

MONTAUK INLET Dredge To Return This Fall

Emergency work won't derail the larger project

By CHRISTINE SAMPSON

As emergency dredging of the Lake Montauk Inlet to a depth of 12 feet officially got underway this week, Representative Nick LaLota on Tuesday confirmed that plans are still on to dredge the inlet to a full depth of 17 feet later this year.

During a press conference packed to the gills with elected officials, Army Corps staff, and government aides, Mr. LaLota reassured members of the press that the dredging project's funding is intact despite the continued onslaught of cuts and changes occurring to federal money sources every day under President Trump.

"I'll stand against anybody's efforts to disrupt the productive things that we need to do here on Long Island. . . . Local projects like this are exactly what we need to get the return on investment of our federal tax dollars," Mr. LaLota said during the press conference, which took place at Inlet Seafood Restaurant overlooking the very inlet in need of emergency dredging.

Col. Alex Young of the Army Corps of Engineers said the project will see about 10,000 cubic yards of sand pulled from



During a press conference Tuesday on the emergency dredging of the Montauk Inlet to 12 feet below mean water level, Representative Nick LaLota announced that the dredge will return in the fall to dredge the inlet to a depth of 17 feet.

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Town Seeks To Settle Airport Litigation

F.A.A. paperwork filed to maintain public status

By CHRISTINE SAMPSON

East Hampton Town is looking to settle with the plaintiffs who sued to block its attempt to close the town airport in 2022 and reopen it with restrictions meant to address town residents' years of complaints. Supervisor Kathleen Burke-Gonzalez announced at a town board work session Tuesday.

To that end, the supervisor said, the town has filed Form 7480-I, the Federal Aviation Administration paperwork necessary to keep the East Hampton Airport public, rather than pursuing the "prior-permission" requirement for aviators that it had hoped to initiate. In a lengthy statement, she said the town "has made material progress" in resolving the litigation and has identified "meaningful solutions" to move forward.

The move effectively brings East Hampton Town into procedural compliance with the federal Airport Noise and Capacity Act, known as ANCA. Filing form 7480-I is mandatory when an airport owner wants to either change an airport from a private-use airport to public use, or from public use to a different status. The town had attempted the latter. New York State Supreme Court Justice Paul Bales, who has since retired, previously ruled that East Hampton had

failed to follow ANCA's requirements as it sought to change the public airport to a prior-permission required (PPR) model. This was a key component of the plaintiffs' case against the town.

Justice Bales in 2023 also held the town in civil contempt for violating a restraining order he had imposed in 2022 that prevented the town from privatizing the airport or imposing flight restrictions. He ordered the town to pay the plaintiffs' attorneys fees for costs associated with the contempt motions, and he imposed a fine of \$1,000 per day "for each day it fails to comply with the T.R.O. from the date of this order."

In March of 2024, however, a panel of the New York State Supreme Court's Appellate Division agreed with the town that the penalty and fine were improper, writing that the plaintiffs "did not establish actual damages, and accordingly, to the extent that the Supreme Court imposed monetary sanctions in the sum of \$250,000 as a penalty for the [town's] civil contempt, they may only recover reasonable costs and expenses, including attorneys' fees, plus a statutory fine in the sum of \$250." Further, the panel wrote that the Supreme Court "should

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Beetle Battle Briefing

Failed steps, next steps in fighting pests' destruction

By DENIS HARTNETT

The work being done to respond to damage from the southern pine beetle on Napeague and in Hither Hills State Parks will continue over the course of "several winters," according to Lynn Bogan, assistant deputy director for stewardship at the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

The department's next steps, Ms. Bogan said at a public meeting at Montauk Downs State Park last Thursday night, are to hire a certified burn boss to "create a fuel mitigation and fire management plan" and to "propose and prioritize treatments for fuel mitigation and fire management." The burn boss will also continue to collaborate with local fire departments and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to ensure everyone is on the same page.

The large-scale plan will also entail cutting down trees that will be piled and safely burned. The goal is to create buffer zones between areas of pines so that the beetle will have a harder time moving through the parks. The department refers to these dead and downed trees as "fuel."

Ms. Bogan was one of many speakers at last Thursday's meeting. Also present were George Gorman, regional director of the department, and Becky Sinker, a forest health specialist, who painted the

full picture of what has happened to both Napeague and Hither Hills State Parks since the beetle was first discovered there, as well as how the department has responded.

"We were told that it was probably a losing battle," Mr. Gorman said of the initial approach to fighting the beetle, "but we had to do it to try and prevent it from spreading any further."

The beetle is native to the Southern United States but has steadily migrated north. "Our winters are getting warmer because of climate change," Ms. Sinker said, "and as a result the beetle has been able to really expand its range. This species is able to spawn multiple generations a year, and with the warmer summers come more and more generations."

The first step the department took was "suppression cuts" in 2021, focused on every infected tree and a buffer zone of healthy trees to stop the spread of the beetle. "You're trying to knock down the populations," Ms. Sinker explained, "and create large enough space that they then won't move to healthier trees."

This largely failed and forced the department to reassess its strategy going forward. Additionally, the northern long-eared bat was placed on the endangered species list in 2022, limiting the windows of when trees can be cut to between Dec. 1 and Feb. 28, and the month of July.

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A Century Of Ice Cream And Community

Candy Kitchen gets ready to mark important year

By CHRISTINE SAMPSON

In 1925, F. Scott Fitzgerald published the now-classic novel "The Great Gatsby." Art Deco was all the rage, and rumrunners were dodging Prohibition rules against booze. The institution that would become the Grand Ole Opry began its run broadcasting the best in American country music.

And on Main Street in Bridgehampton, a community institution was born: Spiro Stavropoulos opened the Candy Kitchen on May 2, 1925.

Thus, the year 2025 marks a whole century in business for the restaurant, owned since 1981 by Gus Laggis and managed day to day by his daughters, Jamie Laggis and Maria Laggis Lania, and son-in-law, Mauricio Lima.

Their patriarch is a bit interviewy these days, and is spending the winter in the West Palm Beach, Fla. area. But Ms. Laggis and Ms. Laggis Lima speak for him when they say they're grateful for the local support.

"We take a lot of pride in our work. This is an extension of us," Ms. Laggis said in an interview this week, just a few days after the eatery reopened following a two-week winter hiatus.

When the noted food critic Florence Fabricant published a list of her favorite old-fashioned ice cream shops in "The New York Times" in May 1998, single-scoop cones at the Candy Kitchen were \$1.95. Today, a small cone costs \$6.50. But you still pay cash — another constant these days, along with most of the menu items.

About a decade ago, the original machine used to make the ice cream broke down and a new, custom-made one had to be shipped up from South Carolina in pieces to be installed. It was a big deal, but necessary. "The ice cream has to be made the old-fashioned way," Ms. Laggis said.

Nowadays, it's Mr. Lima who makes most of the ice cream, including 30 different flavors during the summertime. It's a full day's task, but a personally fulfilling one when he sees the youngest customers' delighted faces. And the recipe is another thing that hasn't changed. "Everything is pretty simple. That's how we like to keep it."

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Stranded Dolphin Did Not Survive

But necropsies expand understanding of how species uses local waters

By CARISSA KATZ

Patrick Hines was on his usual pre-dawn walk on Friday when he spotted what looked like a baby whale stuck on a sandbar in shallow water just offshore at Albert's Landing Beach in Amagansett. When he returned two hours later in daylight to find it in the same spot, he called East Hampton Town police, who alerted Marine Patrol and the New York Marine Rescue Center, which responds to reports of live strandings all over Long Island. The animal was not a whale, but a Risso's dolphin, a species much larger than the bottlenose dolphin more commonly seen closer to shore.

By 10 a.m., when two biologists from the rescue center arrived on scene, the animal — identified as a female — was beached but still alive, occasionally lifting its large head and its tail fins. A trickle of blood colored the water red.

Relaying information gathered in the field, Maxine Montella, the executive director of the rescue center, said by phone later that day that the dolphin was about 300 centimeters long (over nine feet), "potentially an older individual," and looked very malnourished.

"The best thing we could do was get it out of the water and make sure it wasn't rolling around in the tide," she said. The New York Marine Rescue Center does not have the tanks or the resources to rehabilitate injured dolphins. Sometimes, though, a healthy enough animal that is beached can be treated in the center's response truck and then "refueled" after being fitted with a satellite tag. There are portable blood machines that can help biologists assess



East Hampton Town Marine Patrol and State D.E.C. officers helped biologists from the New York Marine Rescue Center get a dying Risso's dolphin out of the water at Albert's Landing on Friday.

what's wrong with an animal. They can elevate it so that it isn't being crushed by its own weight and provide IV fluids for rehydration.

Even an untrained passer-by could tell that the Risso's dolphin at Albert's Landing Friday was in bad shape. Jill Pryor, a senior biologist with the center, and her fellow biologist Andrea Jelaska zipped into waterproof coveralls and unfolded a large red sling on the beach. With the help of three Marine Patrol officers and four State Department of En-

vironmental Conservation officers, the biologists rolled the large dolphin into the sling and carried it foot by foot to the response truck in the parking lot at the top of a steep incline, putting every couple of steps to rest it down.

"Though it was 'super underweight,'" according to one of the biologists, it took a Herculean effort to move it, even with nine people helping. By the time they reached the truck, however, the animal had died.

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PRESERVATION

Rowdy Hall Is on a Roll

Historic timber-frame house will no longer be sinking

By CHRISTOPHER GANGEMI

Long before the name "Rowdy Hall" was adopted by a popular East Hampton Village bar and eatery (now in Amagansett), it was a boarding house: Mrs. Harry Hanlin's Rowdy Hall. The building, now a single-family home, still stands at 111 Egypt Lane, although currently it's floating, suspended six feet above a hole. When it's lowered again, it will be on a new foundation.

"The floors used to roll, which was kind of charming," Lynn Daughass, its owner, said in a phone call. "I think they will be rolling a little bit less now. The foundation will really firm things up."

"The first time I went into that house I had to leave, because I was dizzy," said Erica Bierberg Smith, who has been practicing architecture in East Hampton for 25 years. "It was almost like being on a ship. Rowdy Hall is the most important architectural commission in my career. This may be surprising, as it doesn't require much design work. It is not a project that preffers awards, magazine covers, or the architect's personal style. It is a pure preservation effort."

"One corner was sunk six inches from level," said Kevin Warren, a co-founder of Fifth and Dune Partners L.L.C., the

builder doing the foundation work. The company handling the lifting was Davis Building Movers out of Blue Point.

So how do you lift a house that's about 300 years old? "Very, very carefully," Mr. Warren said. "Because the house wasn't on a foundation, it was slowly sinking into the soil." There was only a 30-inch crawl space below, which needed to be hand-excavated before steel beams could be slid under the house (and its original fireplace). Hydraulic jacks were used to lift it.

East Hampton Village issued an emergency building permit to start the work, which would normally have required a wetlands permit (the property backs up to the Nature Trail). "We decided to forgo it in the interest of saving the house. The structural integrity had been compromised," said Tom Prieto, the village's chief building inspector.

The house is also on the list of historic timber-frame homes, which benefit from their own strict preservation legislation. "At first glance it looks like a lot is going on there," Mr. Prieto said. "The windows have been removed, for example." The contractors will replace them, however, and Mr. Prieto said

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DEVON

Zoning Board Split on Yacht Club

They want more 'but don't want to give up anything,' vice chair says

By CHRISTOPHER GANGEMI

"That was a journey down a rabbit hole," said Ed Johann, a member of the East Hampton Town Zoning Board of Appeals, after an exhaustive discussion regarding the redevelopment of the Devon Yacht Club split the board last week.

Roy Dalene, the chairman, and Mr. Johann seemed ready to send the application back to the planning board, indicating their probable approval for the "involved" and "complicated" project, which, in short, involves the demolition of six buildings and the construction of five others. All are on an environmental-ly sensitive and constrained 6.61-acre site, at 300 Abbot's Landing Road in Amagansett. Except for the Waincoat Commercial Center, and perhaps the town's new senior citizens center, it's the biggest application in front of the Planning Department.

Mr. Dalene explained that the planning board had asked the Z.B.A. for non-binding comments, which would give the yacht club an indication of whether

major revisions would be required before continuing the process, and had drafted comments that he hoped his board would endorse.

"The Z.B.A. views that the application, with the adjustments made by the applicant, meets both the area and N.R.S.P. standards," he wrote. "The applicant, working with the Planning Department, and planning board, has demonstrated that the benefit to the town and the environmental conditions have been met. All reasonable alternatives have been considered. The Z.B.A. recognizes that three major concerns of the planning board are reduction of the tennis courts, amount of grading and proximity to the wetlands, and offshore housing."

Denise Savarese, the Z.B.A. vice chairwoman, and Theresa Berger, a board member, refused to follow their colleagues' lead. (June Mehting, another board member, recused herself from the application.)

Ms. Savarese was unwilling to accept that the private membership club would

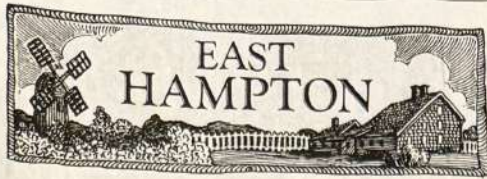
not consider removing one of its tennis courts, which would allow a more conforming location for the new buildings and better wetland setbacks for the parking area and driveways.

"They're asking for more but not wanting to give up anything," she said. "I think these are not the minimum variances necessary. It's one of the things we have to look at, and I think these are alternatives."

Devon, which has operated continuously for 108 years in buildings that pre-date zoning restrictions, is asking for 20 variances, some large, for the redevelopment. A December presentation by Anthony Pisca, one of the club's attorneys, highlighted the difficulty in redeveloping the parcel. Every direction yields an environmental constraint: nine-foot dunes and beach to the north, wetlands to the south, a boat basin to the east, road setbacks to the west.

The club appears unwilling to budge on its amenities.

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Place Names Project

Rick Whalen, a land-use attorney who has spent years researching place names in East Hampton Town, will talk on Friday, Feb. 28, about this ambitious project, which he will eventually publish as a comprehensive "Encyclopedia of East Hampton Place Names." Mr. Whalen's lecture, the second in a series of local history discussions sponsored by the East Hampton Historical Society, will be held at St. Luke's Episcopal Church's Hoie Hall at 7 p.m. Admission is free, but reservations are requested through the historical society's website.

On March 28, David Cataletto, a town trustee, will explore East Hampton's houses of worship. The series will conclude with an April 25 with a

look at the Fowler House by Hugh King, the town historian.

Out of Mexico

The East Hampton Library will show "Totem," a 2023 Mexican film, on Sunday at 2 p.m. Directed by Lila Aviles, it follows a 7-year-old girl through a life-changing day.

This is the final selection in the library's international series, but there are others in store this week at the library. Tomorrow at 3 p.m. it'll be "Sing," a 2016 drama about a school choir set in 1990s Budapest. Music is also a theme in Darius Marder's 2019 "Sound of Metal," a story of a drummer who begins to lose his hearing. It will be shown on Friday, Feb. 28, at 3 p.m.

All films are free, but reservations are requested through the library's website or the adult reference desk.

New at the Chamber

Members of the Greater East Hampton Chamber of Commerce elected new directors at a general membership meeting on Feb. 10 at Clinton Academy.

Gavin Menu, publisher of The Express News Group and 27East.com, was chosen as president, and Nicole Castillo, owner of WordHampton Public Relations, was elected vice president. Members chose Steve Long, executive director of the East Hampton Historical Society, as board secretary, and selected Robert Mangels, a vice president at Dime Bank, to continue as treasurer.

Barbara Layton, former owner of Babette's restaurant and the chamber's former president, was named president emerita and will remain on the board, as will Carl Trace, an attorney who also serves as Sag Harbor Village justice. He was previously the secretary. Susanne Kelly will continue as executive director.

Joining the board this year are Antonella Bertello of the Baker House 1650, Carolyn Brody of BookHampton, Lori Chemla of Cassia's Bakery, Amy Kirwin of Guild Hall, Zachary Minskoff of Minskoff Studios, Annie Palmer of the Roundtree resort, Daniel Schock of The Times Review MediaSouthforker, and Mark Smith of Highest Man Hospitality.

The chamber represents members in East Hampton, Amagansett, Springs, Wainscott, and Nantauk.



At St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Tuesday, from left, Jesus Padilla, Courtney Spellman, Minerva Perez, and Erika Padilla led a workshop for Oakview Highway mobile home park residents to learn about their rights as tenants. Denis Hartnett

OLA Advises Mobile Home Park Residents

BY DENIS HARTNETT

Residents of the East Hampton Village manufactured home community on Oakview Highway gathered at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Tuesday night for a workshop facilitated by Organización Latino Americana de Eastern Long Island on how to fill out tenant complaint forms that will help them use their collective voice to hold the park's management company R.H.P. to greater accountability.

OLA has been working with residents of the community since last summer after they became fed up with the frequent and extensive power outages that have been ongoing for several years.

"This complaint form will be the closest way and the strongest way, if we do it together, for R.H.P. to do the thing it's supposed to do . . . to make sure it's healthier, safer, that you're able to be in a place that has good roads, regular electric, heat, septic, water," said Minerva Perez, OLA's executive director.

"We're not providing legal advice

tonight," said Courtney Spellman, an attorney with Legal Services of Long Island, "but we're giving you information so that you can proceed and consider what you're going to do with your complaint going forward."

Ms. Perez and Ms. Spellman led the workshop along with Erika Padilla, one of OLA's legal advocates, and Jesus Padilla, a paralegal with Legal Services of Long Island.

They walked the residents through a complaint form from the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

While Ms. Perez read a summarization of the tenants' rights, and Mr. Padilla translated from English, some of the rights resonated with the residents who attended, particularly "the right to have essential services furnished at all times, including water, electricity, and heat" and "the right to reasonable notice of any planned disruption of services."

Many residents spoke about their experiences with the expensive power losses, as well as the last-minute notice they

would receive. Many lost household appliances like refrigerators, washers, and dryers to the outages and surges. According to Ms. Spellman, "reasonable notice" in the eyes of the court is generally considered to be at least "24 to 48 hours," and any violation of any of these rights can be included in the form.

The complaints will be submitted in bulk by both email and regular mail. Additionally, copies will be sent to the New York State Attorney General's office.

"I think it's important to know," Ms. Spellman added, "in my experience when tenants have filed complaints that if there is a mistake on there or not enough information, it doesn't kill the complaint; they will contact you."

OLA is aiming to collect the complaint forms in two weeks. Residents interested in filing one out should contact OLA.

Additionally, the workshop leaders wanted people to know that according to state law, all tenants have "the right to be from retaliation if you make a complaint or join a tenant association."



How do you lift a house that's almost 300 years old? Very, very carefully.

Durrell Godfrey

Rowdy Hall Is on a Roll

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village design review board didn't need to review the application.

A front-page article in The Star from 1926 speaks to the origin of the name.

"It was the home of Henry Osborn, born in 1762, when it stood between the Presbyterian church and the David Hunting homestead. In later years it passed into the hands of Deacon David Hunting, by whom it was rented to many families in succession. After the death of Deacon Hunting for a number of years Miss Annie Hunting conducted a summer boarding house within its walls, and later it was used as bachelor lodgings for summer boarders of the neighborhood. At this period the old house was dubbed 'Rowdy Hall.'"

"For all of us, it's a passion project," said Ms. Douglass, who was in one sense born into preservation, growing up as she did in a historic neighborhood in Brooklyn Heights, among old moldings and fireplaces. "I like old. You feel the

people who came before you. I think the village is proud of it. People stop and take pictures. I used to have roses in front, until deer ate them. People noticed; they really care about the house. I feel I'm its custodian, and I've kept it very simple."

"It really is daunting to take on a project of that magnitude," said Ms. Broberg Smith. "We owe Ms. Douglass a round of applause for taking the leap as a conscious steward and saving Rowdy Hall for all of us to enjoy. I've gotten so many texts from people saying thank you to me. The community is definitely appreciative of it."

"One night I was at the Baker House, just staring up at their exposed timber beams," said Ms. Douglass. "A man noticed, and we got into a conversation about preservation. There are a lot of people out here who want to build those really big houses, but there are plenty who really love the feel and look of the past, too."

"The most modern thing that I have is a screen that comes down in the living room so we can watch movies at night," she added. "I don't have a hedge. I'm very much on view. I like being out in the open, until people ask me what I was watching the night before. There's a certain old-fashionedness, not just to the house, but to the landscaping, and the idea of community. I wish more people would take their hedges down."

"The structure is a delightful representation of 'shelter' and 'home,'" said Ms. Broberg Smith. "The beauty is that it doesn't need to be anything more than just that. It's perfect, and its inherent imperfections make it more lovely, just like all of us. The inside is like a dollhouse. It's so beautiful."

Ms. Douglass hopes the work is done by the summer. "I hope this tradition will continue. I feel it's important for East Hampton to preserve these old babies. The house just has a really good feeling when you're inside."

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What is your plan to do with what you love most? M.Olive

The 1922 Wreck of Eagle Boat 17

BY JULIA TYSON

