

Brookhaven official hits Gyrodyne analysis

Accuses Smithtown Department of Environment and Waterways of taking comments out of context

By David Ambro

Brookhaven Highway Superintendent Daniel Losquadro is calling on the Smithtown Department of Environment and Waterways (DEW) to modify its State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) findings and proposed subdivision conditions for the Gyrodyne industrial development plan.

In an October 4 letter to DEW Director David Barnes, Mr. Losquadro alleges that comments made by the Town of Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety are taken out of context and perhaps misappropriated for the points asserted.

George Hoffman, president of the Three Village Civic Association and an activist in the fight against the Gyrodyne Development plan, said this week that the concerns highlighted in the Losquadro letter are indicative of the inadequate review process undertaken by the Town of Smithtown.

“Not only have they not listened to any of our serious concerns, but they take something from Brookhaven’s critical comments and use it to prop up their poorly conceived Gyrodyne project,” Mr. Hoffman said. “The Gyrodyne project will choke our local roads with traffic, destroy the rural character of both town’s historic 25A corridor and pollute our shared

Stony Brook Harbor and all of these harmful impacts have been ignored by Smithtown and Gyrodyne’s owners.”

Gyrodyne is proposing to subdivide 75 acres of land on the southeast corner of Mills Pond Road and North Country Road (Route 25A) for industrial development that includes a hotel, assisted living facilities, medical office buildings and an 87,891-gallon-per-day sewage treatment plant. After a years-long SEQRA process, which included the preparation of a voluminous draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), the Smithtown Planning Board earlier this year approved a final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the project.

Based on the FEIS, DEW prepared a draft findings statement with proposed conditions, which was unanimously approved by the Smithtown Conservation Board at its September 16 meeting. The conservation board decision is advisory to the Smithtown Planning Board, which now has to act upon the proposed findings and conditions.

The Gyrodyne findings and conditions are contained in a 15-page resolution, with 13 sections and 41 subsections read aloud into the record at the September 16 Conservation Board meeting by DEW Deputy Director Howard Barton, III. In his

October 4 letter to DEW, Mr. Losquadro discloses that he has had a chance to review the draft findings statement approved by the Conservation Board. He says there are several sections of the document that reference the Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety comments submitted January 7, 2020 during the DEIS public comment process which require clarification.

Specifically, Mr. Losquadro cites pages seven and eight of the finding statement which refer to both the DEIS and the FEIS. He said the comments provided by the Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety refer only to the traffic impact study in the DEIS and the two building scenarios being proposed and not the FEIS or the final proposed action. He said that point was made clear in the comment submitted by the Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety.

In addition, Mr. Losquadro accused DEW of picking certain statements and overlooking others in the Town of Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety comments. He cited, for example, that Brookhaven asked for new traffic counts, analysis and recalculation at Town of Brookhaven intersections and pointed out that the “build-year” assumption in the DEIS is 2020, which is no longer feasible, and that the traffic counts were taken in 2017, already out of date. “Furthermore,”

Mr. Losquadro writes, “the comments should not be used to bolster a project not reviewed by this agency.”

“All references to the Town of Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety’s comments on the DEIS should be removed from the proposed findings statement as they do not represent a complete evaluation of the FEIS proposed action.”

In conclusion, Mr. Losquadro cites finding #10 in the DEW document, which indicates that mitigation measures have been completed at the two intersections under the jurisdiction of Brookhaven. According to Mr. Losquadro, the Town of Brookhaven work at those intersections were not remediation of the impacts associated with the Gyrodyne development and were instead general road improvements. He said in its comments the Brookhaven Division of Traffic Safety should conduct additional traffic counts and analysis to determine what the impact of development on those intersections would be.

“This request was noted in the FEIS as TR-8. The response to TR-8 was wholly inadequate and dismissive. The findings statement should not be adopted until the updated information to sufficiently determine the proper mitigation is provided,” Mr. Losquadro concludes in his letter.