

Supervisor Vecchio, Members of the Board:

My name is Mike Kozyrski, I reside at 53 Cleremont Avenue in St. James and I am also the Commodore of the Smithtown Bay Yacht Club.

For the past few years, Club members and all other Smithtown boaters have become increasingly concerned about the potential tragedy of a boater in distress out in the Bay or Sound during a low-tide period when emergency personnel might be unable to reach them.

As Mr. Barnett recently noted in a Newsday article: *"If there was a medical emergency out in Smithtown Bay, it would be virtually impossible to get back into dock for about two hours on either side of low tide"*.

We absolutely agree with his conclusion. If boaters in distress can't get back in and emergency personnel can't get out, then public safety is jeopardized and lives may well hang in the balance. This is simply unacceptable.

We recognize that getting this dredging done will not be easy and understand that there are various environmental concerns which must be addressed. But as difficult as this may be it pales in comparison to your primary obligation as Town officials to protect the health and safety of your constituents.

We ask only that you undertake the most strenuous effort possible with the Suffolk DPW to move this project forward in the most expeditious manner and we gladly offer both our support and assistance to make this channel dredging happen. And when it does happen, close to a thousand Town boaters will enthusiastically thank you for your efforts on their behalf.

REMARKS OF KEVIN ROONEY, SMITHTOWN BAY YACHT CLUB,
TO THE SMITHTOWN TOWN BOARD...IN RE. DREDGING THE SMITHTOWN BAY
CHANNEL...AUGUST 9, 2016

Supervisor Vecchio, Members of the Town Board:

My name is Kevin Rooney and, since 1970, I have lived at 5 Samuel Street in Nesconset.

For the past 30 years, I have also been a member of the Smithtown Bay Yacht Club and I am proud to serve on its Board of Governors. For many years I owned a 22ft sailboat and participated in the weekly inter-club races between the Smithtown, Stony Brook and Kings Park Clubs. These races, wherein dozens of sailboats would compete, are now a thing of the past as it has become impossible for sailboats to enter or exit Smithtown Bay except at high tide. In fact, there are now less than half-a-dozen sailboats left in the Town Marina!

While no-one should be particularly concerned that sailboat races are no longer held, it begs a far greater question as to "why".

For all of the time that I have been a boater, exiting or entering the Smithtown Bay Channel has been an ongoing problem. Today, however, it is no longer simply a transit problem or navigational hazard; due to decades of inaction and inattention by the Suffolk County DPW, it is now a serious public safety hazard which increases exponentially every day that the problem remains unaddressed.

Navigation charts for Smithtown Bay (Attachment A) show a low-water depth of between 4-5 feet but, as any boater will tell you, that is a joke when we all know that low-tide depths in the channel are oftentimes a foot or less.

Town officials...from Supervisor Vecchio to Environment and Waterways Director Russ Barnett...must be commended for their persistence in repeatedly requesting that

the County DPW prioritize the dredging of this Channel. But, to date, these persistent entreaties appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

We are also cognizant of the fact that the Town will have to amend a number of existing policies and ordinances incorporated into its Local Waterfront Revitalization Act in order to lay the groundwork for the possibility of such dredging. Amending local ordinances is oftentimes a difficult task; but I refuse to accept that the challenge is insurmountable if the Town government is fully committed to making those changes necessary to achieve a far greater good.

In this regard, and in compliance with Objective 1 of the Draft Outline of the proposed Town Waterfront Revitalization Program revisions designed to enhance community involvement and outreach, we respectfully request that a designee of the Smithtown Bay Yacht Club be named to the Waterfront Advisory Committee.

If the much needed dredging of this critical channel is ultimately to happen, the Town must forcefully present and fully document its case, before the County Dredge Project Screening Committee. As DPW Commissioner Gilbert Anderson stated in recent correspondence (Attachment B) with one of your constituents:

“The Town must verify the public purpose for this work as well as identify the area within Smithtown Bay being requested to be dredged. This information must include the proposed channel layout (detailing length, width, depth, coordinates of said location), sediment cores in accordance with NYSDEC requirements, as well as documentation providing a final disposal site for the material dredged. The Town must provide this information, along with, any aerial photo, map or site plan to further detail the proposed dredging.”

Furthermore, in order to lay to rest concerns that limited dredging of the Bay Channel may have adverse impacts on either Stony Brook or Porpoise Channels during periods of high tide, the hydrographic survey proposed but stalled in 2002 needs to be completed. Only then will the adjacent Villages and Towns, the County, the DEC, and all

interested parties be able to determine at what specific point restrictions to tidal flow actually occur and thus be able to determine whether or not the requirement for a negative declaration of adverse environmental impacts under SEQRA can be met.

In conjunction with the Stony Brook Yacht Club, we have requested that the County Executive, the DPW Commissioner, and the Chair of the Dredge Project Screening Committee expeditiously consider and prioritize the dredging of the Smithtown Bay channel, as the Town has also requested.

As both residents and boaters, we stand ready to do anything we can to support the Town's efforts in this regard. But the simple fact of the matter is that the *"ball is now in your court"* to do what is needed to make dredging the Smithtown Bay Channel a reality...and, once it is dredged, to have it placed on a regular 5 year dredging schedule.

As I have said repeatedly, an unforeseen medical or other event at low-tide is a tragedy simply waiting to happen. On behalf of all boaters in our Town, I beg you not to let this happen.

set B is reproduced from NOAA chart # 12364, August/04. Scale 1:40,000. Soundings in Feet.

ATTACHMENT B

From: rmpl22@aol.com
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2016 1:39 PM
To: Kevin Rooney
Subject: Fwd: Smithtown Channel

Just wanted to forward the letter that was sent in reply to our dredging request help letter.

Rosanne Vorrasi

-----Original Message-----

From: Anderson, Gilbert <Gilbert.Anderson@suffolkcountyny.gov>
To: rmpl22 <rmpl22@aol.com>
Sent: Fri, Jul 22, 2016 9:42 am
Subject: RE: Smithtown Channel

Mr. & Mrs. Vorrasi:

Thank you for taking the time to write me on this matter. Suffolk County Department of Public Works takes dredging and the maintenance of navigational channels very seriously. We currently maintain 73+ channels in various waterbodies throughout the County, dredging 250,000 - 300,000 cubic yards annually. Our dredge program has an annual capital budget ranging between \$5,000,000 - \$7,000,000 for contracted work as well as an operating budget of \$3,600,000 for dredging using our own forces and equipment.

That being said, as you may be aware, Smithtown Bay is outside of the County's current jurisdiction of navigation channels. As such, the County's dredging review process requires that the request be brought before the Suffolk County Dredge Project Screening Committee (DPSC) by the Town. The Town must verify the public purpose for this work as well as identify the area within Smithtown Bay being requested to be dredged. This information must include the proposed channel layout (detailing length, width, depth, coordinates of said location), sediment cores in accordance with NYSDEC requirements, as well as documentation providing a final disposal site for the material dredged. The Town must provide this information, along with, any aerial photo, map or site plan to further detail the proposed dredging.

Once confirmed, the DPSC meeting will be scheduled and the Town of Smithtown can make its case. When and if the projects are approved by DPSC, the Department of Public Works will request the necessary funding to allow work to begin towards obtaining the necessary permits and move these projects into the Capital Program.

Please be advised that it is this Departments understanding that the Towns Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) precludes new dredging in Smithtown Bay. Additionally we have been advised that should Smithtown Bay be dredged, there is the potential for significant negative impacts to the estuary with Stony Brook Harbor. These issues may preclude any decision from DPSC, as well as limit our ability to obtain the requisite permits.

I hope that this information is helpful to you.

Gil Anderson

Gilbert Anderson, P.E.
Commissioner, Suffolk County
Department of Public Works
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