gyrodyne finding statement and proposed subdivision conditions. Smithtown should be forthright with its response and if the allegations Mr. Losquadro has raised are true, Gyrodyne should be made to correct the record and reconsider the traffic impact and mitigation plans.

Whether for or against the Gyrodyne development plan, keep in mind this is not political. Mr. Losquadro is a Republican as is the Town of Smithtown government. This is about traffic concerns and the quality of life along the historic and bucolic Route 25A corridor through St. James and into Stony Brook, a state designated Long Island Heritage Trail portion of which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

This is significant and there is a lot at stake.

In a two-page letter to Smithtown DEW Director David Barnes Monday, October 4 (see related story, page 2), Mr. Losquadro alleges that comments made by the Town of Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety were taken out of context and misappropriated to the points Gyrodyne was trying to make. That is a very serious allegation that suggests a bias in the environmental review process.

Mr. Losquadro further asserts that comments submitted by the Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety addressed only the traffic study in the Gyrodyne draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) prepared last year to comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). He points out that the Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety makes it clear in its comments January 7, 2020 that they relate only to the DEIS and should not be weighed in the final environmental impact statement (FEIS). Yet, he charges, DEW included the Brookhaven comments in the FEIS and the finding statement. He asks that these comments be removed from the finding statement. This is another serious allegation that indicates a bias in the environmental

review process.

Mr. Losquadro further asserts that in the FEIS it concludes that Brookhaven has already mitigated the intersections under its jurisdiction to account for the Gyrodyne development. He claims that is untrue, that the road improvements at those intersections were road improvements that did not account for additional traffic from the Gyrodyne development. He charges that Brookhaven asked for, but did not receive, additional traffic counts and analysis of the impact the Gyrodyne development was going to have on those intersections. It's another significant and serious allegation, one that has to be reconciled. Do these intersections need remediation or not? That's a questions that without a doubt is supposed to be answered in the SEQRA process.

Mr. Losquadro also charges that the traffic count

information was taken in 2017 in anticipation of a build-out of the Gyrodyne project in 2020, therefore is outdated data to rely on and more traffic count data should be taken. He further alleges that while DEW cherry-picked comments from the Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety comments to bolster the Gyrodyne position, it overlooked Town of Brookhaven requests for new traffic counts, analysis and recalculations at key intersections; more serious allegations and concerns raised by the neighboring highway superintendent.

This is a discussion by and between officials from neighboring towns that has to be addressed. It is important that this be done transparently and thoroughly because there are a lot of laymen out there who are very skeptical about the traffic analysis undertaken and mitigation measures being proposed by Gyrodyne.

## Be our guest

# Urging support for Gov. Hochul...

By Richard Schaffer

Today, New York State Democrats find ourselves at a crossroads.

With historic challenges facing our state, Democrats can unite behind the most experienced and balanced ticket in our party's history and make progress for New York families. Or, we can embark on an ambition-fueled political free-for-all with potentially disastrous consequences, like the election of Governor Lee Zeldin, a right-wing Donald Trump disciple.

In the best interest of our party and policies that are vital to move New York forward, I endorse Governor Kathy Hochul and Lt. Governor Brian Benjamin for re-election and urge Attorney General Tish James and Comptroller Tom DiNapoli to seek re-election to their current positions where they are each doing an outstanding job.

I believe that Governor Hochul will continue to fulfill her goal for New Yorkers "to believe in their government again." That belief is not based on hope, it is based on knowing Kathy Hochul and seeing firsthand for years how she interacts with everyday New Yorkers. What you see is exactly what you get— a no-nonsense, pragmatic problem-solver who cares about people and treats everyone with respect. New Yorkers have immediately seen that leadership in Governor Hochul's strong, hands-on response to the flooding caused by Hurricane Ida. The priorities she has immediately dedicated herself to are the right ones—addressing the coronavirus pandemic, strengthening New York's economy so that everyone who wants to work hard can succeed, improving public safety, and restoring faith in government.

Governor Hochul would stand for election with a powerhouse ticket filled with proven winners who back sensible policy solutions to the challenges facing New York. Comptroller DiNapoli is an incredible steward of our state's finances, serving as a strong fiscal watchdog while navigating New York's pension fund through choppy waters. Attorney General James has been a fearless and effective advocate, winning an historic settlement against the opioid industry and taking on powerful interests like the National Rifle Association and President Trump. And her investigation into Governor Cuomo was done without fear or favor,

presenting unvarnished truth to New Yorkers. It is clear why New York families have confidence in the great work these public servants are doing in those roles.

A ticket with Governor Hochul, Attorney General James, and Comptroller DiNapoli offer the kind of mainstream, progressive policies we need to move New York forward and that a strong majority of New Yorkers support. In contrast, a free-for-all Democratic primary could result in a candidate that is so far outside the mainstream that they open the door to defeat in November. When New York Democrats face a binary choice, the majority chooses the moderate option. But if several mainstream Democrats—most of whom have little to no policy differences with her—primary Governor Hochul, it could create exactly the kind of fractured field that produces an unelectable nominee.

Meanwhile, while Democrats battle one another, Lee Zeldin, who as of July had already massed a political war chest of more than \$3.2 million, will have nearly a year to run unopposed and add to that haul, ready to clobber whichever Democrat emerges bloodied and bruised from the primary. And for those who would say, "This is New York, a Republican can't possibly win here," I would point you to Maryland, Massachusetts, and Vermont, all of which are to New York's left and all of which have Republican Governors. Make no mistake, I have watched Lee Zeldin firsthand defeat an incumbent Democrat State Senator in 2010 and an incumbent Democrat Congressman in 2014. He is an able, crafty politician who understands how to campaign from the center and govern from the extreme right. Look no further than the policies of Lee Zeldin's former colleague Florida Governor Ron DeSantis to understand the devastating impact a bad governor can have on a state.

Lee Zeldin and Donald Trump's nightmare is that New York State Democrats will choose unity ahead of political ambition, and unite behind a team with strong experience, mainstream policies, and geographic balance. That is why I urge my fellow New York Democrats to join me in supporting Governor Kathy Hochul for re-election.

**(Editor's Note: Mr. Schaffer is Chairman of the Suffolk County Democratic Committee and the Babylon Town Supervisor.)**

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