

Coalition seeks compromise before court

In what they claim is an effort to head off expensive litigation that could go on for years in the courts, opponents of the Gyrodyne subdivision application released an alternative development plan Tuesday, October 5.

The St. James-Head of the Harbor Neighborhood Preservation Coalition unveiled the alternative plan Tuesday. It calls for cluster development on the west side of the property and preservation of the east side of the site, referred to by the Coalition as the Flowerfield Fairgrounds, for passive recreation and community events.

“This proposed plan will preserve the undeveloped portion of the property that is located within the Mills Pond Historic district since the district runs from Mills Pond Road along Route 25A until the point across from Shep Jones Lane and then southward to Parkside Drive and back to Mills Pond Road. The catering hall is located within the historic district, but that has already been sold and is not part of the new subdivision, so this plan would not allow any new development within the historic district,” said Kathleen Diana, a spokeswoman for the coalition.

Gyrodyne has applied to the Town of Smithtown for subdivision approval to develop a hotel, medical offices and assisted living facilities on the 75-acre site on the southeast corner of North Country Road (Route 25A) and Mills Pond Road. The plan released by the Coalition Tuesday, which includes a map outline its proposal, is an alternative to the conventional

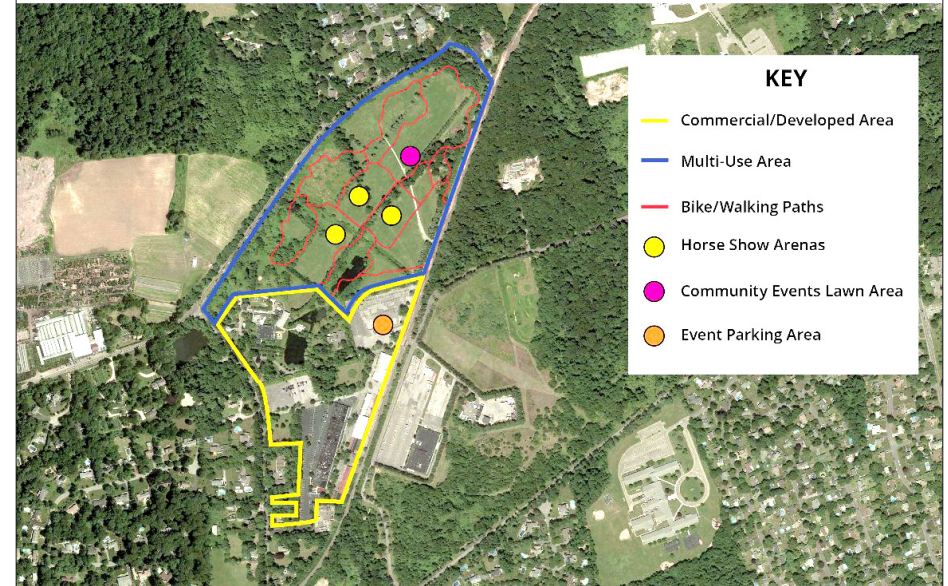
subdivision, which is nearing final approval in the Town of Smithtown land use process. The Gyrodyne plan calls for a hotel, 250 assisted living housing units, 175,000 square feet of office space and parking for 2,500 cars on the former Flowerfield site, with much of the development proposed in the area designated by the federal government in 1973 as the Mills Pond National Historic District. Gyrodyne also includes a 87,000 gallon per day sewage treatment plant. The coalition alternative plan does not include the sewage treatment plant.

“With intelligent planning and some creative thinking, there is no reason why we can’t have reasonable development of the Gyrodyne site while also preserving Flowerfield Fairgrounds,” said Judith Ogden, Head of the Harbor Village Trustee and spokesperson for the coalition. “This compromise plan will be a ‘win-win’ for Gyrodyne and the community, and will help to avoid lengthy litigation over the flawed environmental review of the current mega-development plan.”

The subdivision has met with opposition from government officials in the neighboring Village of Head of the Harbor and Town of Brookhaven, as well as a coalition of residents of St. James who have been raising funds to challenge what they say is a flawed review of the project by the Town of Smithtown. Head of the Harbor Mayor Douglas Dahlgard has called for the property to be preserved in its entirety as a park.

Gyrodyne - Flowerfield Alternate Development Plan

Cluster Development Corporate Park & Multi Use Fairgrounds



“The Coalition strongly supports Mayor Dahlgard’s goal of seeing the entire Flowerfield property protected, and remains hopeful that his goal can be accomplished,” Ms. Ogden said. “If that turns out not to be possible, however, there is still a way to preserve much of the property while allowing reasonable development that would have less of an impact on the environment and the community.”

Under the new compromise plan, development would be clustered on portions of the property that are already occupied by parking lots and

the industrial buildings that are part of the original development of the site, while the undeveloped open space known as Flowerfield Fairgrounds would be left undeveloped and be used for car shows, equestrian events and other community activities.

“The beauty of the compromise plan is that it would require relatively minor changes to Gyrodyne’s subdivision proposal but would address many of the community’s most serious concerns, avoiding the possibility of costly litigation that could tie the property up for years,” Ms. Ogden said.