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## Environmental review to begin for expansion at Strong's Yacht Center

By Tara Smith



A view of the Strong's Yacht Center in 2018. (Credit: Randee Daddona)

An environmental review of a controversial boatyard expansion in Mattituck may soon get underway.

At a meeting Monday, the Southold Town Planning Board approved the final scope, a document required as part of the State Environmental Quality Review Act that spells out what aspects of the project must be further studied before it's approved or denied.

The board voted 4-0 to accept the final scope, with chairman Donald Wilcenski recused.

"This is a major project," Planning Board vice chair James Rich said during Monday's meeting, adding that he thought the final document, which is nearly 30 pages long, is "very complete."

The plans call for two new boat storage buildings at Strong's Yacht Center, one at 52,500 square feet and the other at 49,000 square feet, on the Mattituck property zoned Marine II and R80. The property is already developed with an existing 69,245 square feet of boatyard buildings.

# — The Suffolk Times.

The applicants have said the expansion is needed in order to provide indoor, heated winter storage for yachts that are typically transported to warmer climates in the winter due to a lack of available local storage.

Owner Jeff Strong has also said the expansion could add 15 new jobs to the current full time-staff of 13.

Community opposition to the proposal is mounting, with a group of neighbors forming the "Save Mattituck Inlet" coalition last year. Several other local environmental organizations, including Save the Sound, have spoken out against the proposal, arguing that it would disrupt quality of life, water quality and disrupt the fragile surrounding ecosystem.

Town planner Mark Terry highlighted several sections included in the final scope at a work session earlier Monday. Issues that must be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement include environmental resources including soil, water and ecology, impacts on plants and animals, environment, flooding, human health, community character, open space, noise and air quality, among others.

Economic and construction-related impacts must also be studied along with at least six alternatives to the project currently proposed.

The final scope is available for public review on Laserfiche.

"[The scope] is very comprehensive and it did incorporate many comments from the public," Mr. Terry said Monday.

Mattituck resident Anne Sherwood Pundyk said Tuesday that she felt the community concerns had been addressed in the document. "It is really gratifying that the Southold planning staff heard us and incorporated [our comments] in a comprehensive way," she said. "Our group and many others in our community will continue to watch closely to see how the applicant responds in the DEIS."

With the final scope approved, the applicants must now prepare a DEIS that will ultimately be found either inadequate or accepted by the Planning Board. Once the DEIS is completed, further public hearings will be held on the project.

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Tara Smith is a multimedia reporter who joined the Times Review Media Group in 2018, covering everything from local government and environmental issues to breaking news and features. She's a Riverhead native and 2015 graduate of Arcadia University.

