

SECTION VIII - LOCAL COMMITMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

During the drafting of the Town's LWRP, an effort was made to involve a wide-range of people in the inventory and analysis of coastal resources. Local officials, private citizens, committees and agency representatives were asked for their input. As a result of this public involvement, attention was focused on the key issues that are articulated in this document.

Community involvement in the LWRP process started with meetings of the Town's Local Waterfront Advisory Committee during the late 80s and early 90s. This was supplemented by a wide-ranging research and education effort that included: meetings with Town department heads, alone and in group sessions, one-on-one interviews with sources in other agencies and in the private sector, including representatives of the Town's park districts. The process of informing people and obtaining their input took place in person, through correspondence, and more recently via e-mail.

Public discussions of the draft sections of this report were held with the Town Board, and there were several presentations made for the public benefit, particularly about some of the component programs and legislation. Public input was actively solicited on specific policies and legislation that were pursued as part of the development of this LWRP. For instance, key sections of the LWRP were the focus of a separate, targeted outreach effort which consisted of public presentations, a television show and public discussions at Town Board meetings. These projects included: the *Geographic Information System Project*, the *Farm and Farmland Protection Strategy*, the *Water Supply Management & Watershed Protection Strategy* and the *Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*. At all points along the public outreach process, the relevancy of the purpose and objectives of the targeted program were explained in relation to the broader purposes and objectives of the LWRP. Throughout, there has been fairly extensive press coverage of both the program itself and some of the component programs. Notes or records of most meetings are on file in the archival records of the Town Clerk.

There have also been uncounted meetings, correspondence, and telephone calls between Planning Department personnel working on the LWRP and interested citizens. A small number of private citizens and government officials offered a considerable amount of personal time to share expertise, provide facts and background material and to proof copy. Much of the research took place at business meetings and public forums where one-on-one conversations provided unexpected insight into the issues addressed by the LWRP. The cumulative verbal and written comments have resulted in a great number of beneficial changes and revisions to this document.

Through the years that this document has been in formation, the public outreach process has dealt with the initial resistance that was first encountered. Early public impressions of the concept of coastal zone management were not favorable. The coastal management program, as it was commonly perceived during the mid-1980s, was dismissed as being too urban in its focus, and, perhaps most importantly, too regulatory. The strong home rule traditions of Southold's residents surfaced early and loudly. Initially there was only tentative support for a federally-mandated program, even if the State of New York's approach was to let the Town write the plan. Many people feared that adoption of a LWRP would result in the Town losing control over resources it had husbanded for more than 350 years.

After a decade of dialogue, there has been a shift in public thinking. While naysayers still exist, as key policies and legislation were adopted by the Town Board, the program has come to benefit from a deepening level of both understanding and commitment. Perhaps the most significant evidence of this was the Town Board's decision on March 19, 1997, to petition for the inclusion of the entire Town within the jurisdiction of the LWRP. This decision meant a considerable degree of extra work and thought would have to be expended to develop the LWRP. A number of highly significant policies and legislation were initiated and adopted as a result of this decision. The reader is referred to *Section II. B. Planning Framework* for a brief discussion of the planning initiatives that were started and completed between 1997 and 2000.

Following is a brief summary of meetings and other public occasions which have resulted in a wide and substantive public airing of LWRP issues, and which is expected to provide broadened public understanding of, and support for LWRP initiatives.

B. TOWN WATERFRONT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On July 14, 1987, the Town Board appointed the Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) to provide public input into the development of the LWRP. Five citizen members were appointed. Representing a cross section of community interests the members included a baymen, a Chamber of Commerce representative, a real estate broker, a prominent environmental activist and a member of the Kenney's Beach Civic Association concerned with erosion issues on Long Island Sound.

The Southold WAC met from 1987 through 1997, typically on a monthly basis. The names and term of service of the members are listed below:

Steve Latson, Chairman 1987-1997
Peter W. Kren, Secretary 1987-1997
Bobra W. Wetmore 1987 (Replaced by Richard C. Wilton 1988 - 1997)
Franklin Bear 1987-1989 (Deceased. Replaced by William H. Lieblein 1989- 1997)
Donald J. Stanton 1987-1997

Other active participants during this time were:

Ellen Larsen, Councilwoman
Ruth Oliva, Councilwoman
Scott Dobriner, Graduate Student Intern, May – August 1989, July – December 1990

The meetings focused on four categorical areas:

- finding a primary focus for the program,
- re-defining the boundaries of the program area,
- defining the boundaries of the Reaches, and
- identifying key issues of concern within each Reach.

The members of the WAC were asked to solicit additional input from their neighbors, colleagues and fellow businessmen about specific issues of concern within the Reaches. The WAC meetings were informal working and discussion sessions that were open to the public and the

press. Non-members were encouraged to drop in to listen or share ideas. The work of this Committee provided a clear set of guidelines.

In the early year, the WAC coped with a series of challenging events, including lack of professional support staff, a mid-stream change of consultants and political controversy. In 1989 a capable intern, Scott Dobriner, was hired to do crucial fieldwork and to assist the WAC and the consultants in the preparation of a draft LWRP. By 1994, a Draft LWRP was mostly completed, and two other related studies on Harbor Management and Coastal Erosion had been started.

However, political dissension within Town government and dissatisfaction with the organization and content of the draft document contributed to a slow-down during the period 1994 through 1996. The consultant working on the project was phased out. Between 1996 and 1997, the WAC was unable to proceed further and it was disbanded by the Town Board in 1997. During all this time, meetings were held, open to the public. The records are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

Shortly thereafter, the decision was made to forego retaining consultants to finish the document and, instead, to write the text using existing Town staff. Since that time, the draft text underwent extensive reorganization, updating and fine-tuning in an intensive collaborative effort between the Department of State and the Town using existing Planning staff resources whenever time permitted.

A revised and much more detailed Draft Inventory and Analysis was submitted to the Town Board in December of 1999 for review and comment. Copies were made available to all the public libraries and the public. Aside from observations about typographical or factual errors, the general public feedback was positive.

The Department of State subsequently modified the cumbersome requirement that the Town address each of 44 statewide policies and reduced the number to 13 policies. From this point on, the internal dialogue between departments and boards that would be responsible for the implementation of this program took on a more focused tone, as changes in policies and procedures were debated and implemented. The internal dialogue is documented in a series of memorandums from the Town Planner to the Town Board, which are on file. With the completion of the remaining sections of this document, there will be a series of public information meetings to explain the LWRP, answer questions and obtain comments.

C. GOLDSMITH INLET/KENNEY'S BEACH WORKING GROUP

As an outgrowth of its work on the LWRP, in 1996 the Town Board formed a Work Group for the express purpose of further examining the shoreline erosion problems and proposed solutions to a particularly troublesome stretch of shoreline in the vicinity of Goldsmith's Inlet and Kenney's Beach. The west boundary of the area of concern was subsequently extended to the Riverhead/Southold Town line. The group also is known as the *Southold Erosion Mitigation Group*. The membership of the group was designed to reflect the interested and affected parties as well as the agencies with jurisdiction, to wit:

Town Board Liaison (Brian G. Murphy 1998 – 2001, Ruth D. Oliva 1996- 1998)
Town Board of Trustees (Henry P. Smith 1998 – 2001, John Holzapfel 1996 – 1998)
New York Department of State (Fred Anders 1996 – 2001)

New York Department of Environmental Conservation (William Daley and Lou Chiarella 1996 – 2001)
Suffolk County Department of Public Works (Richard LaValle 1996 – 2001)
Kenney’s Beach Civic Association (Donald Stanton 1996 – 2001)
Peconic Shores Civic Association (Edward Seidman 1996 – 2001)

In 1997, the Town Board added a Conservation Advisory Council member to the group.
Scott Hillary and Mary Griffen 1997 – 2001

In 1998, a study was commissioned whereby a Historic Shoreline Analysis and a Benefits/Analysis of various solutions were reviewed. Details of the outcomes of this study were given earlier in *Sections II. B. I., J.2., K. and Section V.*

The group continues to monitor the erosion situation on Long Island Sound.

D. PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public input into the development of the LWRP was encouraged by the open meeting format. Formal public meetings on the LWRP document have not been held for the document as a whole, but have been held and targeted to highlight specific sections of the LWRP, specifically in the area of policy. Most notable were the series of presentations, discussions, television shows, etc. held on the following proposals:

- Planning Initiative 2000,
- Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan,
- Geographic Information System Project,
- Farm and Farmland Protection Strategy,
- C.R. 48 Upzoning,
- Water Supply & Watershed Protection Strategy.

As was discussed earlier in *Section II.B. Planning Framework*, these projects took place parallel to the reorganization of the LWRP document, but were understood and presented as essential components designed to implement the Town’s final Local Waterfront Revitalization program. Every effort was made to explain the relationship of individual projects and plans to the overall purpose of the LWRP document. Records of public hearings for the above-noted policy and legislative proposals are on file in the Town Clerk’s office.

Discussion by the Town Board on the draft LWRP are recorded in the minutes of the Town Board and on file in the Town Clerk’s office.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

A large number of comments and suggestions, oral and written, were received over the years. Comments were received, both solicited and unsolicited from officials of state, regional, county and local agencies. Many suggestions have been incorporated into the LWRP, but the notes about the comments and the actual correspondence are not included here. Notes on verbal comments and copies of correspondence are on file in the Town Planning Board office as well as in the Town Clerk’s office.

F. PRESS AND OTHER MEDIA

The local press was recruited in the effort to explain various components of the LWRP. Due to the complexity and depth of the Town's program, it was necessary to focus on specific aspects of the plan for the purpose of public education and input.

The local Cablevision television station in Riverhead, Channel 70, televised many of the Town Board meetings and public presentations when LWRP issues or related policy programs (as discussed above) were agenda items. Further, Supervisor Jean W. Cochran used her monthly television show, *Town Talk*, on a number of occasions to explain to the public the purpose of the LWRP as well as the substance of specific aspects or policies of the programs.