



Long Island Regional Council  
Public Forum  
Suffolk County Community College  
Culinary Institute-Riverhead, NY  
October 3, 2011  
1:00pm to 4:00pm

Regional Council members in attendance: Vice Chair Kevin Law, Paulette Satur, Dr. Samuel Aronson, John R. Durso. The Natural Assets Work Group co-chair Carrie Meek Gallagher facilitator Peter Scully and liaison Aida Reyes-Kuehn also attended. Approximately 100 members of the public attended. The meeting began at 1:00pm.

Vice-Chair Kevin Law welcomed the public and introduced the following elected officials: State Senator LaValle; State Assemblyman Fred Thiele; Suffolk County Legislator Jay Schneiderman; Riverhead Town Supervisor, Sean Walters and Southampton Town Councilman Chris Nuzzi. He indicated that this was the third public forum sponsored by the Regional Council and made a presentation on the mission and tasks of the Regional Councils and provided an update on its deliberations. The following is a summary of the presentations by the various speakers.

**Senator Ken LaValle** identified EPCAL and Gabreski Airport as the two key economic engines and the last frontier on the East End of Long Island. He highlighted the need to pool resources from local, county and state governments in order to develop these sites. In addition, he identified farming and the wine and fishing industries as critical to the East End. He emphasized the need to: identify regulations that hamper the growth of agriculture, make sure that investments in these areas are sound, make sure the wine industry prospers, reduce the excessive regulations on the fishing industry. He also added that as the Chairman of the Higher Education Committee in the State Senate he understands the importance of high technology and its relationship to higher education and that the State should support the investment it made in SUNY in Southampton. In addition he stressed the fact that we need to make major investments in the environment since that is a critical part of the economy of the East End and that it must remain in as natural state as possible. He also stressed the fact that we should allow farming and fishing to prosper. He called for the creation of the Peconic

Institute to protect the interests of the East End and that the state legislature will continue to interact with the Regional Councils.

**Assemblyman Fred Thiele** recognized the fact that the Regional Council was on a tight schedule but recommended reviving the East End Economic and Environmental Task Force that he helped organized with former Governor Mario Cuomo in 1993. He suggested that the council consider creating a think tank for East End issues at Southampton College. Thiele added that transportation was another major issue for the East End and suggested a project to create bus and shuttle train lines across the area. He also said that repaving Montauk Highway should be a priority. He concluded by saying that East Enders should not have to sacrifice their way of life and that people come to Long Island to enjoy the environment and the quality of life it provides and that “our environment is our economy”. He provided a handout which will be incorporated in the record.

**Assemblyman Dan Losquadro** said that the area, which encompasses the largest district in New York State, is deserving of investment and identified projects such as the new rail spur at EPCAL and the rail hub at Brookhaven as good examples of projects that will alleviate traffic congestion on the Long Island Expressway. He added that we must streamline the building permitting process. He highlighted aquaculture, job training, the Hashamomuck Cove erosion issue, the protection of coastal environments and the importance of the County land preservation program as key issues for the East End. Finally he stressed the fact that the area suffers from too many regulations and jurisdictions and the duplicative process has to end since it creates delays in the development process.

**Supervisor Sean Walter** asked for help in creating a committee to fast-track development at EPCAL and that EPCAL is not only important for Riverhead but for the entire region and urged the creation of a Planning Commission to review proposals in 72 days and send the message that EPCAL is “open for business”. The commission would incorporate the results of a current study underway in the Town and will provide an umbrella permit to expedite the development process and that the members should be representatives from various organizations so it is not stacked with Riverhead representatives.

**Melrose Corley**, representing the Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau indicated she is pleased that the Regional Council’s mission statement is in alignment with the needs of women and unskilled workers and that key region’s key asset is its people. She indicated she could not attend the forum in Nassau County and wanted to express her concerns on the following issues: many job applicants are not skilled and are not prepared, that we need to re-invest in adults and enhance job training and employment to improve the quality of life of the citizens, the need to invest in women in the workplace so they become productive citizens, the need to enhance the skills of workers in lower skilled jobs.

**Daniel Albizu** spoke on behalf of the Brentwood Chamber of Commerce. He indicated that Brentwood is a family oriented community and that the Ducks baseball field and the Federal Courthouse were

originally planned for Brentwood but ended up somewhere else and that his group was supportive of the Hartland project since it would provide needed employment for the community.

**Luis Ramos** representing the Latin American Voters Club Brentwood indicated his group represents 1000 individuals and wanted to urge the Regional Council to consider the Hartland project and that it will bring incentives to the community.

**Kevin Law** clarified for the record that the Regional Council has not made a decision on the Heartland project.

**Peter Gallon**, representing the Long Island Sierra Club submitted written comments for the record. He spoke about energy, energy costs and renewable energy on Long Island and how these relate to jobs and the overall economy. Highlights of his presentation included the following: most electrical energy on Long Island comes from fossil fuels, high electric bills make living and working here difficult, most effective way to reduce costs is by reducing consumption, there are numerous benefits to energy efficiency, generating power locally can avoid transportation costs, energy efficiency programs can save LIPA customers money in the long run , that we have a choice to become a global innovator in the reduction of fossil fuels and that LIPA lacks the leadership needed and is moving on autopilot.

**Marcos Maldonado** represented the Youth Enrichment Services organization in Brentwood. He indicated Brentwood has been a leader in innovation in the past and that numerous corporations are thriving in the area. He stressed the notion that public benefits are greater than the individual group and that public investment in the Hartland project would come back to benefit the community.

**Peter Maniscalco**, representing the Renewable Energy Committee of Long Island indicated that LIPA is not taking full advantage of energy efficiency programs. He added that we will be tied to a fossil fuel agenda and that there has never been a cost benefit analysis done on LIPA's operations. He suggested that no new power plants be built until energy efficiency is addressed. He criticized LIPA for spending 46% of its budget on fuel, and that the US Department of Energy has indicated that that the North East can save from 30% to 50% in energy if buildings become energy efficient. He added that we need to start thinking in new ways in order to increase more energy efficiency.

**Ivan Young**, a resident of Brentwood indicated his support of the Hartland project in Brentwood. He indicated it is the only economic development project in a Hispanic community on Long Island. The project, he added, will stimulate the economy in the region and provide more money to the Brentwood schools, generate capital and will create housing and better roads around the community. He understands outstanding issues need to be resolved including a labor agreement, permitting and financing. He thinks these issues can be resolved and if the project is not in the Regional Council list it will hurt the people of Brentwood.

**Lynda Edwards** the widow of a commercial fisherman indicated that the East End “does not want government in our lives” and that government money means government involvement and that she supported lower taxes.

**Jean n Rochetta** representing the Childhood Council of Suffolk expressed her views regarding the importance of child care projects. She suggested that Gabreski and EPCAL provide incentives for on-site child care. Child care is important, she added because 90% of brain development occurs before the age of 5 and that society must invest on those first five years.

**Brian Lahiff** also represented the Childhood Council of Suffolk and indicated the importance of providing families with quality child care and that it makes it possible for parents to work and create jobs. He added that it is a \$600M industry and it keeps Long Island working.

**Denis Yuan** a Homeless Outreach Advocate agrees that EPCAL and Gabreski are key sites to economic development on the East End. He raised the issue of the Capital One back office operation closing in Mattituck and that incentive packages should be put together to re-use the building.

**Kevin McDonald**, representing the Nature Conservancy indicated that the notion that every region come up with a strategy is a very smart approach. The challenge is that it is a big race to make everything work better. He has an idea with low cost, high value return that achieves multiple objectives: a new septic system that would denitrify water better and improve the water quality. This would address the problem of too much nitrogen going into the waterways which affects water quality with algae blooms. He added that preliminary work on this system is in place, the technology exists and he is requesting support for a pilot project. A pilot project would help in the redevelopment of downtown Riverhead, which needs a sewer system upgrade.

**Karen Rivara**, an oyster farmer, spoke on behalf of the Shellfisher Preserve and indicated that a successful aquaculture operation requires clean water. She added that the aquaculture leasing program currently in effect in Suffolk County has been very successful and is a good way to start a shellfish farm. Economic development funds are needed to expand the program to scallops and hard clams since there is a market for them at local and NYC restaurants.

**Dominic Stanzione**, spoke on behalf of the Town of East Hampton. He highlighted the need for better telecommunications infrastructure on the East End. We have a lot of dead spots and that this issue should be included in a comprehensive analysis of telecommunications on the East End. He supports the creation of an oversight mechanism to trump local aesthetic advocates. He also brought to the attention of the Regional Council that the deer population is a big problem on the East End as well.

**Elaine Kahl**, a resident of Southampton said she realizes the area needs jobs, but was concerned that too much development would drive tourism and second-home owners away from the quality of life they are seeking on the East End. She suggested that more “Mom and Pop” shops should be encouraged in the area.

**Bonnie Cannon**, a Southampton Village Trustee, spoke on the need for jobs for the youth of the East End and that young adults returning from college do not have jobs available when they graduate. . She also said that lack of child care is inhibiting a lot of people from getting jobs and that the area should be more affordable for workers. The senior population is being neglected, she added and they need services they can afford.

**John Dunleavy** a Town of Riverhead Councilman agreed that EPCAL is critical for regional job growth and supports the rehabilitation of the rail spur which will take trucks off the LIE. As an example, he mentioned a plastic fence manufacturer, located at EPCAL, who will use the spur to transport raw materials. He also added that NYS regulations are a big problem and that often the regulations are changed mid- course and there is a need for consistency. He is supportive of the \$18M upgrade of the sewage treatment plant in Riverhead and that the waste that makes its way to the Peconic Bay affects oyster and clam seed beds.

**Chris Perugia** indicated that he is a proponent of a bio degradable corn-starch plastic that is currently in limited production. He said this technology will put farmers and chemists to work and preserve the environment. The plastic reverts to corn starch within two years and this will reduce the impact on landfills.

**Margrite Smith**, a member of the Shinnecock Indian Nation urged the Regional Council to make sure the concerns of the Indian Nation are taken into account and indicated she was concerned that they had not received a formal invitation to appear at the forum.

**Vice Chair Kevin Law** clarified for the audience that the event was well publicized in the local and regional media and that no one had received an individual invitation to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45pm