

Nothing Being Done

East Hampton

October 24, 2011

Dear David:

I reside on a street that is on the final approach to East Hampton Airport. Our neighborhood has experienced the decline in quality of life due to the tremendous increase in jet air traffic over our houses — sometimes as frequently as three minutes apart on summer weekends. I have reported these events to the airport-noise hotline during the past few years.

After reading about the newly approved airport layout plan, I called Jim Brundige, the airport manager. I was incredulous when he did not know the location of Wireless Road, even though it is on the final approach, and referred to the group opposing Federal Aviation Administration money as disingenuous.

His response to my concerns about noise and safety was that change is inevitable and we just have to accept it, just like the increase in vehicular traffic and new-home construction. Based on our conversation, he obviously is serving the special interests in our community, namely the pilots and the wealthy few who commute to their weekend residences.

Regarding the full-page ads by the East Hampton Aviation Association, nothing could be further from the truth. East Hampton has nothing to celebrate. Our airport will not be quieter, it will not be safer, and it will not have local control. So much for the deceptive headline. And it is telling to note that references in the ad are to helicopters, never to jets, and the logo of the association and photo features a small, recreational plane, leading one to believe that it represents what is taking off and landing at our airport.

The new plan to reroute the helicopters to the southern route is merely transferring the noise problem from one area to another. There is absolutely nothing being done to restrict the noise from jets, or the number and frequency of planes, or to enforce the voluntary curfews, or to monitor the emissions polluting our air and damaging our health, or even to review the calls to the complaint line. Mr. Brundige actually said that no one complains about jet noise! If that is the case, then what happened to my “recorded” calls?

I praise the Democratic candidates and Bill Mott of the Independence Party for their commitment not to take F.A.A. money until all airport-related issues have been thoroughly studied. Shame on the Republican candidates for dismissing resident concerns about noise and safety, and for bragging that they are all for accepting F.A.A. funds.

Frankly, this controversy over the airport has been going on far too long. The interests of a minority are being served to the detriment of the majority. I honestly thought that when the pilot was killed in a crash on Mill Hill Lane a few years ago, town officials would come to their senses. It looks like not even another tragedy will make a difference to this administration.

We have absolutely nothing to celebrate — unless those refusing F.A.A. money get elected.
SHERYL GOLD