Your Vision For Fishers Island’s Future

Please take the time to look at the now completed Land Use Chapter of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. Please pay particular attention to the section devoted to Fishers Island and specifically to the draft goals at the end of that section. The complete Plan can be found on FishersIsland.net and a printed version is available to review at the Museum and Library. The information about Fishers Island begins on page 31 of the Plan. Some highlights follow here:

Fishers Island

Fishers Island hamlet is a long, narrow island located at the eastern tip of Southold Town, about 12 miles northeast of Orient Point, and 4 miles from the coast of Connecticut. It is surrounded by Long Island Sound to the west, Fishers Island Sound on the north, and Block Island Sound to the south. Fishers Island is 2,586 acres in size, and about 7 miles in length.

Visiting Fishers Island is like going back in time. The pace is slower, there is little traffic, and everywhere is quiet and peaceful, except for the bustle of activity near the dock when the ferry lands. As an island, it’s challenges are different than the rest of Southold Town. Over a third of Fishers Island’s 2,586 acres are developed with residential land uses, most of which are single-family homes. An unusual statistic about Fishers Island is that 80% of those 660 homes are seasonal.

Another prominent feature of land use on Fishers Island is its recreation and open space, covering nearly 20% of the land. There are two golf courses, and considerable areas of natural lands preserved from future development. Another 26% of the land remains undeveloped, yet technically available for development in the future. There is no land in agricultural use, though there is active aquaculture for oysters conducted in the water on Fishers Island.

Commercial uses are spread out in several isolated pockets of non-residential zoning on the west end of the island, most located outside the small hamlet center. The hamlet center consists of several shops, a museum, and a municipal building.

Zoning on Fishers Island

The zoning on Fishers Island is unique in that it is the only place in Southold Town that has Residential 120 (R-120) zoning, otherwise known as “3-acre” zoning, which covers nearly 70% of the island. Nine of the nineteen zoning districts appear, with the R-120, R-80, and R-40 districts covering 2,262 of Fishers’ 2,586 acres. The commercial zoning is spread out into six areas with the two largest areas being the 18 acres of General Business (B) zone near the ferry, and the 13 acres of Limited Business (LB) zone along Crescent and Fox Avenues.

Buildout Analysis for Fishers Island

The theoretical buildout potential for Fishers Island can be estimated by looking at the current land available for development and the zoning.

There are approximately 854 acres of land available for development in Fishers Island. Of those 854 acres, there are 488 acres of land that can be further subdivided. Theoretically, if all were subdivided to their full yield, an additional 83 building lots would be created. The remaining 366 acres of...
land already exist as 196 individual vacant house lots. Added together they represent the theoretical buildout potential for Fishers Island of 279 housing units.

The majority, 70%, of those possible new housing units would be on house lots that already exist, while the other 83 potential house lots or 30% do not exist today, and would have to be created through the subdivision process. These buildout numbers are estimates based on the best available data. Many factors influence how much land will be subdivided, and how many homes will actually be constructed in the future. These factors include the economy, and the fact that much of the land that can be further subdivided is currently in use by the two golf courses on the island. In addition, many of the vacant house lots are located in the area controlled by the Fishers Island Development Corporation (FIDCO), and their future buildout is, in part, controlled by FIDCO. See the buildout analysis discussion in the first section of this chapter for more discussion on this topic.

**Goals/Issues for Fishers Island**
The residents of Fishers Island wish to maintain the island’s quiet, rural lifestyle and strong community networks that define its character. Maintaining and growing the year-round population and economy are crucial aspects of this vision, as are protecting its natural resources and limiting tourism to a sustainable level.

1. Facilitate a stable population of year-round residents on the island. The year-round population is dwindling, in part due to lack of jobs and lack of affordable homes.
   a. Create new housing at a price that is attainable for year-round residents. This topic is covered in more detail in the Housing Chapter of this plan.
   b. Create quality jobs; or
   c. Create or maintain efficient, affordable commuting options to the mainland.

2. Strengthen and diversify the economic base of the island to provide goods and services necessary for a year-round population, as well as to create quality local employment.
   a. Examine the zoning on Fishers Island to identify changes tailored to the island’s unique demographic and economic challenges. Goal #12 of the town-wide goals above addresses this issue by calling for an examination of the zoning town-wide. Fishers Island challenges are shared to some degree by all the hamlets, however due to the small size and isolation of the island, these challenges are intensified and probably require unique solutions.

The implementation of this goal for Fishers Island has a head start over other hamlets because of all the hard work done by the Land Use committee of Fishers Island citizens over the past two years identifying where zoning can be modified to better accomplish the goals of the island. This work will also complement and can be used in conjunction with the Fishers Island Community Board’s plans to create an action plan for the island.

3. Ensure the infrastructure on the island is in good repair, and used in a sustainable manner. This topic is covered in more detail in the Transportation and Infrastructure Chapter of this plan.

The Town Planners will be on the Island in May or June (date to be determined) to answer questions and receive comments on the chapter. One may also direct comments to Heather Lanza at heather.lanza@town.southold.ny.us. ~ Thank you, Louisa Evans
A group of our Island Treasures* escaped from the Island for the day on April 27 and had a lovely time enjoying some local culture, an afternoon filled with songs by Cole Porter and each others’ company.

The adventure began at a Union Chapel lunch and, after some investigating with IPP Board Member Polly Heaney, the ladies discovered that Island Peoples Project (IPP) had some funds set aside for senior enrichment. Fran Roethgen, with help from Mary Ski, planned a fabulous day “in America”.

Boarding the 8:15 ferry, the first stop was the Florence Griswold Museum, ‘The home of American Impressionism’, in Old Lyme, CT. The knowledgeable museum docent Sue Aberbach led the Fishers Island group through the boarding house and shared many interesting antidotes about the artists who lived and worked there, as well as the life of Florence Griswold. This was followed by a tour of the garden and museum and the varied collections the museum is proud to hold.

Next, they headed north to East Haddam where the group of 16 had a delicious lunch at La Vita Gustosa before strolling across the street to the Goodspeed for an outstanding musical performance of Anything Goes. Several actors ‘stole the show’ but it was agreed that stand-outs included Rashidra Scott in her role as Reno, David Scott as Billy, Stephen DeRosa as Moonface, and Trixie the dog! The voices, the dancing, and the acting this cast shared with the audience was outstanding as the band ‘played on’ from the top deck of the ship.

As the group relaxed on the 6:15 ferry back home, all were imagining what fun adventure would be the next escape! Grateful thank yous go to the IPP Board for making this day a reality for so many. A special thank you also goes to Fran from organizing this special trip.

Please attend Fishers Island’s Waste Management District’s next monthly meeting at 5:15 pm, Monday, May 23, 2016 at the Community Center.

We are eager to answer your questions about our Capital Project and we want to keep you informed.
May Gardening

From Mélie’s Garden: This and That

Spring has arrived on Fishers Island! The magnolia and cherry trees are all in full bloom and the shad is about to follow. Flower beds are being cleaned up and perennials and some harder annuals will be safe to plant after the full moon on the 21st. Cool weather vegetables like peas, lettuce and spinach can be planted, but the squash family and tomatoes should wait until Memorial Day or early June. All new plantings need to be well protected from the wind, which blows over the cold water. It is quite opposite in the fall when the warm water works as an insulator and some plants thrive well into November.

Race Rock has a beautiful new outside retail space – built by JR Edwards and Mike George this winter – which is awaiting the first delivery of plants next week before Mother’s Day on May 8th. The delivery will include perennials and some hardier annuals. The more tender annuals, vegetables, and herbs will be available for sale on Memorial Day weekend.

Also, on Saturday, May 28th of Memorial Day weekend, the Union Chapel will have native plants for sale that have been grown by the Union Chapel Church School. Jeff Edwards helped the children plant Butterfly Weed, Joe Pye Weed, Milkweed, Asters and Lupine seeds in small pots this winter. The plants have matured in his greenhouse and are ready to be sold. So stop by the Fair and buy some to put in your garden. All of these wonderful plants will attract butterflies and beneficial insects to your property.

Last month, I wrote about sending a soil sample from my vegetable garden to the University of Connecticut Department of Plant Science. This week, I received the report back and it stated that my garden was “above optimum” in calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus, but it was “low optimum” in potassium. In researching how to add potassium in an organic way to the soil, I found that lemon and orange rinds and banana peels were high in potassium and could be buried around plants to bring the potassium levels up. I could just imagine the creatures that might find that practice attractive and would dig the peels up instantly. So, I thought I might collect the rinds and peel and cut them all up in the Cuisinart. I think the mixture might become less attractive to invading creatures and will decompose more quickly for the plants to absorb. I will try this experiment this summer and report back. Or I could up the potassium levels the easy way and buy a potash fertilizer 0/0/30 and forget the home remedy, but it wouldn’t be quite as organic and interesting to try.

Another thing mentioned, in the report was that “Fishers Island has been flagged by the USDA APHIS for golden nematodes. If you send future soil samples, there is a $20.00/sample destruction fee in addition to the charge of the nutrient analysis”. I had never heard this before and looked up golden nematodes and found that they are prevalent in potato farms. To my knowledge, we don’t have any potato farms on the Island, and golden nematodes have not been found here. But Eastern Long Island is still full of potato farms or the remains of them and Fishers Island is part of Suffolk County, Long Island. It seemed obvious to me that “our red golden nematode flag” was just one more thing that the island must suffer with our weird governmental attachment to Long Island.

HLF Museum Director Pierce Rafferty presents a preview of the Museum’s 2016 Exhibit “Mansion House Hotel and Cottages” at the April Senior Luncheon. The exhibit opening is June 25, 2016 – 5:00-7:00 pm.
Recently one of our Officers assigned to the Eastern Sector of the Marine District was on patrol at Miller Pond in Waterford when he came across an osprey with a very interesting story to tell.

The officer learned that the osprey he located was a seven-year-old male named “Edwin” who was outfitted with a leg band and a solar-powered satellite transmitter. After doing some research the Officer learned that Edwin was tagged on May 11th 2013 on Fishers Island, NY by a Wildlife Biologist and Biology Professor Rob Bierregaard at The University of North Carolina who was conducting research on the migration patterns of Ospreys. Edwin is an osprey who calls Connecticut home, specifically the East Lyme/ Waterford area.

On August 16th Edwin departed Connecticut and began his annual migration south. Biologists were initially concerned as Edwin was migrating nearly a month earlier than normal. Nevertheless, Edwin travelled south along the east coast through Florida, stopping occasionally in Cuba, Florida Keys and the Dominican Republic. Edwin continued on south through the Caribbean Sea and toward South America travelling through both Columbia and Venezuela. Edwin’s transmitter lost service for several weeks as he travelled through Venezuela, but he was relocated on Valentine’s Day as he travelled past the Rio Solimoes (upper branch of Amazon River). Edwin spent his winter months along the Amazon River and Solimoes River located in the northern and western regions of Brazil. Edwin returned to Connecticut on April 2nd after having traveled over 5,000 miles.

Unfortunately, this migration was Edwin’s last as he passed away shortly after his return to Waterford. An average osprey lifespan is anywhere from five to ten years of age, and in terms of Osprey years, Edwin was an old bird. An old bird with an amazing story. For more information on Edwin’s life and migration you can visit the H.L. Ferguson Museum website.

Help us get it up and running!

We made it through the winter and the fund goal has almost been reached with gifts from our generous donors including individuals, the Sanger Fund, the Fishers Island Fire Department’s Emergency Operations Service (EOS) and a commitment letter from the Town of Southold. Funds raised total $36,800 toward the $45,000 initial goal. Please consider making a gift today to fill the gap of $8,200 for installation. Funds raised over the goal will go to Emergency Shelter needs such as supplies, blankets, and food stock. Checks can be made to the Fishers Island Fire Department with ‘Emergency Generator’ in the check Memo, or online at: www.gofundme.com/g6bk8sbg Thank you in advance!
IN MEMORIAM: JOHN CALVIN GOSS

John Calvin Goss was born on Thanksgiving Day, November 24th, 1927, on Fishers Island, New York. Eager to join the party, John was born just after his mother served lunch, causing her to exclaim, “Oh what a bird we have this year!” Eighty-eight extraordinary years later, he passed away peacefully on March 3rd, 2016. His faith, family, and hard work were the foundation of his life.

John was born to Leland Harold Goss of Whitehall, New York, and Alice Dunn Goss of County Cork, Ireland, and was a grandson of Etta and Charles Goss of Wallingford, Vermont.

John graduated from Fishers Island High School in 1945 and was the only male in a class of four.

John attended The College of Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, and majored in economics. After graduation, John worked his way through law school at Boston University. Graduating in the top of the class allowed him to enter officer training school for the Navy, where he served as a volunteer for two years. John took a position with Shell Oil in Houston because he was enamored with the movie Giant. But better than finding oil, he found the love of his life, Jacqueline Ehlers, “across a crowded room” at an Allegro ball.

Wanting to be his own boss, he then founded John C. Goss Realty Company, where he worked tirelessly for almost five decades. John specialized in River Oaks homes, and through his work came to know and love so many people in the community. John’s motto for his company reflected his motto for life: “Home is where the heart is.” Whether in Houston or Fishers Island, he always tried to make everybody feel at home and part of the family. John was a member of River Oaks Country Club, Hay Harbor Club in Fishers Island, Allegro, and Revelers.

John was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 54 years, his parents, and his brother, Edward Goss. He is survived by his three daughters, Alice Marie Goss, Suzanne Emerence Goss, and Jacqueline Goss Cathriner; Jacqueline’s husband William Walter Cathriner II, and their daughters Anne Amsler Cathriner and Virginia Goss Cathriner; his sister-in-law, Jane Hotchkiss Goss; his niece Janet Markley and her husband Sanford; his nephew Lee Goss and his wife Jane; his sister-in-law Suzanne Ehlers Parker, her husband Wesley, and their children Emy Parker Johnson and Jack Ehlers Parker; and multiple great-nieces and nephews.

The family would like to express its unending gratitude to Cynthia Robinson, Beverly Ferguson, Aurelia Alvarez, Carolyn Washington, Darlene Allen, and Mary Nell Moore, all of whom gave their loving care to Mr. Goss.

The memorial service was conducted at St. Anne’s Catholic Church in Houston, TX. Another service will be held on Fishers Island, NY.

In lieu of customary remembrances, the family requests memorial contributions be made to St. Anne’s Catholic Church, 2140 Westheimer Road, Houston, TX 77098; or to Our Lady of Grace Church, PO Box 425, Fishers Island, NY 06390; or to a Fishers Island charity of your choice, which can be found at FishersIsland.net.

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IPP MORNING PROGRAM 2016

Be an IPP Counselor this summer! IPP has openings for counselors age 14 and up. Contact Director Sarah Scoville at IPPFINY@gmail.com today!

Registration for the 2016 IPP Morning Program opened April 11 for year-round residents of the Island, and May 1 for seasonal residents. This year, the IPP Morning Program will run Monday through Friday from 9:00-12:00, from Tuesday July 5th through Friday August 19th.

FISHERS ISLAND TO REACTIVATE WOMEN’S AUXILIARY

We are exploring whether it’s worthwhile to revive the Sons and the Auxiliary – although there are less than 10 year-round veterans eligible for the Legion (that we know of!), there are several eligible and interested people for the Sons and Auxiliary. Getting their energy and resources could really improve our ability to maintain our facilities and introduce programming! To begin, we would like to see if there is interest in re-establishing the Women’s Auxiliary. Please contact Liz Burnham or Tim Patterson to find out more!

PETER SANGER MEMORIAL MARATHON

Organized by the Fishers Island Fire Department, the marathon will be held on Sunday, May 29th. Registration starts at 8:00 am at the Fire House and the race starts at 9:00. VOLUNTEER: In addition to race participants, drivers who can transport runners to the various starting points are always needed and welcome. There will be free baked goods and drink for all the runners. If you would like to contribute some baked goods please contact Mary Ski.

UNION CHAPEL’S ANNUAL SPRING FAIR

Saturday, May 28, 10am-1pm Among the usual offerings at the fair, this year the church school children have planted wildflowers, with assistance from Jeff Edwards, to help our local species thrive. Some of the varieties of wildflowers on sale for planting in your island garden include Butterfly Weed, Joe Pye Weed, Milkweed, Lupine, and Asters - plants our insects and butterflies love.

ISLAND JOB POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Many job openings are listed on FishersIsland.net (in Classifieds at the top right). Full-time, seasonal and part-time opportunities are listed from a wide variety of companies and island organizations – for all ages. Please check them out and spread the word!
The Alfred R. Grebe Post 1045 of the American Legion will host its annual Memorial Day Parade and cookout on Sunday, May 29th.

The parade will depart the Legion at noon, with the cookout to follow the village green ceremony.

Volunteer cooks are welcome – please contact Legion Manager Deb Doucette at 788-5508.