



East Hampton Helicopter Route Gives Rise To Rally

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By Rohma Abbas Aug 21, 2012 12:34 PM

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Residents from Southampton and East Hampton towns rallied against a new helicopter route at the East Hampton Airport on Sunday. KYRIL BROMLEY

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Groups of frustrated residents from both East Hampton and Southampton towns sprung into action last week, opposing a route that takes noisy helicopters over portions of Southampton Town to and from East Hampton Airport.

An estimated 70 to 90 people crammed into the Noyac Schoolhouse on August 15 to sound off about a noise situation that has plagued residents in parts of Noyac, North Sea, Bridgehampton and Sag Harbor. The new route—which is actually an old route East Hampton Airport officials revived from years ago—has recently directed the noisy traffic over Jessup's Neck and the Elizabeth A. Morton National Wildlife Refuge in Noyac, instead of over Northwest Woods in East Hampton, where they used to fly until sometime last month.

On Sunday, members of the Quiet Skies Coalition, an East Hampton anti-noise group, rallied at the airport to protest the new route. Kathleen Cunningham, the executive director of the group, said just under 50 residents participated—many of whom hailed from Southampton Town, and from the group that met in Noyac last week.

On Tuesday, anti-noise activists announced that U.S. Representative Tim Bishop would attend a public meeting to discuss helicopter noise, at 7 p.m. on Thursday at the Bridgehampton Community Center on the Bridgehampton Turnpike. Southampton Town Councilwoman Christine Scalera is also expected to attend, as are other public officials, according to a press release issued by the group.

The newly formed Southampton group has yet to come up with an official name, according to Barry Holden of Noyac, who organized last week's meeting. But within just a week, the group was able to amass hundreds of signatures on an online petition opposing the new route, he said. As of Monday afternoon, the petition had 268 signatures.

"We are furious not only at East Hampton Airport and East Hampton Town, we are very upset with how we are being treated by the Southampton Town Board," said Mr. Holden. "...The fact is that very few people are making a lot of noise for other people—it's ruining our lives. It's ruining our property values."

The group's mission is to draw attention to the issue and hold elected officials accountable for their actions and nonactions, said Connie Steensma, of Noyac.

"We hope to get attention," she said. "We hope to find out why our officials, our elected officials, aren't standing up for us ... We're trying to bring attention to it now because the Federal Aviation Administration is apparently going to make a decision in the near future about where the flight paths will be. We have to say that this is not right."

Besides protesting the new route, members of the Quiet Skies Coalition raised safety concerns about airport traffic.

"It just doesn't make sense to have traffic coming and going out over the same route," Ms. Cunningham said. "It just does not make any sense."

Town Board members from both towns attended last week's meeting in Noyac. Southampton Town Councilwoman Bridget Fleming and East Hampton Town Councilwoman Theresa Quigley were both present. Ms. Quigley, who said she was "glad to be there," said she felt the purpose of the meeting was to organize a group to speak with one strong voice on the issue.

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"I personally feel that as though we, the town, should not have changed the route without the input of the East Hampton community or the Southampton community," she said.

Recently, Ms. Quigley and East Hampton Town Supervisor Bill Wilkinson have blasted East Hampton Councilman Dominick Stanzione over the route change, accusing him of unilaterally deciding to change it without consulting the rest of the board. Mr. Stanzione has rejected those claims, saying he had "no authority to make that change."

"The town has no authority to control air space," he said. "Safety and efficient operations are the purview of the air traffic control tower and the users of the airport. So aircraft using the airport have to execute agreements with the control tower. Those agreements don't have a place for the town to sign on."

In July, 114 different households outside of East Hampton Town filed nearly 1,500 complaints with an airport noise hotline, according to information generated by PlaneNoise, a company paid by East Hampton Town to synthesize that data. Of those complaints, there were 10 individuals who accounted for the vast majority of them. The highest number coming from an individual in Sag Harbor, who logged 551, or 36.8 percent of the total monthly complaints, the company has reported.

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Im sorry but when you bought your house, did you not put into consideration about the noise. The world is not a quite place sorry.

By [Unkown Local \(18\)](#), southampton on Aug 21, 12 2:21 PM

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When I bought my house, which by the way is in noyac and no where near the airport, I didn't have 50 helicopters flying over me every weekend.

By [bubby \(38\)](#), southampton on Aug 21, 12 3:34 PM

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And your property value was peanuts compared to what it is now. Things change, and you have to take the good with the bad. What is the solution you propose? Helicopters that land @ EH Airport have to fly over SOMEONE's house

By [Nature \(913\)](#), Hampton Bays on Aug 21, 12 4:07 PM

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That's a very ignorant thing to say. Not everyone with a noise problem lives near the airport. Let's be nice, ok.

By [marybmary \(22\)](#), east hampton on Aug 21, 12 3:10 PM

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@Unknown local. The problem is that the pilots are flying far too low than what they are legally authorized too coming in over communities that are far from the airport. Likewise, when most people bought their properties there was not as much air traffic then as there is now. Not to mention that this probably not disclosed neither by sellers or brokers that there is a noise problem. Don't even know if they have to disclose that. So they had no way of knowing. It would be nice If Suffolk county, [...more](#)

By [V.Tomanoku \(396\)](#), southampton on Aug 21, 12 3:39 PM

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More and more planes and more noise are just part of the future-get used to it. The rich will have there way.

By [EastEnd68 \(740\)](#), Westhampton on Aug 21, 12 4:22 PM

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SagHarborBob: Add a comment

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