

Peter Chapman
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Southold Town Board
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Dear Board Members:

Nothing is more critical to the health and vitality of the entire Fishers Island community than a robust year-round population. This group forms the core of every single essential service that islanders rely on - fire department, EMTs, utility workers, teachers, postal employees, ferry and freight operations. And nothing is more important to attracting new families to the island than affordable housing. The year-round population has been in decline over the past thirty years, and among the reasons for this decline is the scarcity of housing. Given the master plan developed for the east end of the island which limits increasing the number of buildable lots, demand for what little housing inventory that does exist far outstrips the supply, thereby driving prices up.

Walsh Park Benevolent Association has been the lynchpin in expanding the inventory of affordable housing with the most recent example being the conversion of the second story of the freight operations building into six apartments. Their request for a change in zoning to allow for the construction of additional housing units fits its mission and would yield immeasurable benefit to the island.

Walsh Park's plan is in keeping with the character of the neighborhood which provides existing utilities and services, and it would be an excellent use of the property and provide much needed financial support for the school.

In its deliberations of this issue, I hope the Town Board will consider the important benefit this change of use will afford the island.

Respectfully,

Peter Chapman