

September 4, 2020

Planning Board  
Town Board  
53095 Main Road  
Southold, NY 11971

Re: Change of zone application for Fishers Island submitted by Walsh Park Benevolent Association (SCTM# 1000-9-10-10)

Dear Members of the Planning Board and Town Board:

I am a year-round resident of Fishers Island and I have lived here for 35 years. Let me say that I am very much in favor of the zoning change for the proposed Walsh Park purchase of land from the Fishers Island School and future building of affordable housing.

The piece of land in question is largely sandwiched between existing school housing and was, according to original Fort Wright maps, developed with as many as 12 small houses. It is my belief that most of the objection to the zoning change is not the style of house built there, it's simply that they do not want any houses built there at all. If you built the site back with the same number of small houses that were originally there I wonder if any zone change would be required at all as the land in question, it would seem, would be existing non-conforming lots from the original Fort Wright design. I agree that there would need to be some upgrades to the utilities but from my understanding the FI Utility Company and Walsh Park have agreed to resolve this matter with no cost to the surrounding neighbors.

Walsh Park and the School have been, and continue to be, the only supporters of affordable housing on Fishers Island and without their efforts the year-round community would not have nearly the numbers it has today. As an example: out of 11 current Emergency Medical Technicians on Fishes Island, five own or rent in Walsh Park housing, four rent from School housing, one lives in IHP housing and only one owns a home not connected with one of these organizations.

I believe with the demand for seasonal housing driving up the cost of current housing that if we do not support endeavors such as this that Fishes Island, as we know it today, will become a truly seasonal community with all of the support staff commuting every day from the mainland. This could and would be an end to such valuable resources as the volunteer Fire Department / EMTs and eventually the closing of the School.

In closing I must say it seems that with the continuing need for year round housing, is this perhaps not just a case of “we completely support the idea of year round affordable housing”, just not in my back yard.

Sincerely,

Paul Giles  
516-790-5813