

Must Rise Up

Wainscott

November 28, 2011

To the Editor,

The price of preservation is eternal vigilance. For those who truly love it, this issue is simple on the East End: Some people consider the natural beauty and resultant lifestyle a blessing to be preserved, while others look upon those same resources as potentially lucrative capital projects.

The sole reason the East End is still beautiful and remarkably well preserved is because each and every major development initiative has been defeated. Without such resistance, without our eternal vigilance, there would be housing developments all through what is now preserved woodlands at Barcelona Neck, Hither Woods, Cedar Point, and Mashomack; no farmland at all, no Long Lane preserve, no Town Lane preserve in Amagansett, no Sagaponack or Wainscott potato fields; hotels on the bay at Three Mile Harbor and the ocean on Napeague; houses all through the dunes of East Hampton town; Amagansett would have lost its charm and heritage; there would be a highway through Scuttlehole, Sag Harbor, East Hampton, and Amagansett; car ferries from Connecticut would dock on Napeague and in Montauk, etc.

Every major environmental initiative out here was decried as “bad for business,” “anti-capitalist,” “bad for locals,” “will raise our taxes,” and so on. But in fact, it has been the environmental initiatives that maintained the quality of life, dramatically increased the value of land, and kept our taxes far lower than in developed areas up west.

The developers were wrong then and they are wrong now. Which brings us to East Hampton Airport.

Operators and profiteers maintain that we (really, they) “need” Federal Aviation Agency money in order to maintain a safe and necessary airport. But the airport, in full violation of our town’s master plan, is no longer a small, recreational airport only serving single-engine planes and amateur pilots — despite the anachronistic signs and deceitful ads showing propeller-driven planes floating through pristine skies. Those days are as gone in East Hampton as the Model T on Main Street. The airport, as it currently exists, is not necessary, it is merely convenient — to the hedge-fund moguls, Hollywood celebrities, and their entourages. In the summer, Wilkinson-Twomey-Krupinski Airport has become a major metropolitan jet and heliport. Those who love the natural beauty and serenity of the East End must rise up once more, like the minutemen of yore.

We are acting in force to stop expansion of the airport. We will be singing the patriotic song of preserving what is best for the generations to come. And we will be bringing eternal vigilance to bear.

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