

August 13, 2007- Meeting Summary

Members present: Co-Chair Steve Abramson, Gloria Rabinowitz, Tom Shea, Marlene Haresign, Tom Haresign, Al Kistler, Barry Levy, Joe Krajewski, Toni Maloney, June Morris and Rachel Verno

Non-members present: Edward Armus, Ann M.Chilicki, Bill Berkowski, Liam O’Braoin, Teal Vella Squires, Margery Freedman, Bill Petty, Aline Griffin, Paul Griffin, East Hampton Star reporter Jennifer Landis and Southampton Press reporter John Riordan.

Meeting was devoted to LIPA’s proposed Expansion:

A few new options were submitted by LIPA and they are posted on their website. All are variations of the original plan. None of them bury 100% of the lines.

LIPA has received a positive declaration on the SEQRA report, but we do not know on what grounds, so we will try to ascertain that information.

LIPA continues to say that 100% underground is not an option

1. Too costly
2. They are not going to set a precedent for Southampton
3. They are not going to pass along the cost to their ratepayers outside the area to cover something just for Southampton.

Numerous town officials have written letters against this proposal, but LIPA has the ability to do whatever they want.

Southampton Village Mayor Epley has retained an environmental consultant and attorney to represent the Village in a lawsuit against LIPA and it was suggested that we get the same commitment from the Southampton Town Board or perhaps join the Village in its’ efforts.

Town of Southampton’s 1999 Comprehensive Plan section 3.4 on page 123 recommends.

“...The Town should also make an effort to coordinate with local utility companies to place utility lines underground along scenic road corridors. By coordinating schedules for repaving and line replacement, placing the wires underground can often be accomplished at a minimal cost. The wires can be placed in the road right-of-way either at the edge or the pavement or within the shoulder. The underground utility easement should be placed in such a manner as to protect the existing trees along the road corridor. In addition, Special Assessment Districts (SAD) can be designated to fund the placement of existing utility lines underground, particularly in Hamlet Business (HB) Districts.”

Various civic groups are backing our desire to bury all of the new lines and a new group called the Committee for a Green South Fork that could promote incentives for LIPA to bury the lines has been formed. The Committee could also raise funds for any legal action that may be required against LIPA.

The following was pointed out as to why it is imperative to bury all of the new power lines:

1. Will set a precedent for the entire East End.
2. This is only part one of a larger plan that will eventually go to East Hampton and they should join us in this fight and carry some of the burden of cost if LIPA refuses to pay for this.
3. This is an historic and scenic area, and this plan would be a visual blight.
4. Property will be devalued and all the homes in area will have to be reassessed.
5. This is a hurricane evacuation area and to put in taller above ground transmission poles seems hazardous.

Several issues regarding what CAC would like the Town to do were discussed.

1. Put pressure on politicians to take action and pass laws like North Haven
2. The Town should be asking for their own breakdown of the cost
3. Would Town be open to taking a settlement like Riverhead did
4. Discussion about using Montauk Hwy versus back roads and how the Highway would be more conducive to a project of this scale.

In conclusion, the CAC unanimously passed a resolution stating it would write a letter to Town Board stating:

In the event that LIPA declares that it is going ahead to install new transmission lines with anything other than 100% buried underground, CAC would request Town be proactive and take legal action.

Next meeting will take place Sept. 10, 2007