

QUESTIONNAIRE - WADING RIVER CIVIC ASSOCIATION

OVERVIEW: The Wading River Civic Association was formed in 1935. It represents residents in the 11792 zip code. About 80 percent of the membership live in the Riverhead Town portion of Wading River and the rest live in the Brookhaven Town portion of Wading River. The civic association represents residents in both Brookhaven and Riverhead. We have six meetings a year.

RECENT PROJECTS/ACTIONS: We have actively advocated for and participated in planning studies of the Route 25A corridor in Brookhaven and Riverhead. We have undertaken efforts to encourage Brookhaven and Riverhead to enter into intermunicipal agreements to improve conditions in and near our historic Wading River Duck Ponds. We have strongly supported and advocated for preserving the historic character of Wading River. We continue to bring concerns about the condition of the Wading River Creek to the Riverhead Town Board. We have worked along with other civic associations to push for meaningful regulations to protect the historic and scenic Sound Avenue corridor. We have successfully opposed efforts to eliminate provisions of the Riverhead Town code that are unique to Wading River such as the prohibition on hours of business operation and allowance of drive thru windows. We supported the successful effort by the Peconic Land Trust to assist the Condzella family's effort to purchase and restore land along 25A in Wading River to agricultural use. We played a key role in the initiative that led to New York State commitment to buying approximately 800 acres owned by National Grid in Wading River and Shoreham. We strongly advocated for many years for the now completed North Shore Rail Bike Trail .

ISSUES OF CONCERN IN WADING RIVER: Residents want to preserve the rural hamlet heritage and community character. They are strongly opposed to "overdevelopment" in the form of new shopping centers, excessive signage and superfluous retail. They strongly support open space preservation and maintaining our agricultural heritage. They do not seem to support the widening of Route 25A, but they see the need for improvements on certain town roadways. They support efforts to insure pedestrian safety but are divided on what type of walkways should be encouraged. There is no clear view on where these walkways should be. They also support the preservation of our hamlet's historic character and

wholeheartedly support bicycle paths and bike lanes. The residents expressed concerns about the condition of town facilities such as Bayberry Park, the Town of Riverhead Beach and the municipal parking lot at the intersection North Country Road and Sound Road. They are supportive of the concept of single family home ownership but are less supportive of multi-family housing units. They are concerned about short term rentals. Residents also seem to recognize the need for flooding remediation in certain portions of the hamlet.

Residents want to see Brookhaven and Riverhead maintain and enhance the Duck Ponds. In order to address major projects such as the dredging of the Duck Ponds, Riverhead must step up to the plate and secure the funds to replace the existing bulkheading. Without new bulkheading, Brookhaven Town will not undertake the costly task of dredging the Duck Ponds.

Residents also recognize that there are issues and development projects outside of our hamlet that will have possible regional impacts. Projects such as the sale and development of the EPCAL property are deeply concerning to residents. The Comprehensive Plan Update must address the the issues surrounding the development of the EPCAL property. The construction of the “new breed” of large warehouses in nearby Calverton is also deeply concerning. We would suggest that all warehousing to be analyzed should use current research and information provided by the Institute for Transportation Professionals in planning and code considerations. We also believe In order to protect the historic character of all the hamlets in the town, Riverhead must Improve its code enforcement capabilities.

PRIORITIES: The overwhelming priority for our hamlet is for the Town of Riverhead to begin planning to address these issues as soon as the CPU is adopted. The town should be required to issue a report on what progress it has made in dealing with the various issues that have been identified in each hamlet. The report should be made every 5 years after the adoption of the current CPU. We cannot wait 10 years to look back. We do not have the option to kick the can down the road any longer. We must act now!

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Expand the Town’s IT operation. All Town Boards should allow public participation through zoom connections on all meetings and not just public hearings.

