

Perspective

Preservation group offers compromise plan for Gyrodyne property

SUBMITTED BY THE SAINT JAMES – HEAD OF THE HARBOR NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION COALITION

In an effort to avoid litigation that could tie up the environmental review of the massive and controversial Gyrodyne LLC development proposal for years, local community leaders Oct. 5 unveiled an alternative plan that would cluster development on part of the 75-acre property while preserving the Flowerfield Fairgrounds portion of the site for passive recreation and community events.

“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, spokesperson for the Saint James – Head of the Harbor Neighborhood Preservation Coalition and Head of the Harbor village trustee. “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.”

Gyrodyne’s controversial subdivision plan envisions 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 in 1973 by the federal government as the Mills Pond District and listed in the National Register of Historic Places due to its historical and cultural significance. The subdivision has met with fierce 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.

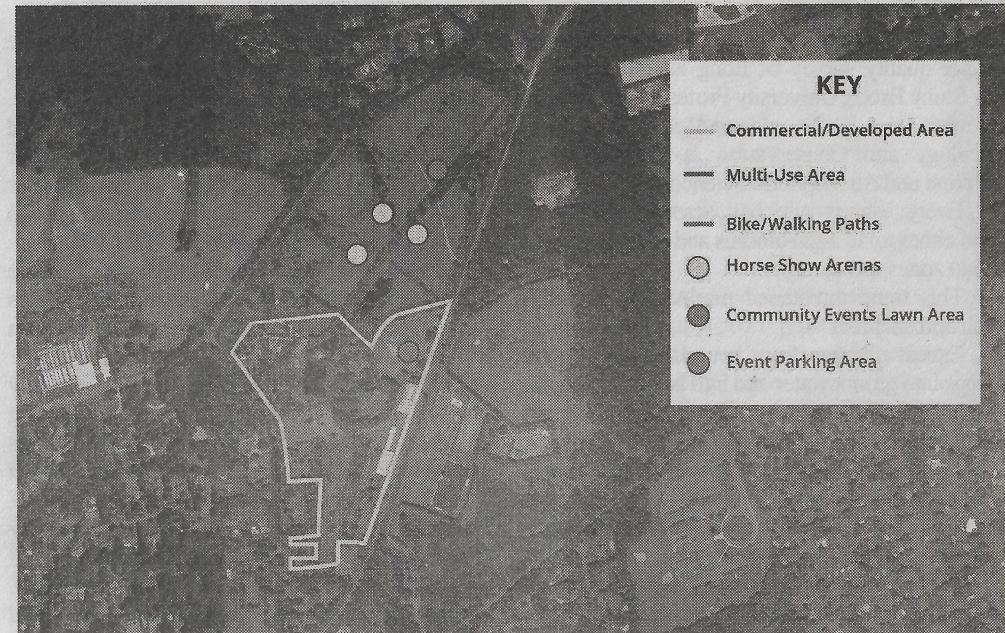
“The coalition strongly supports Mayor Dahlgard’s goal of seeing the entire Flowerfield property protected, and remains hopeful that his goal can be accomplished,” Ogden said. “If that turns out not to be possible, however, there is still a way to preserve much of the property while allowing reasonable 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 up the property for years,” Ogden said. “The coalition looks forward to working

Gyrodyne - Flowerfield Alternate Development Plan

Cluster Development Corporate Park & Multi Use Fairgrounds



Map that depicts the proposed alternate use plan.

with the Town of Smithtown, the Village of Head of the Harbor and Gyrodyne to flesh out the details of a compromise plan that the community can support.”

The Saint James – Head of the Harbor Neighborhood Preservation Coalition was established to promote public awareness,

community outreach and other activities intended to protect the unique rural-suburban character of the community and to advocate for responsible actions by involved local governments to enact and administer appropriate land use policies and decisions consistent with its goals and objectives.