

**Report of the
Island Hills Independent
Advisory Committee**

The Island Hills Independent Advisory Committee Hearings Executive Summary

In the fall of 2023, the Island Hills Independent Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) held a series of meetings with leading citizens and stakeholders of the Sayville area to obtain feedback on a revised plan to develop the former Island Hills Golf Course. The Islip Town Board rejected a previous plan, known as Greybarn, in 2021, but allowed the developer to submit an alternate concept for the property. A summary of reactions to the new concept is outlined in this brief abstract.

Almost all participants in our meetings agreed that the new concept was an improvement over the Greybarn submission because it substantially reduced the density and height of the original proposal. The aesthetics were warmly received and described as in keeping with the architecture and feel of the surrounding community. The mix of housing types, which for the first time included owner-occupied single-family detached homes and townhomes, was met with almost unanimous approval. Most participants at our convenings asked for an increase in ownership opportunities and a reduction in rentals. A vocal percentage of attendees, most of whom were members of the Greater Islip Association (“GIA”), continued to object to any development of the property and insisted on maintaining the current one-acre zoning.

Traffic remained the Number One criticism of the new concept, as it was for the initial Greybarn plan. Creative ideas for mitigating the impact of more cars travelling south on Lakeland Avenue ranged from building a bridge over the railroad tracks, to aligning Gibbons Court (thru Adams Way) and Chester Avenue, to installing bike and walking paths on property, and sidewalks down Lakeland Avenue. Attendees recognized that any development at Island Hills, not just this particular plan, will increase traffic to some extent.

The plan’s waste treatment plant was widely praised because it offers an opportunity for Main Street businesses to hook up to the facility as a possible community benefit. Many participants noted the environmental benefits of a wastewater treatment plant, particularly with respect to protecting the Great South Bay.

Attendees suggested many inclusions and alterations to the new plan, which are thoroughly described in the attached report. Suggestions focused on “green” development, significant buffers, safety, units dedicated for special needs residents, parking and open space. Although it was explained that the developers have expressed retail was no longer something they would include, many attendees vocally opposed retail activity or amenities that could increase traffic within the complex or on surrounding streets. Many participants resisted including on-site amenities that would negatively impact downtown Sayville.

Despite studies showing the need for more diverse housing on Long Island, opposition to rental units, and renters in general, was strong. Reasons for this opposition included: 1) a perceived negative impact on local school districts, 2) belief that renters are transients with little stake in the community, and 3) a belief that rental units reduce the property values of nearby single-family homes. No matter how circumspect objections were worded, the overall feeling

was summed up by an attendee in an official capacity who described renters as “people not like us.” However, many participants recognized the need for a diversity of housing opportunities on Long Island, particularly “starter” rental housing.

Some participants strongly recommended the incorporation of “cottages.” At least two participants noted that a relatively new development, Wind Crest Cottages, in Bohemia that consists of “cottages” would be a design concept that the community may support at Island Hills.

Originally, the current AAA zoning was a placeholder. A Sayville homeowner, familiar with the history of the property, explained that the current AAA zoning was always a placeholder based upon the assumption that the property would remain a golf course.

The primary opponent of a zone change suggested that six units per acre could be a “compromise.” A Board member of the GIA asked the Committee if six units per acre would be a compromise. The Committee interpreted this question as a willingness to consider a compromised amount of density at the Island Hills site.

Attendance at our community meetings was surprisingly sparse. We invited more than a thousand stakeholders, but few attended our scheduled meetings--although many more spoke to Committee members in one-to-one conversations. We are confident more residents would have participated in convenings if our revised proposal had been the first plan for the property, but our hearings followed the divisive Greybarn presentations. Some said they were intimidated by the extreme negativity of the GIA and other organizations in response to Greybarn. Many said they were against all further development in the area. The most unexpected response, however, was indifference. For one of our meetings, nearly 25 people signed up to attend, but only seven actually showed up. The over-arching reasons for failing to attend were disinterest and the feeling that the fate of the project did not concern or affect them.

The structure of our meetings altered the nature of discussion concerning the development of Island Hills. By hosting small, invitation-only affiliated groups as a supplement to public hearings, we created a safe atmosphere in which diverse opinions were aired, discussed, and respected. We believe this model can be replicated whenever communities face contentious issues. We thank all who took the time to attend our meetings, the generosity of our True North Community Church host, and the tireless work of our support staff.

The following pages include a detailed account of all the comments, pro and con, recorded at our seven gatherings. Comments are reported as stated. There were no attempts to correct misstatements or inaccuracies.

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1. Objective

In July of this year (2023), Rechler Equity Partners reached out to five members of the Bayport-Sayville-West Sayville hamlets known for their history of community involvement to form the Island Hills Independent Advisory Committee.⁽¹⁾ The Committee was tasked with holding meetings with a cross-section of stakeholders regarding their opinions of a redesign of the property known as the former site of the Island Hills Golf Course and producing a report of their findings. Rechler Equity Partners asked the Committee to conduct business with complete autonomy.⁽²⁾ This turned out to be the case. As veterans of many contentious battles over development projects on Long Island, members of the Committee have seen open meetings descend into volleys of disrespectful and unproductive comments—and ultimately a lack of trust on both sides. Some attendees advocated for open public meetings and comprehensive professional polls. Our effort does not preclude the idea of open meetings held by other entities; however, this was not part of the Committee’s process. As a Committee, we were committed to attempt a new way of engaging in peer to peer group dialogue. In what is perhaps an overly optimistic goal, it is the Committee’s hope that this process might become a model for future discussion concerning development on Long Island.

2. Process

In order to foster an environment where people would feel free to express their honest opinions, meetings were by invitation only. The Committee made the decision not to hold open meetings where one individual or special interest group could dominate the proceedings, drown out other points of view, and never hear or listen to diverse opinions. All stakeholders’ opinions held equal value, the Committee was there to gather input, NOT to judge it. The Committee also decided to group the invitees to each meeting by areas of mutual interest (for example: civic associations, chambers of commerce, restaurant owners, environmentalists, housing advocates, etc.) This was done to avoid obvious built-in conflicts of interest. For purposes of this report, participants were guaranteed anonymity unless they consented to be identified. To protect the participants’ privacy, the meetings were closed to the press.⁽³⁾ It was also decided not to invite elected officials, particularly on the Town level who would end up voting on the zoning application for any revised proposal for the project. It should be noted that every participant had an opportunity to provide input at the convenings.

The Committee sent more than a thousand invitations via email to community leaders, groups and individuals, known for their interests in affairs related to the Town of Islip.⁽⁴⁾ This included known opponents of the original Greybarn proposal for the Island Hills site. The Committee also issued personal invitations to those who could not be reached by email. As we do not know the membership for organizations such as Life Services, Chambers, Civic Groups, etc., invitations were sent to their boards that stated the invitation included their entire membership. In addition, The Committee established a web site (<https://islandhillscommittee.com>) that allowed people to post comments or ask for invitations to a meeting. This web site was published in the local weekly newspaper, the Suffolk County News. The work of the Committee was also highlighted in a Newsday op-ed piece by Randi F. Marshall (“Sayville residents get a say in new Island Hills proposal” August 31, 2023).

3. Meeting Format

Meetings were held at True North Community Church at 1101 Lakeland Ave, Bohemia, NY 11716 in the evenings throughout the months of September, October and November 2023. Participants sat informally around U-shaped tables and chairs. A member of the Committee gave a few words of welcome while explaining the format of the meeting. It was expressly stated at the opening of every meeting that:

1. The Committee was not an advocacy committee. The Committee's job was not to sell or to convince anybody about the new design proposal.
 2. The Committee was there to listen, not to talk, to engage in meaningful dialogue, not debate.
 3. The Committee would eventually compile a report of all thoughts that were conveyed in the meetings.
 4. The Committee existed as neighbors and proponents of the process and not the project.
 5. Lastly, it was strongly stressed that what attendees saw during these meetings was not, in any way, the final proposal. It was merely a design concept created for discussion purposes that would be shaped by comments and suggestions.
- At this point, all the members of the Committee introduced themselves individually and participants did the same.

A representative of Union Studio Architects of Providence, Rhode Island, was then introduced to participants. Rechler Equity Partners hired Union Studio to come up with a proposal for a redesign of the Island Hills project. Their stated goal was to design something that fit the nature of the surrounding community and to include a variety of housing types and price points. Union Design gave a twenty (20) minute power point presentation after which attendees were invited to comment, ask questions and provide feedback. They were also invited to suggest any community benefits they might like Rechler Equity Partners to include as adjuncts to the new concept.

4. Recording Meetings and Assembling the Report

Although many people expressed identical thoughts, particularly concerning density, rentals and traffic, the Committee has decided to recreate each session as verbatim as possible, despite the great amount of repetition. All speakers are included in this report. Because of the nature of speech, and differing speech patterns, we have taken the liberty of casting as many comments as possible as complete sentences, rather than the sentence fragments that were often spoken. We have in no way altered the meaning or intention of any speaker. Representatives of Rechler Equity Partners kept minutes of the convenings and Committee members took their own notes.

All attendees at all sessions were guaranteed anonymity. Speakers who are identified in this report have volunteered the public use of their names.

5. The Meetings

The seven convenings were held in the fall of 2023 on September 18, October 2, 11, 16, 25, November 9 and 16. The first six meetings were targeted to include specific business or community groups. The final meeting was designed as a “catch all” to include various residents with an interest in the project and people who had conflicts with a prior scheduled sessions.

A. Restaurants & Taverns

(see 13. Minutes of the Meetings – Pages 11-12)

On September 18, 2023, the Committee held its first convening, which targeted business leaders in the hospitality industry, a segment that plays an important role in the local economy. Although many invitations were issued, few attended this meeting, although some restaurant owners spoke one-to-one with Committee members at other times.

The group was primarily interested in the project because of the potential for Main Street restaurants to hook up to the wastewater treatment plant within the Island Hills proposed development. Speakers complained of the current situation in which restaurant owners frequently have to pump out their own septic tanks. They spoke of environmental concerns that extend beyond the immediate Sayville area, and strongly supported the eventual installation of sewers throughout Long Island.

The group also felt the Island Hills development would benefit them because an increase in local residents would mean a potential increase in customers.

B. Schools Board Members and School District Officials

(see 13. Minutes of the Meetings – Pages 12-13)

On October 2, 2023, the Committee hosted members of the Connetquot and Sayville School boards, and the school superintendent of the Connetquot School District. Both districts will be impacted by the Island Hills development. Students living in the Island Hills complex will attend Connetquot Schools, but the demands on the surrounding infrastructure will predominantly affect Sayville. Although both Superintendents and all members of the two school boards were invited, only four (five with Dr. James Bertsch at a later meeting) people chose to attend.

The Boards of Education members from Connetquot and Sayville School Districts who attended the meeting spoke at length. Although attendees thought the new project was attractive, the consensus was that the plan was too large and had too many rental units. “The issues are enrollment and traffic,” said a board member, summing up the feelings of the group. “It looks pretty but it is overdeveloped.”

All but one of the attendees objected to renters and wanted the Islip Town Board to maintain the current AAA zoning which permits only single-family homes. The sole attendee that disagreed with the others said the plan could benefit the community because it contained a mix of housing types for young people and senior citizens. She said the Town, the school districts and the developer should work together to find ways to split property taxes and any student increase between the two districts.

C. Chamber of Commerce and Independent Business Owners

(see 13. Minutes of the Meetings – Pages 13-18)

On October 11, 2023 the Committee hosted local business owners and members of the Sayville Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was well-attended and generated thoughtful feedback.

Business owners and the Sayville Chamber of Commerce provided a variety of opinions and concerns about the Project, but the majority agreed that the new proposal was an improvement over the prior Greybarn plan for the site. One member of the Sayville Chamber said the group saw the project through a pro-business lens and would not endorse anything that diverted patrons from Main Street, such as retail within the complex. The Union Design architect assured them that there was “zero retail proposed here.” As did other groups, many Chamber members said they preferred ownership to rental, but one local realtor said the community needed the kind of housing mix included in the new plan. The group advocated for improved infrastructure, such as better sidewalks, jogging paths, and aggressive traffic control. One attendee, who was well versed on the zoning history of the site, mentioned that the AAA zoning currently in place was meant to be a placeholder for the golf course.

D. Environmental

(see 13. Minutes of the Meetings – Pages 18-20)

On October 16, 2023, the Committee held a meeting specifically targeting environmental organizations. Members of several local organizations attended.

Representatives of environmental groups, and other attendees, focused on matters that dealt specifically with land and water. Attendees supported the wastewater treatment plant and the possibility of allowing access to Main Street business owners. Attendees spoke against clear cutting the 114-acre site and advocated for the use of organic fertilizers and native plants. They believed the project had “value added” benefits such as the proposed greenspaces and perimeter buffers. Although they questioned density and traffic, as did all groups, they praised the overall design, storm and wastewater treatment plans and the commitment to preserving old growth trees on the site. They suggested that the developers create an environmental fund as a community benefit for conservation projects on the Great South Bay.

E. Greater Sayville Civic Association

(see 13. Minutes of the Meetings – Pages 20-23)

On October 25, 2023, the Committee hosted the Greater Sayville Civic Association. Members of the Civic Association asked many questions of the architect and were more actively engaged with the details of the plan than prior groups. They asked technical questions about density, floor area ratios, height and number of buildings, use of solar panels, fencing, sales vs rentals, security, unit pricing, and target market. Since the presentation was not a final plan, many of their questions could not be answered with specifics.

A member of the Greater Sayville Civic Association said rental units were everyone’s problem with the plan. They said the group wanted single family homes on the site, even if it meant a zoning change that allowed up to 400 homes. “I understand large lots per home are not necessary. I would be ok with more homes on smaller lots, but the Civic Association gives a

‘hard no’ to any rental apartments.” They said all housing on the Island Hills site must enhance downtown and reflect the dominant single-family-homeowner makeup of the area.

In discussing benefits the developer might offer the larger community, the group unequivocally rejected anything that would take away business from Sayville’s downtown or add more traffic to the community. Some members suggested installing sidewalks from Island Hills to Main Street, more green space within the project, extending greenspace to Chester Avenue, and adding kiosks within the complex to promote downtown stores and community festivals.

F. Greater Islip Association

(see 13. Minutes of the Meetings – Pages 23-27)

On November 9, 2023, the Committee held a meeting especially for the Greater Islip Association (GIA) whose website name is “Stop Island Hills.” As expected, the group was unanimously against the project and had no comments concerning the new plan and no suggestions for community enhancements. Attendees were board members of the GIA organization who presented facts and figures to bolster their arguments against the development. All their comments are in Section 13 of this report. The GIA’s overall feeling about the project or any development of the Island Hills site can be summed up in four words: “No Change of Zone.” However, one of the attendees indicated a willingness to potentially compromise on the amount of density.

A notable fact of this special meeting was the absence of attack and acrimony, which confirmed the “safe space” process and the concept of small, targeted and private group meetings embraced by the Committee.

G. Local Residents & Business Owners

(see 13. Minutes of the Meetings – Pages 27-30)

November 16, 2023 was the last convening of the Committee and was the only one in which the group was not united by a specific interest. Attendees were a mix of business owners, interested residents who did not “fit” a specific group, and people who were invited to prior meetings but had a scheduling conflict. The meeting had the largest number of people who said they were coming, but relatively few actually attended. Those that did attend engaged with the plan, asked questions and offered many thoughts for enhancements. While the group had differing opinions, the majority supported the project or said they would consider it. Many cited a need for mixed housing for seniors, young people and those facing life changes. One attendee wondered why people “would not want this” and felt the project would help the community.

The president of Autism Communities stressed the need for housing for people with special needs and asked the developers to set aside some units for them. (see attachment 1) Others praised the wastewater treatment plant and the possibility of Main Street hook up. Some asked for the same things others asked for in prior meetings: sidewalks, green space and mitigation of traffic.

Of all the meetings, those who attended this one asked probing questions as if the project would take place. This included queries about HOAs (Home Owner Associations), first floor

availability for seniors, maintenance companies, price points for rental units and the amenities at the development's community center.

6. What People Liked About the Presentation: A Summary

On the whole, attendees, even vocal critics, agreed the new plan was better than the original Greybarn concept. The aesthetics, the reduction in density and height were uniformly endorsed. Several attendees spoke of the need for high-end housing like the Island Hills proposal.

Attendees who favored the plan spoke of the following benefits:

The need for housing on Long Island, especially for young professionals those looking to downsize. All age groups have a desire for flexibility. There is a need for housing for young people starting out and for older residents; retired people no longer value single family ownership. Young people are often head-hunted and change locations. Senior citizens desire maintenance free accommodations that are near family and familiar communities.

The need for “starter” rental housing. A Committee member spoke of beginning his many years as a Sayville resident by renting an apartment in Bohemia close to Island Hills—then moving on to ownership. Several attendees said rental could lead to ownership, or vice versa. Ownership could lead to rental. Several other attendees echoed the sentiment that rental was often the first step toward community involvement.

Several attendees spoke of the need for affordable housing but said the current definition of affordable is frequently not affordable to many.

Several non-attendees, who spoke to individual Committee members, cited the need for transitional housing that was not “transient housing.” They saw a need for housing for the elderly and those in the community experiencing life-changing situations.

An attendee asked for the developer to include affordable ownership opportunities.

Local businesses overall are excited about the possibility of hooking up sewers to the project water treatment plant.

Many local businesses also expressed the need for more customers that could be addressed by new residents with disposable income.

Environmental groups unanimously supported the possibility of sewers protecting drinking water and helping to restore the Great South Bay.

Many attendees were also pleased with the buffer and green space that was incorporated into the concept.

7. What People Did Not Like About the Presentation: A Summary

The most often stated concern was traffic. Increased congestion, traffic safety, and road conditions were all raised as concerns at every meeting. Lakeland Avenue, Bohemia Parkway, and Chester Road were frequently mentioned. Community members want to maintain the traffic patterns that are appropriate for residential neighborhoods. On a macro level, many attendees felt the development project at Island Hills would increase traffic at the Oakdale Merge.

Density was the second most often stated concern, which was usually linked to traffic. Concerning this, many attendees said the Project was “very attractive but too large.” They feared adding such a large number of new residents to the Sayville community would change the character of the hamlet, and they felt the infrastructure could not handle the population increase.

Opposition to renters was strong. Many wanted the number of ownership units in the plan increased and rental units decreased. Almost every meeting contained some attendees who were adamantly against renters, even describing them as people “not like us.” Some said they believed ownership cut down on crime and helped residents establish equity. They believed rentals encouraged transients who had little interest in becoming part of the larger community; whereas, home ownership encouraged investment in the community.

Several people stated they were opposed to any kind of development other than detached single family dwelling units. One group was the most vocal, and vehemently opposed to the development project. They frequently requested single family dwelling units on a quarter acre lots, which they claimed would be consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods. This concept would require a zone change for the property at Island Hills. This was taken further by some who were opposed to any change in zoning and consider nothing but single-family homes on one-acre lots, which is the current AAA zoning.

Parking was raised as a concern. Attendees favored the draft concept in which resident parking was located behind units to minimize the on-street presence of vehicles. An attendee feared that visitors to the complex might park on Bohemia Parkway or other nearby residential streets if visitor parking was unavailable within the development. To prevent this, there might be a need for *No Parking* signs on these adjoining streets.

8. Suggestions Raised to Mitigate Traffic Concerns

Almost all attendees, pro or con the plan itself, cited traffic as a problem. The following thoughts emerged to mitigate traffic:

Link Gibbons Court (thru Adams Way) and Chester Road at a single point on Lakeland Avenue with a single, multiple turn light.

Create an exit at the north end of the project on Bohemia Parkway that provides better and more immediate access to Sunrise Highway.

Provide rent reduction incentives for tenants without cars, or without the allotted number of cars.

Build a bridge over the railroad tracks on Lakeland to avoid backup when trains are stopped.

Provide residents with charging stations, anticipating a rise in electric and autonomous driving cars. In a thoughtful analysis, one attendee reminded the audience that we are likely to see dramatic changes in automobile use which will affect traffic. “We are already seeing big car manufacturers testing driverless cars. We have to assume that cars, driving and traffic will be different 10 or 20 years from now.”

Provide Uber or Lyft service or shuttle services the train station and downtown Main Street.

Repair and extend sidewalks so it will be possible for residents to walk to Main Street and the Sayville train station. Sidewalks exist now on the west side of Lakeland, in an almost straight path to Main Street, but are in disrepair in many areas. Extend the sidewalks on the East side of Lakeland Avenue.

Provide bike lanes to access Main Street, with a thought to the rising use of motorized bikes, scooters, and skateboards.

Improve crosswalks on Lakeland Avenue to include flashing lights or stop signs to warn drivers and protect pedestrians and cyclists.

A business to the west of the project suggested the idea of access roads entering/exiting onto Bohemia Parkway and Terry Road. Suggested changes to the traffic patterns on North and South sides of Smithtown Avenue to allow access to local businesses.

9. Suggestions for Community Benefits

The groups had some suggestions for amenities or “give backs” to the community, but discussion seldom centered on this opportunity. At several meetings, attendees rejected the idea of an art center or suggested it be on Main Street, Sayville or at the old Sayville Court House at 190 Railroad Avenue. Many felt that nothing should be installed at the Island Hills site that draws residents and visitors away from Main Street. The following community benefits were embraced by community members:

The Number One benefit of the plan to the larger community was the opportunity for downtown businesses to hook up to the Island Hills wastewater treatment plant. This was cited at all meetings.

Create a security office on site which provides dusk to dawn patrols of the complex and includes the neighboring street, thus mitigating concerns about crime.

Establish a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) for Sayville. Monies could be donated to either the school district or other entity, to offset the fact that taxes on the project go to the Connetquot School District while Sayville endures most of the traffic, environmental, and infrastructure impact.

Create running and bike paths throughout the Project's greenway, which connect to sidewalks in the surrounding neighborhood.

Expand the greenspace to include Chester Road and utilize native plantings wherever possible.

Provide a shuttle to the downtown business district. (Many thought this would not work.)

Invest in the local museum, the LT Michael P. Murphy Navy SEAL or the Long Island Maritime Museum, instead of establishing an art center.

Provide kiosks to support Main Street Businesses within the Island Hills property.

Reserve some affordable rental units for adults with disabilities, who would get support from the nonprofit organization Autism Communities (AC). Renters would not disrupt their neighbors and their rent is subsidized by New York State.

Establish a long-term community fund to mitigate the environmental impact of the project and to preserve Long Island bays and water supply.

10. Indifference.

While major opposition to the plan comes from those near the property, and the well-organized efforts of the GIA, many stakeholders and Islip residents do not feel the project affects them. Although there is universal concern about Lakeland Avenue traffic, there is less interest in the development of the Island Hills property than expected. Many invitees who said they planned to come to a meeting failed to show up. Their reasons ranged from being too tired, too dark, getting caught up in the day, or they forgot. Thus, learning about the new plan for Island Hills was simply not a priority.

Even election results from the area close to the site seemed to point toward indifference: Candidates won handily against opponents who made Island Hills a signature issue. Supervisor Candidate Ken Colon and Town Board Candidate Tom Murray publicly and vocally opposed any zone change for the Island Hills property. In the six Election Districts which contain and surround the Island Hills Property, their opponents - both incumbents - swept all these districts, some by big numbers and overall by over 65% of the vote. Additionally, in the hamlets of Bayport, Sayville, West Sayville, Oakdale and Bohemia, incumbents won every election district except one, which was the most southeast district in Sayville and nowhere near the Island Hills property.

In talking to many business, community and civic leaders from other parts of the town, it became clear that they had little interest in supporting or opposing the proposal. Those who chose to participate were overwhelmingly from the Sayville and Connetquot School Districts or the hamlets of Sayville, West Sayville, Oakdale, Bohemia and Ronkonkoma.

11. Community Climate

The Committee feels that it is important to point out the conditions under which they had to conduct its business. Every member of the Committee met with a certain amount of disapproval, and in some cases downright condemnation, for what they were attempting to do. It didn't seem to make a difference when Committee members explained that they were not advocating for the development project, but only seeking to engage in dialogue and get input from the community. The Committee encountered people who felt the possible development of the Island Hills property was an issue so dangerous that the topic should not even be talked about. One person felt that she was put in a "precarious situation" by simply being invited to attend a meeting with the Committee. This climate was somewhat shocking to us.

This feeling of fear and intimidation (whether real or imagined is not for us to judge) extended to many of the people we sought to speak to in this process. This was true of both businesses and residents. Many businesses told us they were instructed not to speak to us. Many expressed the very real fear of a boycott of their establishment. There is no doubt that many people who were invited to meetings were intimidated by opposition groups and feared retribution. An owner of a local establishment said he was told he would lose business if he attended our meeting. Others expressed a great reluctance to "get involved," or publicly support the project. Residents expressed fear of being ostracized by their neighbors. Many businesses and residents did speak to the Committee, although many requested anonymity, which was assured to them. Again, our goal in this process was to create a safe environment where people could feel free to express their true feelings. The Committee's guiding philosophy throughout was to invite community stakeholders to participate in a judgement-free conversation with the intention of providing substantive input regarding the new design concept for the Island Hills property.

12. Reaction to the Meeting Format

Many attendees applauded the process and the opportunity to meet in small groups. One attendee described public forums as "sh-t shows," where nothing is accomplished. "You enter those meetings as friends and leave as enemies." One Sayville homeowner familiar with the history of the property said he liked the small meeting format in which everyone had a chance to speak, observing "Public hearings never give everyone time."

The "safe space" process worked and was welcomed by everyone, even the most outspoken critics of the project. At the meeting that catered to the vocal opposition group, the GIA, no one raised a voice or condemned another attendee, yet the group was able to present all their arguments, and their facts and figures, for the record. It was stated, though, by one attendee that he was not more vocal due to possible backlash from others attending. There was less feedback about the concept than expected, but many constructive thoughts were contributed. Although there were many questions about the concept, it was difficult to elicit suggestions for improvements and preferences. This may be because attendees were viewing a complex, visionary concept for the first time and could not fully digest the concept at their first sitting, and/or attendees did not want any concept (other than single family homes) and thus did not want to add positive thoughts.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS

The following contains minutes of the seven meetings that the Committee held in the fall of 2023. Because of the nature of speech, and differing speech patterns, we have taken the liberty of casting as many comments as possible as complete sentences, rather than the sentence fragments that were often spoken. We have in no way altered the meaning or intention of any speaker. In addition, we have included comments that were made in one-to-one conversations with individual Committee members.

A. Restaurants & Taverns

September 18, 2023

Jack McCarthy, president of the Suffolk County Restaurant & Tavern Association and 1st Vice President for the Long Island Region of the Empire State Restaurant & Tavern Association said the project was extremely beneficial for local restaurants. He based his opinion on six factors:

1. The ability for Main Street and local bars and restaurants to hook up sewers from their establishments to the Island Hills water treatment facility. He said this would greatly expand business as it would allow for more seating per day, per restaurant. He stated: We will not survive without sewers, adding that he considers the proposed sewer treatment plant and its extended capacity a key reason to support the Island Hills project.
2. Mr. McCarthy also noted that due to Sayville restaurants close proximity to The Great South Bay the sewers would help keep that water body's marine life healthy. All restaurants love to use local food sources. He especially noted that Oysters are a big seller and it's mutually beneficial to the filtration of the Great South Bay if sewers and oysters both existed. Their being healthy would boost the local economies.
3. The Island Hills development would increase the supply of local customers with disposable income who are more likely to eat out.
4. Mr. McCarthy also noted that the bay's health would be greatly enhanced if additional businesses such as nail salons, beauty parlors, dry cleaners along the main corridor are hooked up to the sewers. They utilize extremely toxic chemicals that work their way to the bay and the aquifers. All of Long Island would be better off.
5. Mr. McCarthy commented that in Florida and across the country new developments have sections within the developments that are 55 and older that have elevators. In fact elevators are big for all ages just to get your shopping upstairs. They should be considered.
6. He felt since these homes and apartments would not have individual yards, the project would limit the number of families with children. Younger professionals would like this.

Agreeing with Mr. McCarthy, one local restaurant owner who would only be identified as "Owner of Restaurant X", said there was an immediate need for sewers and pointed out the huge impact on operating overhead costs of constantly having to pump out existing septic systems.

Another local restaurant owner stated that he was instructed by customers and groups not to speak to us. "We are Switzerland, please leave we don't want to upset anyone."

Another local restaurant owner said they were afraid of a “local business group” and only spoke under anonymity that they pump their cesspools frequently. It is becoming extremely cost prohibitive. They would love sewers but were afraid to show up at the meetings.

Another local restaurant owner said they’ve already been impacted by being perceived as pro sewers by groups and customers that informed them that they were not patronizing them anymore because of it. The opposition felt that Sayville would become Patchogue.

An anonymous owner said that they felt that sewers should run down Main Street to West Sayville.

Many hospitality establishments in Bayport, Bohemia, Oakdale, Sayville, West Sayville were visited. Only one felt Island Hills should be a park and stated “No Zone Change” but everyone else was supportive of the project as they need the business. Many stated they were struggling to remain profitable since the pandemic and felt this would lead to younger folks with disposable income. All stated they needed sewers both for the environment and the constant disruption of having cesspools pumped, often during business hours which affect both customers and parking.

B. Schools

October 2, 2023

Boards of Education members from both the Connetquot and Sayville School Districts attended the meeting and spoke at length. The Superintendent of Connetquot Central School District also attended the meeting, but left early due to prior commitments. Prior to departure he did inquire as to how many new students were anticipated. Although not directly impacted by an increase in students, a Sayville Board of Education member said they have experienced questions and concerns from community members at their meetings. Their input as community leaders was welcomed.

A vocal Connetquot School board member described the new proposal as “pretty, and nice, BUT...”, then said it was too large and had too many rental units. Two Connetquot board members raised the specter of an influx of students as the result of the project. The school district representatives were concerned about the impact on the schools of the “types of families” potentially adding children to the school system. Every school representative said they did not want a zone change. They spoke against rentals of any sort, preferring home ownership even if the Triple A current zoning was reduced to quarter acre, allowing almost 400 single family homes. “Ownership means better people and less crime,” said an attendee.

One Connetquot school board member stated the following: “the issues are enrollment and traffic. The development should have fewer buildings, and fewer units. Give more land to each unit to keep more green space and do not overpopulate the area. Home ownership is a better option because homeowners care more. The community prefers ownership. If townhouses can be homeownership, it could ‘take the edge off.’ There is a perception that you do not care as much about the area if you are a renter. People are concerned with the ‘criminal element.’ Traffic is an issue, especially on Lakeland Avenue. And what is the parking plan? The more I see it the more I see overdevelopment. I prefer single family houses. I would prefer 180 units on

half acre lots. Colony Park [a development across from Ronkonkoma Middle School] has an issue with criminal activity (the speaker stated she had a background in law enforcement). The issue is not who moves into the homes, it is who attracts criminals with nice cars. This plan is not realistic for the neighborhood. It looks pretty but it is overdeveloped. ”

Another Connetquot School Board member asked: “the property is close to the south shore, what is the plan for the high-water table?” She was told the water treatment plant of the proposal includes capacity for downtown.

A Sayville School Board member stated: “Having retail stores in the development would bring more people to the area.” She was told that no retail is included in the proposal. “Sayville has declining enrollment, does Connetquot?” She was told there may be some increase from the project. She then said she hoped some of the property taxes the development generated could go to Sayville to offset that district’s expenses. On the whole, she thinks this development would benefit the community, adding “many prefer single family houses, but they have not seen the drawings or architecture.” She asked Union Studio architects to keep the height to 2- 2 ½ stories as indicated on the new plan.

C. Chamber of Commerce/Business

October 11, 2023

Business owners and members of the Sayville Chamber of Commerce provided a variety of opinions and concerns about the project. One attendee asked if there was a walkway around the perimeter of the entire project. She was told there was. She then asked, as a homeowner, “What is the benefit of being close to renters?” The architect told her, and the audience, that the project’s goal is to provide housing opportunities where multiple generations can live in the community. She said the new proposal was a great improvement but added that she was still concerned about the amount of rentals.

A Sayville Chamber of Commerce member said they were happy to see greenspace in the plan and advocated for even more. It was stated the Board visited Greybarn (Amityville) and a huge concern was the claim that some units are “affordable.” They didn’t agree that was the case for those starting out in the real estate market. “If we are saying it is affordable, (these proposed rental units) will be next to homes where owners have invested a great deal of money.” If they were purchasing a home in the area, they said they would not buy next to a renter who is transient. As an organization that represents businesses, they said the priority of their constituency is downtown revitalization, adding, “Sayville business owners are concerned that the Rechlers Greybarn project in Amityville has retail.” They were told “there is zero retail proposed here.” They said The Chamber and local businesses would be more interested in the new plan if it provided kiosks on the property promoting local business and urging residents to come to Main Street for goods, services, and promotions. The inclusion of a proposed farm on the drawings “makes them nervous” because there are three family farms within a half mile of the Island Hills site that sell to restaurants, so the proposed farm would be competition. Union Design told the Chamber members and the other attendees, that the farm idea was just that—an idea that grew out of an aesthetic decision to disguise the treatment plant as a barn. In response, a Committee member said that if a cooperative farm just for residents was included as an amenity,

produce could be donated to a local food pantry to assist with food insecurity initiatives in the Town. Chamber Members continued to provide the following comments:

1. If an arts center is included in the plan, the center should be on Main Street, and residents of Island Hills should be shuttled downtown and encouraged to support local business.
2. The former Capital One bank is vacant and could be recycled as a community center that could be rented out for events by The Chamber.
3. There are no sidewalks to downtown, so you cannot tell future residents of the site that it is a walkable community to Main Street. Shuttles would be nice, but is not sure if they would be used. Based on her input from other business owners, concerning foot traffic, no one imagines an influx of people walking from the development. If they cannot get down there easily, they will not come. There should be new or improved sidewalks from Island Hills to the train station.
4. One member said the infrastructure, even as it now exists, is awful. Their business is on Railroad Avenue in Sayville and they have timed it and it took 14 minutes to make a left hand turn to get out of their driveway. There are no safety controls. An updated traffic study needs to assess the area from the train station to Main Street. Downtown cannot handle any more cars. It took five years to get traffic calming crosswalks around Main Street. If the new plan adds traffic, you need to look at traffic calming measures. Even Sayville football games generate a lot of traffic. There should be an Uber or Lyft pick up point serving the area. People tell them the area is already too busy. The “no zone change” is sometimes misused. The community likes affordable home ownership. People cannot find smaller, less expensive homes and there is a market for it. The Pines at 1330 Smithtown Ave, Bohemia, NY 11716, which are craftsman style bungalows, were sold quickly, and they are not affordable anymore.
5. Ownership is always better than rentals as owners have deeper ties to the community. If there was no zone change, what could architects put there besides single-family homes?
6. Other issues they see as concerns are:
 1. A possible influx of students in Connetquot Schools
 2. A negative impact on volunteer Fire and EMS services because of an increase in need
 3. They would like the developers to provide a public benefit that helps local restaurants

They said they believed people wanted open public meetings to discuss the new plan, and they believe the public has been clear that they do not want any change of zone of the property. The Committee responded that they were trying something new by not holding open meetings which are often disruptive. They again stated their preference for public hearings and said, “Those that cannot behave in public should not hinder the process.”

Finally, they asked: What will the population be when the project is completed? A Committee member said the number is not fixed yet but estimated that it would be at least 33% less than the original proposal.

Another Sayville Chamber of Commerce member stated that much of the resistance he hears is from residents who do not want the Island Hills Project “to look like Queens.” His initial

response to the original Greybarn proposal is that it looked just like Queens. After viewing the presentation by Union Design, he felt the new concept bridges the gap of housing types and is interesting. He likes the concept and wondered if there are more examples or other designs. He said he was particularly interested in potential public benefits that could be added to the project. He said, “The Rechlers know if there is a market for renters, that is what they are going to do. But what will they give to the community? The biggest concern will be the traffic. So infrastructure improvement—this is what interests me most.” He said another development has recently gone up at the nearby driving range which is also on Sunrise Highway, and continued, “People want something that does not exist here. It is a pipe dream to think affordable homes would be here. Supply would determine demand. Townhouse options are more in character and would mean less density. I think there would be interest in buying one-bedroom units.”

A local realtor said they appreciated the Chamber member’s comments. With the design and buffers shown at the presentation, they thought the new plan would be “quite nice to live across from.” They were against retail and were happy to learn that there is no retail planned for the project. On a positive note, as a local realtor, they felt the community needs “something like this. It is visually pleasing, has many TIS (Tenant Improvements), has good aesthetics, and it fits into the community.” “It will not appeal to everyone, but it would appeal to younger or older people looking to downsize. Some seniors are advised by accountants to rent, not to buy. This design isn’t just apartments, it’s a community. It will have a clubhouse and amenities. If there were a farm, it should be for on-site residents, not people from outside. People who live there will have little or no land. Part of a HOA (Home Owner Association) benefit could be membership in a cooperative on-site farm. Local governments are requiring that a portion of new developments be rentals, and this design accommodates that.” They said, on the whole, they “love it.”

The local realtor continued to provide the following comments:

A sidewalk and traffic study needs to be done.

They would like to see more ownership and fewer rentals. “Many people need rentals. If the complex is well managed, the mix will be nice. As a real estate agent, it’s challenging to find this type of housing in our area. Most young people are making good money. The issue is not affording the rent, it is saving enough for down payments to purchase their first homes. There are a lot of incentives to live here.”

A Sayville resident and homeowner spoke next. He stated that he thinks the Committee has developed a productive way of gathering community feedback. He attended a prior public hearing on Greybarn, but not everyone, including himself, had a chance to speak. He thought the invitation-only format produced more dialogue. Some homes across the street are on a fifth of an acre and apartments down the road have maintenance issues (not to blame renters themselves, but management.) He explained his own personal standpoint on the question of zoning changes by asking a series of questions: How does this project fit into the future of the community? How does this fit into the future of Sayville? And Islip? The larger region? How does it affect the adjoining area? The roads? The swale that connects to Greens Creek? How does it affect property values? As for the site and the plan itself- does it fit? Does it work? Does it function well? He said the new design is much better than the prior one, then described an historic

evolution of apartments on Long Island that has moved from a 1960's barracks-like configuration to more thoughtful concepts like this. He said he has visited other parts of the country where apartment developments are beautiful.

The resident who is very familiar with the site's history contributed the following additional comments: There are other sites beside this golf course that have been redeveloped, such as SunVet Mall (5801 Sunrise Hwy, Holbrook, NY 11741), and the former flea market that is now Target (5750 Sunrise Hwy, Sayville, NY 11782). Back in 1967 or 1968 triple-A zoning was put in as a place holder because the property was expected to remain a golf course. A 2009 study looked at the Sunrise Highway Corridor and recommended AAA zoning to save the golf course but that was 15 years ago. By no means can we stop thinking now. I think approximately 100 single family homes in a cluster would be ok. There are no other 120-acre sites left in the Town of Islip. This is the largest single tract of undeveloped land in the entire town other than Pilgrim State. We need to really think this through. Industrial development is not appropriate. This is an excellent opportunity for residents to look at opportunities here. The original Greybarn plan pushed the limits. Opening discussions to get ideas is a good one. He said his initial reaction to the new plan is positive but he has not looked at traffic in detail, and saw an opportunity to realign Chester Avenue with Gibbons Court to eliminate the need for an offset intersection on Lakeland Avenue. "This is a great opportunity for Sayville and Islip. We should not waste it. Not everyone wants a single family detached home. I hope your focus groups includes younger people and you listen to their voices. He described the new plan as sensitive to the community, and said he was positive about the concept.

Jim Folks, the owner of Folks Insurance Group, 33 Main St, West Sayville, NY 11796, stated that this was an excellent presentation. Although he has read articles in the paper about Greybarn and this revision, he has not been involved in hearings until now. As a golfer, Folks pointed out that the famous course designer A.W. Tillinghast was the architect of the defunct Island Hills Golf Course. "If it is not a golf course, it will be a residential site. What is proposed certainly fits the tonality. If it is presented correctly, coming into Sayville and seeing this type of architecture can only benefit the community. It would make a nice entryway to Sayville." He said the sewage treatment plant (STP) that could connect to downtown was a good idea because restaurants can use it. (A Sayville Chamber board member interjected and agreed that restaurants need the sewers.) He wanted to know the breakdown of ownership vs. rentals. (He was told by Union Design that approximately 120 units had been designated for ownership and 800 for rentals) He said his In-laws are looking to downsize and the new concept is very intriguing to them. They love the concept. He added, "The past view of renters has shifted. Technology allows young professionals to stay home, so it will attract young professionals. The line between renters and homeowners has blurred and is a thing of the past. This project presents a nice place to live, to grow a family and maybe eventually move into the village of Sayville. All in all, I think it's a nice project."

A Bohemia resident who is also an attorney said he hopes there are affordable ownership opportunities. He said he is not against renters, but feels Long Island needs more opportunities for young homeowners to build equity through ownership. He thinks there will be more interest in the project if developers provide more homeownership opportunities. He said he bought a townhouse in the community in 2006, built liquidity, and then moved to a single family home in

the area. He thought two or three bedroom single family houses in the complex could be starter homes for many young people. Overall, his main concern was traffic. He commented that he had not seen anyone on the Committee at any previous meetings he had attended concerning Greybarn. At that time, he attended meetings in this church with the property owners, but felt his comments were ignored. He saw the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that was part of the Greybarn documentation but did not see it or something similar in this presentation. He said he is glad that the new proposal has no four story units, as did Greybarn. “The new development at the old driving range Greenview Commons West, LLC at 4180 Sunrise Highway Oakdale NY 11769 does have four stories and it does not fit into the area,” he said. He continued to make the following comments:

1. He is glad that the new proposal is configured with buildings that do not have more than twelve units. He liked the mixed styling of the units vs. the Oakdale project.
2. His biggest concern is density.
3. He pointed out that the property is now zoned for 98 single family homes which is not consistent with homes in the area. Most nearby homes abutting the project are on 1/3 of an acre. The new plan proposes over 900 new living quarters which is a large increase in residencies in Sayville. This increase, and increase in traffic, could easily affect the Oakdale Merge. He said he almost never goes downtown anymore and does not think if shuttles were provided they would be used. A Sayville Chamber member agreed shuttles should not be used. “You need to have a car in Long Island. It is unrealistic to think people will not use their cars. Traffic is a concern.”
4. He urged the developers and Town of Islip to proceed cautiously, saying, “This is one of the last remaining vacant undeveloped parcels. The Town must look at everything collectively before making a change. I think there is some room for development, including multi-family. But there are other successful one-acre single-family developments, which would preserve the current zoning. The Rechlers could have considered this when they bought the property. The Committee should listen to the whole community, not just the people here.” He further stated, “It’s putting a lot of people in one box, one acre plots are not necessarily the right fit either, but to not look at every aspect would be negligent.”

Another attendee pointed out that “affordable housing” is looked at negatively. Bay Shore has the infrastructure for it, but this area is different. They said, “We cannot take what is there in Bay Shore and Patchogue and cram it in here. Bay Shore and Ronkonkoma developments have fewer units on smaller lots with integrated places to walk to.” Another attendee pointed out that Tritec’s Station Yards project near The Ronkonkoma train station has six restaurants, an amphitheater, and office spaces, a configuration that encourages traffic to remain within the complex. Contrary to most other attendees thoughts, he said retail within the Island Hills proposal could mitigate some of the traffic and circulation issues.

Another stakeholder stated he is not against the concept; “it just does not fit here.”

Joe Deal has lived across the street from the Island Hills site on Gibbons Court for 12 years and was member of the golf course for 10 years. He is also a civil engineer that works on land development projects across Long Island. His neighborhood is made up of about 24 single family

homes on half acre lots and was built as part of the agreement for The Fairfield Knolls at Sayville 55+ Luxury Rental Community located at 400 Adams Way, Sayville, NY 11782. He said his development is not as large or as integrated as the new Island Hills plan, but mixed housing is not an issue for him. He stated the mixed residential types is not an issue in fact it seems to work well and is integrated. He feels this is an opportunity for the community: “The community should want residences to go in places like Island Hills.” Instead of a typical gated development, he said he is glad to see connectivity to streets, with many outlet points for people and cars, so that the development becomes part of the larger community. He said he likes the change from the prior Greybarn proposal, which only had rental apartments, to the new plan with its mix of housing types. He would like more for-sale townhouses and would like the developers to add condos. If he were the planner he would shut down Chester Road, align it with Gibbons Court, and add single family houses to fill in the corner. He knows people are worried about traffic and stated this project will take many years to build out completely. He said everyone needs to consider what traffic will be like eight years from now, we don’t even know what cars will be like then. “We are already seeing driverless cars that will change how we live and travel.” He said one acre residential zoning will not work “unless you go very high end single family homes which is only happening in Sayville. He said the zoning for this site will ultimately change no matter what residential type or other use is proposed.

Other comments and questions included at this meeting included:

“I am happy to see greenspace.”

“What would the givebacks be to the Fire/EMS communities?”

“Sidewalks would be great; the plan is moving in the right direction.”

“The price point is key.”

D. Environmental

October 16, 2023

Representatives of environmental groups, and other attendees, focused on matters that deal specifically with land and water. Attendees supported the sewer treatment plant and the possibility of allowing capacity to Main Street business owners. Attendees spoke against clear cutting the 114-acre site. The architects said that although much land would be cleared and shaped, every effort would be made to keep old-growth trees. The presented plan calls for open green spaces and extensive perimeter planting. The developers were urged to use organic, chemical-free fertilizers to maintain the site.

The environmental groups made the following suggestions:

1. The Rechlers should pay attention to land and water needs, but should also focus on other environmental concerns in their plan. This includes the use of passive solar energy in units and in outdoor lighting, the use of non-toxic building materials whenever possible, and awareness of allergens in their selection of materials, policies concerning pets and rules regulating smoking. It was noted that the Brinkmann family built Islip Town’s first “off the grid” building several years ago when they expanded their hardware business Brinkmann’s to a new building at 226 Railroad Avenue Sayville, NY 11782. Though it is impossible to say whether their all-green strategy increased business, the family received

much positive publicity. In addition, the building telegraphed a commitment to the future, not the past.

2. The Rechlers should consider positioning the Island Hills project within these forward-thinking environmental concerns. An “environmentally progressive” reputation tends to appeal to a younger, educated, upwardly mobile demographic, ultimately reflecting the nature of residents and renters in the development itself.

The Rotary Club of Sayville’s Drew Baldwin, Past President, and the coordinator of The Rotary Club of Sayville’s Great South Bay Oyster Restoration Project, asked about the ratio between developed land and greenspace within the project. The architect said a reasonable amount of the 114 acre site will be preserved as a buffer and for stormwater drainage, adding “Although it’s not easy to tell on the plan, within each block there is greenspace. A lot of areas are used for stormwater retention to preserve overall water quality. Larger scale developments do not use as much micro-grading practices and stormwater management practices as we will use here.” Mr. Baldwin said he was impressed by the focus on property management, runoff, and wastewater management because, in his mind, some of the biggest issues facing development on Long Island are wastewater management and stormwater management. He is happy to see that both are well thought out in the plan and that the extra capacity at the wastewater treatment plant can become a community benefit, both from an environmental and business standpoint. He added that the chain link fence around perimeter is a community eye sore. “People living outside just see a lot that used to be open space. That will change. When people see how things benefit them, they can begin to support the project.” He thought that residents and neighbors would take advantage of the proposed trails around the perimeter of the complex.

Mr. Baldwin made several additional points and said the following:

As a benefit, the developers should hire environmental consultants that consider the larger local community. I do not know anyone who does not care about the condition of our water, especially groundwater and surface water. If the Rechlers established an environmental fund to help the greater area, it would encourage people to support the project. Because excess nitrogen levels from Main Street to the bay take 48 years to dissipate, we need to start mitigating those effects now. But how do we mitigate what’s already been done? Connecting parts of Main Street to the project’s sewage treatment plant could help everyone. Many businesses, especially restaurants, have sanitary grandfathering that they would never be allowed to get now. We need to focus on reintroducing shellfish to filter our water quality. A permanent community fund to mitigate this would allow people to see this is as a commitment to the community and a big benefit. The Rotary Club of Sayville’s Great South Bay Oyster Restoration Project costs \$5-\$6 thousand dollars a year. This proposed new fund could be administered by a local group the community trusts—perhaps The Rotary Club of Sayville? (See Attachment 2.)

Mark Murray, former Board of Directors of Save The Great South Bay, Founding Member of Long Island Conservancy, East End Republican Club, made it clear that he was only representing himself at the meeting and not any organization. Mark stated that he preferred a design with higher density in the center and less development around the perimeter which would:

1. Act like a higher density space for native plants and animals.
2. Provide additional stormwater discharge.
3. Provide area residents with sound, sight and usage buffer.

Mark spoke about the need to use indigenous plants, never invasive species, and to plant in ways that conserve water as much as possible. It was suggested that the developers support other environmental projects in the area and that they expand and promote environmental efforts within the project. Mark further said he applauds the stormwater design, which uses greenspaces and plantings to mitigate run off, rather than deep water retention ponds. He said, “This is a great way to handle an ongoing problem and it will strengthen the ability to address stormwater as the plants mature. It is a good long-term investment.” He then asked the question several attendees asked at other sessions: Will this site be clear cut and start from scratch? The Union Design architect answered: “There will be grading so some clearing will need to occur. However, to the extent possible, our firm will advocate for an existing tree survey and keep what can be kept and is appropriate. The value of the neighborhood will increase as the landscape matures and feels like it has been there for a long time. Specimen trees, especially in buffer areas, will be preserved along with the native features. But, yes, the interior of the site will need to be earth moved.” In a back-and-forth conversation, Murray stated that some of the trees are beautiful, and no longer available. The architect again said Union Design will advocate strongly for an existing tree survey and work around anything that should remain and can be saved. Murray said he wants community involvement in the selection process. He noted that when the golf course was installed many years ago, the perimeter plantings were chosen only to protect the privacy of golfers. He said he was turned off by the use of turf in the greenbelt and does not want a monoculture of grass. “Native plants can easily be put in their place.” The architect answered that the plan, as shown, just depicts the greenbelt as the color green. He agrees with the value-added features Murray proposes, as a benefit for both the development and neighbors. Murray added that there is also a benefit to migrating birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife species. “The perimeter landscape plan is a terrific way to merge the use of the space as jogging and bike paths and the buffer you need from the surrounding area. If you use native plants, you can even introduce some education as part of that pathway.” Summing up, Murray said he “loves the overall design, the stormwater design and greenbelt perimeter.”

E. Greater Sayville Civic Association

October 25, 2023

The members of the Greater Sayville Civic Association asked many questions of the architect who dutifully answered each one. They asked questions about density, floor area ratio (FAR), use of solar panels, fencing, units for sales vs rentals, height of buildings, security, pricing, and target market. Since the presentation was not a final plan, many of their questions could not be answered with specifics.

One of the leaders of the Greater Sayville Civic Association began the meeting, stating that rental units are everyone’s problem with the plan, as the community prefers ownership. The FAR and the density shown in the draft are issues. They said people come to Sayville to raise children and for the schools, adding that “it is now impossible to buy single family homes here because of the cost. This type of project does not provide for people with children.” Concerning the possibility of an arts center on the premises, they said “knowing the Chamber” they do not want anything that takes away from Main Street.”

One board member of the Greater Sayville Civic Association said the concept looked like Queens, saying “The plan is too compact. The site is surrounded by single family homes. The developers are trying to make everyone happy by sprinkling ownership on the outside, while putting the density in the center. It is still a problem.” He said the biggest takeaway, according to this group, is that people want single family homes.

Another board member of the Greater Sayville Civic Association stated the arts center is a non-starter because no parking is shown on the plan to accommodate it. The architect answered that there is parking, and it is on the plan. The Civic Association representative said she felt units in the design were still too tall. She continued, “I understand large lots per home are not necessary. I would be ok with more homes on smaller lots, but the Civic Association gives a “hard no” to any rental apartments.”

Another Civic member expressed concern about the possibility of a community farm. Saying, “We live on Long Island; we are not farmers. Who is responsible for upkeep of the area shown as farming? The farming season is short, what happens off season? Is it just going to be dirt?” Then continued that they believed it came down to money. “Rentals are more profitable over time. However, the upkeep needed for the site in the previous plan is less than for the smaller buildings shown in the new concept. Will individuals buy them out if the developer cannot afford the upkeep?” The Architect answered that there is a management company that would handle upkeep, which ultimately is included in the price of rent. The Civic Association representative responded, “The ratio does not allow for 800 rentals to become 120 homeowners. This group prefers more ownership. The surrounding area is generational, and there is nothing here to buy any longer. The FAR is too large now because of zoning and these surrounding homes are no longer affordable. Renters spend dollars with nothing to show for it after the lease ends. Home ownership provides a pathway out of poverty. I have an issue with any plan that does not acknowledge that. This plan is just not there. This allows monthly income to disappear without providing needed ownership opportunities. I have read research on ownership vs rental and been involved in some of it. How much is based on affordability vs. prices that are not accessible? There is a manipulation of that data (because the data doesn’t show where the real estate is or factor in when the real estate was purchased.) The site is walkable internally, but residents need to get in a car to live in the area. This is not walkable to the greater Sayville area, and there is no access to transit. Nothing will make this plan ok.”

Another Civic member said Sayville is known for being quaint: “This plan is not small, quaint Sayville.” She felt that 800 units turning onto Lakeland will cause too much traffic, which will change the look and feel of the larger community. “Multi-story units are different from single-family homes,” she said.

A Sayville resident who lives on Chester Road, abutting the project, also stated that the project would create traffic, saying “Sayville Schools expect kids to cross major roads to get to school. The traffic created by this project will add to traffic that already exists. You will not be able to cross Lakeland. I can barely get out in the morning onto Lakeland. All new traffic patterns will affect traffic on Chester Road, which is already used as an alternate throughway because of Google maps.” The resident suggested that an “exit only” on Chester Road could protect residents from Lakeland Avenue traffic. He further made the following suggestions:

No arts or community center because it would create too much traffic.

Instead, develop a playground or more green space by Sunrise Highway and Lakeland Avenue.

Expand the greenway to include Chester Road in order to maintain the residential integrity of the neighborhood.

A Sayville business owner said they liked the design, liked the scale of the buildings better than the previous concept and appreciated the mix of smaller units, “but 12, 14, or 16-unit buildings is still too many. I have been living in Sayville for a long time, and I know people want to come here and live in the community. The percentage of renters is too large in this plan; reverse the proportion of rental and ownership. I grew up in New Jersey. I could walk to the store. There are no places to walk to from this site. Long Island does not have transit. Everyone is a two-car household. You cannot get anywhere without a car.”

Dr. James Bertsch, Sayville Board of Education Trustee, Trustee for Save the Great South Bay, and other organizations, Nassau BOCES school administrator and Sayville Civic Member, was speaking only as a resident said the location of the Island Hills property is problematic because the traffic generated by residents of the complex can have an effect as far away as the notoriously crowded Oakdale Merge. He said, “There has been criticism that this type of project would overrun the schools, but the truth is the school districts need the students. Connetquot School District will get the taxes generated by the project, but Sayville will get the traffic.” He advocated for a larger discussion with the Town of Islip concerning the current triple A zoning, which is from 1928 and was updated in 1967. Ideally, he would like a zone change to make the entire property a park with an overlay that includes other development options. “Greenspace on this property would be the best community benefit and it would help traffic at the Merge,” he said. Bertsch said downtown Sayville needs sewers to help water quality in the bay, whether or not there is a treatment plant in place at Island Hills. As for the plan itself, he prefers a Victorian aesthetic and would like to see the entire project moved to Main Street or near the Railroad Station, thus fitting into the County plans for transit-based housing. “We should focus on housing to support downtown,” he said.

Dr. Bertsch continued with the following statements: “The reality is that what you want for housing is a variety of options in the market. That is the problem with the housing inventory on Long Island. It is either rentals or single-family homes that are too expensive. This project would serve housing needs but should be a negotiation between the community and the developer. The Town of Islip wants to stay out of it but the Town needs to facilitate a discussion on appropriate zoning. What problems does the community have? Could this be part of the solution for that? For example, for environmental problems, sewers can help with that. If students are needed in schools with declining enrollment, work with the Town to bring some of the students from the development to the Sayville School District instead of Connetquot. If we are getting the traffic we might as well get the taxes and the few students that might be here as Sayville’s school population is in decline. What kind of easements could be developed with an overall plan to create a park? Use this as an opportunity to address parts of life. For problems with retail, having additional residents with disposable income to spend would help. How do we solve problems? How can we use this plan to solve problems?”

Dr. Bertsch suggested that the Rechlers could make a Payment In Lieu of Taxes contribution to the Sayville School District.

Ryan Stanton, Executive Director of the Long Island Federation of Labor, said that union labor should be used if this development is built.

When asked for possible community benefits, they would like to see, the suggestions from various members of the Civic Association were:

Greenspace;

Playground;

Shuttle to downtown;

Sewer capacity for downtown;

A museum;

The question was asked who the realtor would be for the for-sale units. "It would be a big opportunity for a local broker;"

Sewers downtown to help water quality in the bay;

The units should have Victorian aesthetics; and

Focus on housing to support downtown.

One resident stated a concern that the sewage treatment plant would smell.

Another resident did not believe people rent because they cannot afford ownership.

When the meeting ended, an attendee mentioned to a Committee member that they realized that rentals are needed in Islip Town for young people who are just starting out, but they did not want to say that at the meeting because "these people are my neighbors."

F. Greater Islip Association

November 9, 2023

The membership of the GIA was invited to attend a convening and four GIA Board members and four additional GIA members attended. Additionally, the Board was given the opportunity to invite other members.

A notable fact of this convening was the absence of acrimony, which was consistent with the "safe space" process and the concept of small, targeted and private group meetings embraced by the Committee.

Instead of engaging with the concept itself, the members of the GIA presented alleged facts and figures to bolster their arguments against the development. Because the participants clearly went through considerable effort to state reasons for their unanimous opposition to any zone change and wanted their comments on the record, the Committee feels it is only proper to include as much of their input as possible in this report verbatim to convey their point of view. The Committee cannot vouch for the accuracy of the GIA data or statements.

The GIA's overall feeling about the project or any development of the Island Hills site can be summed up in three words: "No Zone Change."

One attendee stated that community outreach was just part of Rechler Equity's "checklist" from the Town. The 2009 Corridor Study recommended green space or keeping AAA zoning for the site. The GIA is stressing to the Town that there is a need for a new master plan and a hamlet study. Many developments have received Planned Development Districts, or PDDs, which result in more density. Everything around the site is stand-alone housing. The State Environmental Quality Review Act, or SEQRA, recommended staggered arrival and dismissal times for nearby Bosti Elementary School, which is unfair to parents. It would be a 20-minute stagger, so a parent dropping of a kindergartener and a third grader would have to hang around school for 20 extra minutes. This is unreasonable. Colony Park, with a fourth of the density of the Island Hills proposal, generates a lot of students. Rechler Equity Partnership says they have decreased the density, but they have increased it from the original plan for the site. SEQRA indicates that \$3 million in taxes will support the school district, but the initial project would have provided \$7 million. A letter from the Suffolk County Police Dept. to the GIA mentioned that Lakeland was a high crash corner and requested no zone change. No one asked for the Art Center, which is being held out as a "golden carrot." The Chamber of Commerce does not want an Arts Center in the complex. The Old Court building in downtown Sayville would be ideal for an Art's building.

Another attendee stated the building footprint is more than the original proposal. The FAR and square footage is a larger building footprint with the same amount of paved surfaces. "Rechler Equity Partnership is requesting over seven times the allowed density. The new concept looks good, but it is not to scale and is deceptive. The side-by-side comparison with the original proposal is inaccurate because the angles are different," said the attendee.

The members of the Greater Islip Association then turned much of their attention to criticizing the Committee's process of holding smaller meetings with groups of similar interest.

One member stated: There was a survey and 96.6% did not want the original proposal. It was done by Glen Rothburd at Strategic Price Management Group. Why are you having small meetings? How did you get our emails? It seems like cherry picking. We want a big community meeting. Why were you selected? The Civic invited the Committee to a meeting with a larger group. The community makes its decision together. You should consider bigger meetings with the whole community. Most people did not know about the meetings.

Another member stated: This process of small, closed meetings creates divisions. We do not like that the Committee met with all groups separately. With small meetings, we do not know what others are saying to the developer. Would you consider an open meeting with ten or eleven different groups? With small meetings no one talks to each other.

Another member stated: The building footprint has increased. We presented a Freedom of Information Law or FOIL to the Town in February. You were not transparent. This process had a rough start with the Randi Marshall column. We did not like the "weaponization of protest," "yelling" and "NIMBYs" quotes in her article. We did thousands of hours of research, and the

Newsday column was a sour note. Members of your committee gave the quotes. We just don't agree with the developer. Your presentation is not accurate. It is not to scale and seven times the density of the current zoning. Your new plan is not much different at the end of the day. It is not walkable and "30% to scale." Studies show 25% of Sayville residents live in apartments, which is more than Brentwood. This would increase Sayville's population by 15%. It's a massive project that requires a zone change. It does not comply with the old master plan or the 2009 Corridor Study. The new plan is not on your website, so how can we formulate an opinion if we do not have details? It was a "great presentation" but there are other factors that go into conceptual plan making that are left out here.

Another member stated: It feels that you have been intentionally vague. You are trying to make as many people happy as possible. This is not all the facts, and it is not final. It is "moving in the right direction" but it needs to "move further." They recommended putting together a specific plan so that you get specific feedback. They were told the "specific plan" they requested would be the one before the Town Board and subject to public hearings in the future.

Three members stated in quick succession:

We do not want a zone change. The builder is not listening to us.

The residents do not want a zone change.

The Corridor Study says no zone change.

One member stated: This will completely change Sayville. It will change the look in Sayville. Those historic homes the architects used as models for their units do not exist. All the properties around the site are single family homes and the footprint is worse than the first. The home ownership in this plan is only 12%. "People who rent are not part of the community. They are here and then not here."

Another member added: If you had my next-door renters, you would not be happy.

One member stated: I do feel that the "design is a lot better" in the new concept, but that can be changed. Regarding traffic, there are 1.5 cars per unit, or 1800 cars. I'm concerned about the traffic at the Oakdale Merge and on Sunrise Highway. You cannot mitigate the traffic.

Another member stated: My stance is build without a zone change. The loudest opponents are in the neighborhood, but "Some don't care." Traffic on Lakeland is an absolute nightmare. Rechler Equity Partners, REP, initially proposed a shuttle, now it is Uber. This community should be near a train station.

One member stated: We did a survey. Why were people against it? There was more than one reason. It was rental for some. My problem is traffic. This will add to congestion. We are saturated. It is hard to get around town. It would change the nature of the town. It is not just NIMBYism. 2,000 people were surveyed and over 96% were against this. I grew up here, biked, and clammed here. In the winter we now go to a place that is not crowded. It used to be idyllic on the bay. I would rather move to Maine, but my wife will not let me.

Another member stated: No one walks in the community. The project is not a walkable community. It is dangerous to walk. It is 1.5 miles to the train station. The "rendering is very

nice, but how many more people do we need in the neighborhood? Are you kidding me? I am picturing all the cars, and it is a nightmare. There is a history here. It started in 2003 when REP got involved. There was a New York Times article about the Rechlers acquisition of the property. The Committee should educate itself on the history. There is a lack of trust and it is based on the history. The golf course should still be a golf course. Now it will increase the population by 15%. We need a hard objective look at what looks like a nice plan. Sayville has eleven apartment complexes already.”

One member stated: The community is upset because they bought what exists now, not four and five story buildings. (The architect pointed out that the concept design proposed 2.5 to 3 stories maximum.) Island Hills is in a low area and we’re told we won’t see stories. But neighbors will see tall buildings. Neighborhood height is 28 or 25 feet, two stories.

Another member added: It is 35 feet. There was a survey of 2,000 people in the surrounding area. 76% were against any zone change at all; 15% would allow a change in excess of single-family homes; and 10% were not sure. This concept is 10.95 times what the current zoning allows and density and height are an issue. Significantly, a GIA board member asked if a compromise would be six homes per acre? A Planned Development District, PDD, can change. Zoning B is around the property with a quarter acre lots, so four units per acre. We are not at a spot where we see compromise. A lot has been done and there is more to be done to arrive at a consensus. We are not looking for a fight. That takes too much time.

One member wanted it clarified that, “when we say single family-homes, we mean detached. We do not want townhomes.”

One member stated: The school district cannot find workers like bus drivers. Your plan is for housing for empty nesters, millennials, not workers. Colony Park is the opposite and your rates will be higher. It’s too expensive for workers. We like the cottages near St. John’s Church by Church Street in Bohemia. They are all sold. They are all snapped up. It is a cluster of cottages that people keep in their families. Single Family Homes fit the character of the neighborhood. This “looks nice on paper” but it will change the character of the neighborhood forever. It would be a shame to not see a golf course. We have recently seen deer, owls, and turkeys on the course. Every house around the course is single family detached. No one wants to look at a Sewage Treatment Plant. No one wants the smell, the connection to downtown. Your target tenants will be \$80,000 and up. For a single bedroom, it is \$89,000. The complex will generate kids. We cannot hire workers in the school district. There are 500-600 kids at Colony Park. We do not have the resources. Workers cannot afford these apartments, the cafeteria workers & bus drivers need affordable houses. Cottages are a solution, but with no zone change. The school district has declining enrollment. There are a lot of special needs kids who are very costly.

Another member reiterated: We do not want a sewage treatment plant.

One member stated: We do not have sewers. Everyone has a car. We do not want more cars. Garbage trucks cannot get by. There are blocks downtown that are congested because of ferry traffic in the summer. This would bring it to a whole new level.

One member stated: We have a lot of questions that are not answered. This is too vague. We are happy that you are listening. We wish we had a moratorium.

One member stated: We are coming after the Town, not the developer. There will be a hamlet study. We want a real vision for what we want to see. Lots of projects are on the docket. No one wants to “urbanize” here. We need home ownership.

One member stated: There is a letter of intent for open space from Suffolk County because of Legislator Picarillo.

Another member added: There’s money for the land at the County.

One member stated the town would eventually do land banking.

G. Local Residents & Business Owners

November 16, 2023

This was the last convening of the Committee and was the only one in which the group was not united by a specific interest. Attendees were a mix of business owners, interested residents who did not “fit” a specific group, and people who were invited to prior meetings but had a scheduling conflict. The meeting had the largest number of people who said they were coming, but relatively few actually attended.

Paul Pedretti, the Chairman of Autism Communities (AC) asked Union Design to make some residential units available for adults with developmental disabilities. Although his professional background is mechanical engineer (PE) in the construction industry, he was attending the hearing as Chairman of Autism Communities which is dedicated to housing solutions for Long Islanders on the autism spectrum or with developmental disability. His agency is trying to solve the lack of affordable housing for these individuals. He asked the architects and developers to set aside some apartments for his clients, who can often live independently. AC has already worked with other nearby rental developments and has successfully integrated autistic and handicapped adults into Greenview properties in Bay Shore and Great River. Pedretti said he would like several apartments within the Island Hills units, not an entire separate unit, because his clients need opportunities to be part of the larger community. Mr. Pedretti provided many interesting facts about autism, which he said has skyrocketed, and answered questions from others at this meeting about the way autistic adults would manage life in their apartments. “Depending on an individual’s needs, their support staff may live with them, but many live on their own and just have someone who checks on them. Clients are usually between 20 and 35 years old,” he said, adding that New York State pays for housing and support services. He said clients would be placed among the affordable units that are now mandated in any new development. His presentation concerning his clients fascinated the audience and resulted in a welcomed educational opportunity for everyone. (See Attachment 1)

Mr. Pedretti continued with the following statement on another topic: Putting on my “engineer’s hat,” it should not be lost on everyone that a commitment to build a sewage treatment plant is necessary for density, but it is also very expensive, both initially to build and then for the ongoing maintenance. The developers are serious in their intentions to invest in this community

just by virtue of a sewage treatment plant being in the plan. It is a huge commitment to have the capacity to run down Main Street, they are serious. Every developer has a “sweet spot”, and they cannot always do just single-family homes.”

One attendee stated that the presentation mentioned seniors that are downsizing but none of the housing types on the plan are on a single floor. The architect answered that the three-stacked-flats configuration on the plan was an answer because the first floor unit would be entirely accessible. Some of the other scenarios have a bedroom on the 1st floor. Also, there are accommodations for installing residential elevators if and when they are needed. The attendee then spoke at length about the need for units with “single floor” design. The speaker identified herself as a long-time homeowner who expected to downsize in the next few years and was preparing for a time when they might not be able to navigate stairs. She said she and her family were looking for a cottage community concept, which a GIA board member previously supported. She would like to see single-floor cottages incorporated into the ownership home designs along the perimeter of the plan.

A business owner on Main Street asked how the sewers and treatment plant for the Island Hills project could impact and help downtown. The architect said the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) has to serve this development but could be built with a larger capacity to give some sanitary flow to downtown businesses. The business owner then asked, “If this plan moves forward, who starts the conversation to link this STP to help downtown? The architect answered, “It is now on the record tonight, so your bringing it up is useful.” Addressing the thought that an art center might be included at Island Hills as a community benefit, the business leader asked if retail would be included in that arts center. “I do not want to take away from Main Street businesses or the programs such as the fall festival competing with downtown.” They were told there will be no retail at Island Hills and no competition with downtown business.

Paul Pedretti described a grant, partially funded by federal, state and county monies, to connect 300 homes in Oakdale on the Connetquot River to the Bergen Point treatment plant. It is scheduled to be voted on in February 2024. The architect said that scenario is different from Island Hills, which is privately funded and privately maintained. (A letter from Mr. Pedretti is attached as an Exhibit.)

The attendees started a discussion on rental properties in general:

One resident stated: There is an issue with the transient nature of residents who are renters. I lived in Annapolis, MD, which is an area with a lot of military, who tend to be more transient. I am concerned with the integration into the rest of the community. What is the turnover rate in residents?

Another resident added: There are apartments in Sayville and Bayport, and the management company that owned apartments on Nicholls Road are not taking care of the apartments. There are complaints within the community. It is now owned by Fairfield and they do take care of buildings.

The Main Street business owner said: There is a stigma around rentals, there are kids in the schools, the parents are not as involved. There is garbage and furniture on the curb when people get evicted. Their kids cannot ride bikes in these developments.

One representative of a local community group asked: Will there be a Homeownership Association, HOA? She would not buy in an HOA development because the taxes are already high. It would be a tough sell. The plan would sell best if it had more for-sales than rentals. A big concern is that there will be too many people if you build too many units.

A resident asked: would the HOA be brought in by the developer or brought in by those who buy units? The architect answered: it would likely be the developer until there is a critical mass and then those who own properties would take over. This proposal is for a mix of for-sale and rentals so there would be a need for coordination and cooperation. The resident stated: My experience with owning a condominium and having to get rid of a property management company is that there could be cause for conflict down the road.

Questions were asked about parking. The architect answered that the point is to have enough parking on the site to accommodate all the parking needs of residents so there is no spillover to the outside community. Parking is not all in one spot; it is spread throughout the development.

One attendee asked what would be in the community center. The architect answered that it is yet to be determined but typically it is a pool, fitness center, management office, co-working space.

The same attendee asked: It is not an enclosed community? No gates? The architect answered: No, that does not make for good neighbors.

One resident stated: Inside the community there are multiple entrances and exits. With the increase in traffic, how much falls on the Town to maintain? Increased traffic will degrade the roads faster, sewers mean ripping up the street, and all this will increase taxes. What is driving people out? It's higher taxes and the cost of living. The developers want high occupancy, but what is the actual ratio that makes it profitable? The architect answered: there will all be taxpayers living here too, helping to cover the cost of services.

A Main Street business owner asked: What is the biggest pushback we are getting? Why don't people want it? A Committee member answered: traffic and parking have consistently been the biggest issues. Then density, which is connected to traffic issues. There are worries that it does not fit into the community.

Another Main Street business owner expressed their approval of the benefits to local businesses for the projects: emphasizing the possibility of sewers and an increase in customers.

Another Sayville business owner, who did not want to be identified, stated: Sewers, sewers, sewers. We need sewers.

One attendee wondered why people would not want this and felt that this would only help the community.

David Fallon of the law offices of David P. Fallon, PLLC, 53 Main Street, Sayville, who is a lifelong resident, as well as a second generation landlord, was not able to attend the meeting. He did speak to a Committee member and stated that he supported the addition of rental units given the lack of affordable residential apartments. He also was a proponent of the addition of sewers in downtown Sayville at the developer's cost. Given the number of commercial spaces that are currently vacant in downtown Sayville and the restrictions placed by the Suffolk County Health Department on the uses of those properties due to the lack of sewers, Mr. Fallon believes the addition of sewers are critical to prevent more vacancies in downtown Sayville. Sewers also have a positive environmental impact as opposed to the current septic systems in downtown Sayville.

14. The Web Site

The Island Hills Advisory Committee established a web site (<https://islandhillscommittee.com>) that provided some visual and written information about the redesign concept at the Island Hills property. (See Attachment 3.) Residents and stakeholders were able to post comments or request to attend a meeting through the web site. The web site went live on August 30, 2023. The portal for leaving comments was closed after the date of the committee's last meeting on November 16, 2023. The address of the web site was published in an open letter to the community by the Advisory Committee in the local weekly newspaper and was freely circulated among the local groups of interest.

A total of fifty (50) submissions were received from the public from a total of forty seven (47) individuals (Three (3) people posted two (2) comments each). The following is a breakout summary of the fifty (50) submissions:

Meeting Requests:	20
No Zone Change:	16
General Opposition (no specified reason/committee criticism):	3
Miscellaneous (spam/inapplicable responses):	6
School District Concerns:	2
Interest in Learning More About Concept:	3

The following are totals by community of the forty seven (47) people who made submissions to the web site:

Sayville	37
West Sayville	3
Bohemia	2
Oakdale	2
Ronkonkoma	1
Unknown	2

15. APPENDIX AND FOOTNOTES

1. The Committee members are: Michael Dawidziak, Justin Jaycon, Fred Welge, Mary Lou Cohalan and Tim Dolan. (C.V.'s and Bios at Attachment 5.)
2. Rechler Equity Partners paid several Committee members for their time and expertise. Two members served as volunteers and were not compensated.
3. A reporter from The Suffolk County News (SCN) contacted the Committee and asked why the meetings were not open to the press. The Committee explained that we were trying to provide a safe space for discussion and indicated that we would be happy to give the SCN an interview at the conclusion of the process. The Committee also sent the reporter a written statement to that effect. However, the reporter attended the Committee's October 11, 2023 meeting, claiming that she was attending the meeting solely as a member of the Sayville Chamber of Commerce. During the meeting, the reporter took extensive notes and participated in the meeting. The next day, October 12, 2023, the front page of the SCN included an article under the headline "Press Denied Access to Private Meetings," under that same reporter's co-byline. The article is included as an attachment to the Committee's report. (See Attachment 4.)
4. 1,500 emails were sent, approximately 100 one-on-one conversations were held, and various stakeholders attended one of the seven meetings the Committee held.
5. A final note on the GIA meeting is their mention of a survey that purportedly found that 96.6% of respondents did not support the original Greybarn proposal. The poll was done by Glen Rothburd at Strategic Price Management Group, SPMG. SPMG is a well-established firm that specializes in "pricing strategies," not polling. Mr. Rothburd is apparently a member of the Stop Island Hills Facebook page (which is affiliated with the GIA).

A member of the Committee has deep experience in designing and conducting complex polls in many contexts. A cursory review of the polling "methodology" used by SPMG raises significant questions about the validity and methodology of that poll. In addition, the poll is over four years old and claims to reflect community sentiment regarding the old Greybarn proposal. Given that the new concept is vastly different from the original Greybarn proposal, the SPMG poll results are of little to no value to the Committee.

Some Summary thoughts:

WHY I RENT:

A woman who declined to be publicly identified is a long-time resident of Bohemia, who raised a family in a traditional owner-occupied home. Her daughter and family live in Bayport and other nearby communities. She rents at Fairway Manor. Her quote exemplifies the attitude of supporters of the Island Hills project:

I am retired, over 70 and have a little trouble walking. I sold my family home because it was too big. I decided to rent because, above all, I want flexibility in my life. I don't expect any disaster to happen soon, but I don't know if I will need assistance at some time. I love my daughter and family, but I don't want to live with them. I definitely want to live nearby and near the communities where I have always lived. I don't want to own again or be responsible for anything. Renting gives me everything I need right now. My criteria for choosing a place are security and maintenance. It's as simple as that. I have these two things where I am now. I think renting is great at this age.

WHY I AM AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT AT ISLAND HILLS

A business owner on Lakeland Avenue summed up what many residents feel. He said:

I think everyone on Long Island feels crowded now. I grew up near the golf course before it was the golf course, and I have seen every open space in every town developed and even redeveloped. There is nothing but condos, rentals and over 55 housing on Sunrise Highway from Great River to Patchogue. I am not specifically against the Island Hills project. I am against more development anywhere. I am against sewers because sewers will enable Sayville to become Patchogue. Not that there is anything wrong with Patchogue. I go there all the time. I just don't want Sayville to be Patchogue. The traffic on Lakeland Avenue is a killer. My customers can get into the parking in front of my store, but they can't get out...ever. I suppose that's good for me. Keeps them longer. Maybe I'm just an old guy now, and just don't like change—but I don't think that's it. Enough is enough.”

ATTACHMENT 1

January 14, 2024

Michael Dawidziak
Strategic Planning Consulting

Ref: AUTISM COMMUNITIES & ISLAND HILLS

Autism Communities, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit that works to provide young adults on Long Island living with autism affordable living arrangements in a non-certified setting.

By partnering with real estate developers, Autism Communities facilitates supported independent living opportunities throughout Long Island that are integrated into the local community.

Using a person-centered candidate process, we help individuals and their circles of support establish the steps needed, as well as those recommended, to successfully transition to independent living. All residents are Self-Directed through NY State's Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Support personnel are provided for through each individual's self-direction budget, along with a housing subsidy to help pay for rental costs.

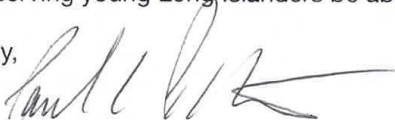
Autism Communities also supports residents through the housing liaison, who regularly checks in with individuals to ensure their needs are being met. In addition to the housing features, we provide social and educational resources to families through monthly events available with a Club AC membership.

We are thankful for the opportunity to have attended the Island Hills Advisory Committee meeting on November 16, 2023.

As an Oakdale parent with a child on the autism spectrum, it is exciting to see Rechler Equity's commitment to inclusion and affordable housing. The features of a walkable neighborhood as presented at the meeting work well for the people we serve. Certainly, we have members that would love any one of the options discussed.

Please consider this as an official expression of interest for Autism Communities to be the recipient of an allocation of affordable rate units in the Island Hills development. We would love to work together with the team to achieve our mutual goals, and help some very deserving young Long Islanders be able to live in a home of their own.

Sincerely,



Paul L. Pedretti, Chairman
Autism Communities Inc.
P.O. Box 459 Brightwaters, NY 11718
(631) 213-1561 www.autismcommunities.org

ATTACHMENT 2

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Sayville Rotary Club, I would like to thank you for putting together an independent panel to complete a community assessment surrounding the Island Hills project. We believe that a constructive conversation is the most important part of conflict resolution where it is important for all parties to both listen and be heard.

One thing and possibly the only thing the people of Sayville can agree upon is that they wish for a healthier local environment. As such, the preservation of green space in the community is a priority. However, green space that cannot be accessed fails to meet a necessary concern, recreation. The proposed development of the Island Hills site would remove a large amount of green space in the community and by far the largest private parcel available. However, due to the lack of access the property has been providing no recreational uses. A solution that would benefit the community while developing the land responsibly would be to make a commitment to the community's environment.

As such, we believe that creating an environmental fund for the greater Sayville community would benefit both the community and your project. The fund would demonstrate a long-term commitment to the community beyond simply operating the development. The community would benefit from the money in the fund being utilized to make improvements that would offset the loss of green space. At the same time, this effort would be most effective if the fund is managed by an independent trusted community member. It is important that the fund is applied based off of the needs and wants of the community as well as complementary to other projects going on.

The Rotary Club of Sayville has made an express decision to make the local environment a key area of focus of ours. We have worked recently with the Sayville Library as a key sponsor in creating a native planting garden with a emphasis on educating people on how to incorporate these plants into an existing garden. In San Souci Park, we are working on cleaning both the trails as well as the Browns River. Going forward we are planning on improving trail markings and mapping as well as expanding the trails to include a marked nature trail, an outdoor sculpture trail, and a fitness trail. Most importantly, we have put a strong emphasis on working with other organizations to ensure that we are good stewards of the park. We have partnered with the Cub Scouts, Save the Great South Bay's Creek Defender program and the Michael Murphy Division of the US Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

Our most important project has been our Shellfish Restoration project. We are working with Cornell Cooperative Extension in developing and expanding a community aquaculture program. In this program, we are raising oysters in a protected environment before planting them in open water to build natural reefs. The aim being to reestablish a viable breeding population to assist with improving water quality in the Great South Bay. In the first year we established an educational work experience that brought in over 250 volunteers ranging in ages from 6 to 80. We raised over 50 thousand adult oysters building a 25 cubic foot reef in East Islip.

We are now expanding the project by partnering with Save the Great South Bay to expand the project to sites in Amityville, Babylon and Bay Shore. At our current scale the annual cost is approximately \$6,000 per site. We are working with the Town of Islip to utilize town property to allow us to expand the project even more in the Sayville community. When we began this project, we planned on a minimum timeline of 10 years and based off of early results we believe that this will be the cornerstone of our work in the community.

I believe that the Sayville Rotary Club would make for a good administrator of a potential environmental fund. We have strived to be a trusted community leader while building last relationships with business, government, and civic leaders. Our dedication to the environment throughout the Sayville community and our desire to engage numerous outside organizations and volunteers is unmatched. Most importantly, we understand that as an administrator the funds would not be solely for our use. We would be responsible for distributing the funds to other organizations and projects throughout the community.

If you do not choose to focus on a Sayville Community Environmental Fund we respectfully request assistance in funding our ongoing Shellfish Restoration project. Your help will be greatly appreciated as we work to incorporate our work into the local High Schools and include more children. This hands-on work is both educational and fulfilling. If you have any questions or concerns please contact us at sayvillerotary@gmail.com or you can call me at (603) 459-9144.



Drew Baldwin
Community Director
Rotary Club of Sayville

ATTACHMENT 3

The Web Site

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ATTACHMENT 4

Press denied access to 'private' meetings



Public outreach process meetings held by the Rechler Equity advisory committee are not open to the press.

FILE PHOTO

Posted Thursday, October 12, 2023 10:04 am

SAM DESMOND & NICOLE FUENTES

As part of the Suffolk County News's ongoing effort to properly and fairly cover the Island Hills development we reached out to the newly formed Rechler advisory committee for access to a community meeting held on Wednesday, Oct. 11.

The following statement was released by the committee in response to our inquiry to attend prior public hearing held on Oct. 2, thus denying our access and reporting:

"The Island Hills Advisory Committee has begun its public outreach process and has invited over 200 community stakeholders to a series of private meetings devoted to each stakeholder group's mutuality of interests. Thus far, the committee has met with a restaurant owners' representative and local school officials at True North Community Church. Notably, we have intentionally invited individuals and organizations that were opposed to the original plan for the

site to attend our meetings and provide input on the new concept. The Town of Islip is not involved in this process, and given the differences between our process and an official government proceeding, these meetings are not open to the public or press and the identities of those who elect to attend will not be made public. This is done in an effort to create a safe, open, civil and productive dialogue for the sharing of thoughts, questions and opinions that can enhance the proposed new concept for the betterment of the project and the community at large. The committee will submit a final report of the stakeholder meetings to the developer at the conclusion of the meetings. When the developer submits a formal revised application to the Town of Islip, there will be open public municipal hearings on the application. This is an interactive process and the committee expects to send additional invitations as the process unfolds [...]"

The comment was signed by the entire The Island Hills Advisory Committee including: Mary Lou Cohalan, Michael Dawidziak, Timothy Dolan, Justin Jaycon, and Frederick Welge.

ATTACHMENT 5

MARY LOU COHALAN

EMPLOYMENT

2006-Present

**Heart For Art, Inc.
Bayport, NY**

Director

Heart For Art, Inc., a non-profit corporation, supports artists and artists' projects by initiating collaborations among artists and agencies in the tri-state area that result in new works of art.

1991-2012

**Islip Art Museum
East Islip, NY
Carriage House Workspace**

Director

Responsible for all aspects of Museum operations, including exhibition planning and implementation, and management of the Museum Store, Museum School, public programs, publications, fund-raising, permanent collection and long-term development. The Museum maintains three exhibition sites, including the Brookwood Hall Galleries, Carriage House Workspace (through Heart For Art from 1987 to present) and the Anthony Giordano Gallery at Dowling College (From 1991 through 1998). While in this position, the Carriage House emerged as Long Island's center for experimental art and became internationally known for its artists' residencies. Guided institution through AAM accreditation process, including three MAP assessments.

1987-1990

**Girl Scouts of Suffolk County, Inc.
Commack, NY**

Director of Public Relations and Development

Developed and implemented all internal and external public relations efforts for the largest youth-serving agency on Long Island.

1971-1987

**Suffolk County News Corporation
Sayville, NY**

Editor and Publisher

Managed all editorial functions of a chain of 100-year-old community newspapers on the South Shore of Long Island. Received numerous awards from the New York State Press Association, including Best Newspaper in New York in 1982 and Best Editorial Columnist in 1983. During tenure, the papers' circulation and editorial products doubled in size. The publishers and editor sold the newspaper chain in 1986.

EDUCATION

BA Degree

1965

Bryn Mawr College

Bryn Mawr, PA

English major, Philosophy minor

MA in Art History and Criticism
2002
State University of New York, Stony Brook, NY
Thesis Advisor: Donald Kuspit; Reader, Barbara Frank

EXHIBITIONS

In Retrospect: The Work of Frank Wimberley June 20-August 18, 1997
An exhibition at the Islip Art Museum tracing the career and development of this Afro-American abstract artist who has worked in Manhattan and the east end of Long Island for the past 50 years.

In Retrospect: The Work of Tobia Tucker September 17-November 4, 1996
An exhibition at the Islip Art Museum using work from the Museum's Permanent Collection to expand upon Tucker's career as a photographer of Native Americans, with emphasis on her work with Long Island's Shinnecock tribe.

PUBLICATIONS

Numerous publications from 1971-1987 through the Suffolk County News Corp., including an award-winning column about the suburban experience; contributed essay chapter to architectural textbook, *How To Be Your Own General Contractor* by Alfredo DiVido, Yale University Press, 1978; Other publications include:

Reinventing the Avant Garde: A Stylistic Analysis of Selected Essays of Jacques Derrida, Art Criticism, Vol. 13 No. 2, SUNY Stony Brook, NY, 1998, Donald Kuspit, Editor

Abstract Painting in the 90's: A Challenge to the Spectacle (Co-authored with William Ganis), Art Criticism, Vol. 14, No 2, SUNY Stony Brook, NY, 1999, Donald Kuspit, Editor.

Tobia Tucker: Vanishing Traces, 1996, Catalogue essay accompanying exhibition at the Islip Art Museum

Frank Wimberley: In Our Era, 1997, Catalogue essay accompanying exhibition at the Islip Art Museum

TEACHING

Section Teacher, Art History 101
Fall 1999

Taught section of undergraduate students enrolled in Art History 101 course at SUNY Stony Brook as a teaching assistant to Zanhah Baharani. Lectured weekly in review sessions; prepared and presented section on Medieval Art.

Director's Tours

Prepared and presented Director's Lectures for public in conjunction with all exhibits at the Islip Art Museum and Carriage House Workspace

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Hospice of the South Shore
1987-1998

Volunteer with Suffolk County's first accredited hospice agency. Served as patient volunteer for three years; Served as board member for three years. Served as President of the Board of Directors for three years. While president, guided organization through successful merger with three other hospice groups and through merger/affiliation with North Shore Hospital/ Columbia University Health Care Network.

Organization is now known as Hospice Care Network, Inc., and is the largest hospice provider in the tri-state area.

Other volunteer activities and organization memberships:

Sayville Food Pantry weekly volunteer

PlazaMac Cinema volunteer coordinator

Bayport Blue Point Heritage Association/Meadow Croft docent

Bay Area Friends of the Fine Arts

Sophia Garden Queen of the Rosary Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Trashmaniandevil.wordpress.com

Maintain a popular blog about trash—and artists who use trash and repurposed materials in their work

Michael D. Dawidziak

Michael D. Dawidziak (more popularly known as Mike D.) is the founder and president of Strategic Planning. His company employed many IT professionals, being located in the Sayville-Bohemia-Ronkonkoma area for 34 years. He is a nationally known pollster, general consultant and political strategist and has worked on races for all levels of government in every state in the country, including four presidential campaigns. He was a recognized pioneer and innovator of what we call “micro-targeting” today.

Over the last 40 years, Michael’s reputation has grown nationally in the areas of public opinion management, polling, communications, strategic planning, media management, debate prep, press/public relations, grass roots public opinion, and demographic targeting, to a wide variety of political and corporate clients in all fifty states of the country. Past and current clients include major newspapers, universities, charities, civic groups, chambers of commerce, real estate developers, financial institutions, advertising agencies, health care providers, energy companies, major law firms and publishers.

Michael also appeared regularly in the pages of Newsday as an opinion writer on local and national political attitudes. He has appeared nationally on NPR, FOX News and CNN, locally on CBS, NBC. ABC FOX5-NY and WPIX and is a frequent political analyst for News 12. Michael has contributed to and been quoted often in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Newsday and many other national newspapers and publications. He also serves as a judge for the Fair Media Council’s Folio Awards.

Michael and his wife, Pamela J. Greene (attorney and former Town of Islip Councilwoman) founded and run the Rollstone Foundation, a charity dedicated to aiding in the adoption of orphans with special needs all over the world. He also serves on the board of HALO Missions, a charity created to provide hope to orphans in developing countries through medical missions and educational investments. He is the President of the Board of Perpetual Help Ministries, a charity devoted to bringing access to education, clean drinking water and proper sanitation in Africa. Michael is a parishioner of Our Lady of the Snow in Blue Point, NY, an active and proud Rotarian and has also worked prominently in the area of environmental protection and serves as a fund raiser for a wide variety of charities and causes.

Timothy Dolan

Goal: To participate as a member of the Island Hills Advisory Committee

Experience

- 2018 - Present **Teacher at the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District
Calhoun High School, Merrick, New York 11566**
- Responsible for the creation and implementation of daily lessons for Advanced Placement World History Modern classes
 - Responsible for the creation and implementation of daily lessons for Advanced Placement Microeconomics classes
 - Responsible for the creation and implementation of daily lessons for World History, from prehistory through the early modern era
- 2003 - 2018 **Teacher at the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District
Grand Avenue Middle School, Bellmore, New York 11710**
- Responsible for the creation and implementation of daily lesson for United States history from 1860 to present
 - Responsible for the creation and implementation of daily lessons for Great Lives, a character education class
- 2001 - 2003 **Teacher at the Schiller American Academy
Open Tennis Academy, Barcelona, Spain**
- Responsible for the creation and implementation of daily lessons for United States from 1450 - present
 - Responsible for the creation and implementation of daily lessons for participation in government

Education

- 2014 - 2016 **Masters degree in Educational Leadership
State University of New York at Stony Brook**
- 1999 - 2004 **Masters degree in Social Studies Education
State University of New York at Stony Brook**
- 1994 - 1998 **Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Business
Lafayette College, Easton Pennsylvania**

Certification

- New York State Teacher Certification, social studies grades 7 through 12
- New York State School District Leadership
- New York State School Building Leadership

Justin Jaycon

Summary: Self motivated, energetic and creative marketing, public relations, community health and operations professional with more than 20 years' experience in advertising, PR, graphic design, print production, special events, web development, social media, government and physician relations.

Relevant Skills

- Leadership trained in relation to the multi-generational workforce with a focus on emotional intelligence skills
- Effective operational and project management skills with a sound understanding of the health care industry, as well as marketing and PR principles
- Effective understanding of latest technologies and able to translate ideas and messages into successful written, online and video marketing and PR campaigns
- Excellent ability to operate under pressure and meet tight deadlines while handling multiple tasks
- Excellent verbal, written and interpersonal communication and networking skills
- Proficient computer skills including programs such as Microsoft Office Suite, Quark XPress, Adobe Creative Cloud Suite, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Joomla, Drupal, Constant Contact and Healthstream
- Social media proficiency using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube
- Writer, editor, publisher and content creator
- Successful in developing, cultivating and pitching opportunities for positive media coverage
- Ability to plan, coordinate and manage various types of physician, community and special events

Work Experience Primary marketing professional for a 437 bed hospital that is part of a 6 hospital integrated health system

Oct 2016 – Present **Good Samaritan University Hospital, Director, Public & Community Relations**

May – Oct 2016 **Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center, Acting Director, Public Affairs & Marketing**

2015 – 2016 **Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center, Asst. Director, Public Affairs & Marketing**

2013 – 2015 **Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center, Marketing Manager**

2004 – 2013 **Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center, Marketing Coordinator**

1000 Montauk Highway, West Islip, NY

- Supervise and manage a multidisciplinary department featuring marketing, public relations, community health, government and physician outreach.

- Act as the operational lead for Good Samaritan’s Center for Weight Loss (Bariatric Services), the Diabetes Education Center and Wound Care Center.
- Manage the development/production of internal and external publications
- Writer and editor of all printed material, including ads, brochures, press releases, web content, community service plan, etc., that promote the positive image of the hospital and help to identify its services.
- Handle and actively pitch all PR activities; respond to media inquiries on a timely basis.
- Develop and maintain proposals and collateral, desktop publishing, rate cards, newsletters, brochures and numerous other materials related to marketing
- Create, track and adapt campaigns and prepare various reports to effectively and efficiently manage PR and advertising initiatives
- Oversee direct mail, email broadcast campaigns, outbound calls, customer communications, media advertisements, promotions and other marketing plans
- Serve as hospital webmaster and assist with website projects for Catholic Health
- Assist with special marketing initiatives for Catholic Health on a system level
- Develop lead generation plans with targets, measures and objectives
- Work with customers in developing case studies, references and testimonials
- Lead a physician outreach strategy that focuses on developing referral patterns between acquired, IPA and ACO practices and the hospital.
- Launched branded e-newsletters targeted to specific audiences
- Negotiate and implement major multi-year partnerships and campaigns with business and community organizations (i.e., Malls, the Long Island Ducks, various chambers of commerce and other not-for-profit organizations with a similar mission and values)
- Key role in developing award-winning advertising campaigns, including services such as open heart surgery and cancer service lines.
- Supervise agency relationships
- Leader of race medicine for the Catholic Health Suffolk County Marathon

2002-2004 South Nassau Communities Hospital, Marketing Associate

One Healthy Way, Oceanside, NY

- Assisted in marketing initiatives under the guidance of the Director of Marketing.
- Coordinated the printing of brochures and hospital wide manuals.

Education

St. Joseph’s College, Patchogue, NY

Masters Degree in Business Administration

Graduation date: May 2014

Binghamton University, Vestal, NY

Bachelors Degree in Politics, Philosophy and Law

Professional Affiliations

2013 – present

Long Island Elite (LIE), Professional Business Association

Board Member, Membership, Communications and Charity Nomination
Committee Member

- Named 2018 Long Island Elite Member of the Year
- Assist in fostering the growth and development of Long Island’s business professionals and emerging regional leaders.
- Integral role in choosing the LIE’s Charity Partner of the Year, in which all members become brand ambassadors of the chosen Long Island not-for-profit organization, with past partners including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island, The Safe Center of Long Island and New Ground.
- Assist in the planning and coordination of special events, membership drives and other functions.

2016 – present

West Islip Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

2018 - present

Our Lady of Consolation Foundation Board of Directors

**2019 - 2020
Committee**

Chair, Nassau Suffolk Hospital Council Communications

Advertising Awards

- 2018 Silver Aster Advertising Award
- 2017 Cancer Advertising Silver Award
- 2017 Healthcare Advertising Merit Award
- 2016 Silver Cancer Awareness Advertising Award
- 2016 Healthcare Advertising Merit Award
- 2016, 2015, 2014, 2011 & 2009 Bronze Aster Award
- 2012 Gold Cancer Awareness Advertising Award
- 2011 & 2008 Silver Aster Award
- 2011 Bronze Health Information Award
- 2010 Silver Cardiovascular Advertising Awards
- 2008 and 2006 National Health Information Merit Awards.

FREDERICK W. WELGE

Summary of Qualifications

Fiscal Professional with a strong work ethic and extensive diversified administrative experience. Thrive in fast-paced dynamic environments. Proven ability to function in remote environment, juggling multiple projects to timely successful conclusions. Broad knowledge base in bookkeeping auditing. Developed meaningful relationships with all levels of management, staff, vendors, and clients. Utilize analytical reasoning to foresee, prioritize and efficiently accomplish tasks in an accurate manner. Organized with exceptional attention to detail and excellence. Calculated and authorized variable payroll for a large multi-unit workforce. Maintain highest level of discretion, loyalty and confidentiality.

Core Competencies

- Attentive to Details
- Positive Influencer
- Communication Skills
- Empower Others
- Results Oriented
- Flexible
- Proactive
- Even Temperament
- Analytical Thinking
- Manage Change
- Ethical
- Organized

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Dockers Waterside Marina & Restaurant, East Quogue, NY 16 years
Fiscal Administrator/Payroll Manager/On & Off Site Catering Director

The Inn at Quogue, Village of Quogue, NY 2 years
Corporate Chef/Procurement Negotiator/Cash Flow Oversight

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Professional Studies cum laude, Hospitality Management
New York Institute of Technology

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Rotary Club of Sayville - Active member, former Treasurer, former Board Member
Empire State Restaurant and Tavern Owners Association, LI Chapter - Board Member