

NEIGHBORS SUE ON SHINNECOCK “PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT”

Say High Density Residential Development Helps Builders, Not Residents

For Immediate Release

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Shinnecock Neighbors -- both the group and the individuals, have filed suit in New York State Supreme Court to overturn approval of the controversial Planned Development District at the Shinnecock Canal.

The high-density development project proposed by the Rechler organization calls for 74,000 square feet of new residential development in an area that was designed for resort uses that featured local restaurants and amenities for the benefit of local residents.

The Southampton Town Board justified the density giveaway because of the developers' promise to "rehabilitate" the former Canoe Place Inn. Residents complain that the approval allows wastewater from the new development to be pumped from the new development to their neighborhood and that the promises involving the Canoe Place Inn do not include how the CPI will be owned and managed in the public's favor.

"PDDs are always good for the developers giving them density that looks more like Up-Island urbanization than the town we all call home," Dorothy Donohue, one of the residents added.

The suit argues that state environmental law prohibits benefitting a builder at the expense of the community. The Rechler deal cannot be justified because it benefits the developer at the expense of people who already live here.

"Right now, the public has enjoyed 300 years of access to the waterfront, but with a single vote of the Throne-Holst Administration, the interests of the community have been subordinated to the selfish interest of the development-at-any-cost crowd," said Richard Amper, Executive Director of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society which is working to eliminate PDDs to protect water quality and East End communities.

The "Neighbors" who are bringing the legal action include long-time residents who care about the maritime tradition of the area, commercial and recreational fisherman and residents who are committed to protecting wetlands, instead of compromising shellfishing and contributing to the decline in water quality throughout the Shinnecock ecosystem.

Jennifer Juengst, the attorney who is bringing the neighbors' case says, "The law is on our side. It's designed to protect the community, and while we respect the right of an up-island developer to make a profit, it should not be at the community's expense. We're being asked to give up too much."