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**DEPARTMENT OF LAND PRESERVATION
TOWN OF SOUTHOLD**

TO: Leslie K. Weisman, ZBA Chairperson
FROM: Melissa Spiro, Land Preservation Coordinator *MS*
DATE: January 29, 2021
SUBJECT: Request for Comments – ZBA #7463
Suffolk County Energy Storage II, LLC
SCTM# 1000-45.-5-1

Thank you for referring the above mentioned application to me for review and comment.

The subject property is located within an environmentally sensitive area and the preservation efforts by many entities reflects this. Years of preservation efforts have resulted in over 325 acres in the immediate area being permanently preserved for purposes of open space preservation and public access. Numerous public and private entities, including Federal, State, County, Town, The Nature Conservancy and the Group for the East End, have contributed to this effort, spending over 12.7 million dollars to acquire and improve these properties for open space purposes and public access.

The subject property shares two boundary lines with County parkland which is part of the 160+ acres of preserved lands known as the Pipes Cove Preserve. The subject property is across the street from 165+ acres of preserved lands known as Arshamomaque Preserve. Many of the properties within the Pipes Cove Preserve have similar zoning designations (LI and LIO) as that of the subject property, establishing precedent for preservation of properties within all zoning districts in this area.

The subject site, and other properties in the immediate area, are included on numerous lists for potential preservation, including the Town's Community Preservation Plan, Suffolk County's Open Space Master List, the DEC's Open Space Plan and the Peconic Estuary Partnership Critical Lands Protection Strategy. Preservation efforts in this area have been ongoing for years, and it is expected that preservation will continue in this area.

The Land Preservation Committee reviewed the proposal for the subject site. The Committee hopes that a less environmentally sensitive site, and one outside of an area of such significant existing and potentially future preservation efforts, can be found for this proposed use.

Maps showing the extent of preservation in the area are included with this memo.

John Sepenoski, GIS Technician/Land Management Coordinator, has provided information pertaining to the significant Bay to Sound Project in the immediate area. The Bay to Sound Project encompasses lands adjacent to, and in the vicinity of, the subject parcel. New public trails were established in this area and opened to the public in 2018. One such public trail is approximately 100 feet from the boundary of the subject property and the subject property is visible from multiple locations along the trail. The incremental process of purchasing lands in this area started years ago. The steps to make these lands available for the public to access and enjoy is an ongoing long-term project. Current and past partners involved with the Bay to Sound Project have included Town, County, NY State, Greenport Village, Peconic Estuary Partnership, Group for the East End, Boy Scouts, Audubon and volunteers from the general public. The Project has involved several phases of grant funding, totaling over \$470,000.

Details pertaining to the Bay to Sound Project, grants for the project and a map of existing and proposed trails are included with this memo.

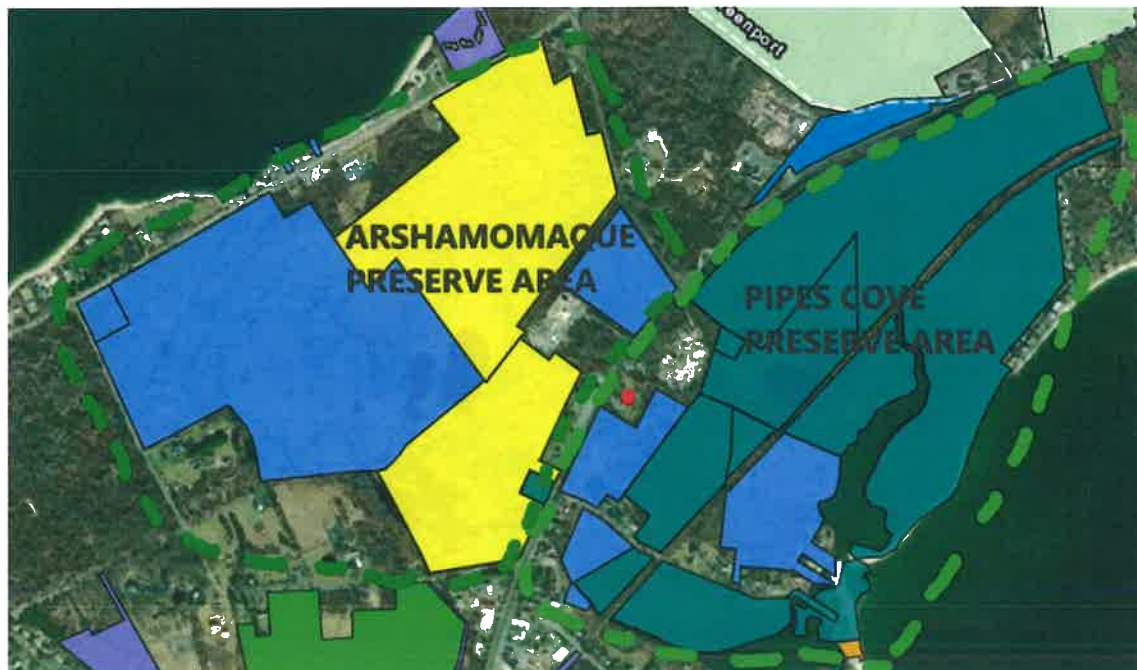
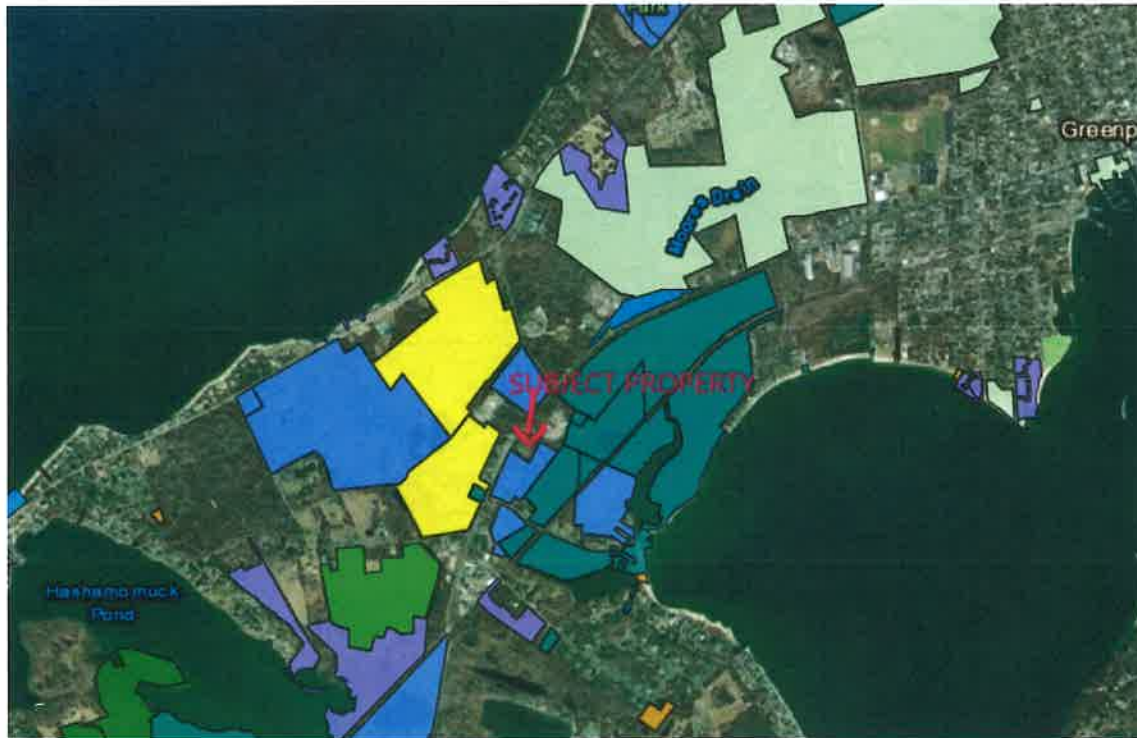
The subject site is environmentally sensitive, adjacent to and interconnected with the adjacent preserved lands. John Sepenoski has pointed out that:

- Parcel is bounded on two sides by Suffolk County parkland that includes a public trail and is part of the Bay to Sound Trails project.
- Public trail is approximately 100 feet from the boundary of the parcel at its closest.
- Current structures on the parcel are visible from multiple locations along the public trail over an approximately 550 foot section of the trail, proposed structures would be visible too, unless screened.
- Approximately one half acre of the parcel is within a NYS DOS designated Significant Fish & Wildlife habitat.
- Approximately one quarter acre of the property is mapped as freshwater wetlands.
- The entire parcel is within the NYSDEC freshwater wetland check zone, indicating that it should be checked for additional wetlands.
- The bulk of the parcel is currently mowed as lawn. Within 800 feet of this location a similar lawn area that was no longer mowed after the Town purchased it naturalized with wetlands vegetation without the Town planting anything, the same would likely occur on this parcel indicating that there are potentially additional wetland areas on this parcel.
- Based on proposed coverage of the parcel, stormwater runoff will be significantly increased compared to current conditions.
- Based on NYS DEC wetlands delineation conducted for the Bay to Sound project, there are additional wetland areas on the County parkland not shown on the DEC wetland map but within the check zone that could be impacted by run off from this parcel.
- The parcel currently drains to two wetland areas on the adjacent County parkland. One of these areas flows into a tidal pond connected to Pipes Creek via a culvert under Pipes Neck Rd.
- The Town, The Nature Conservancy and the Peconic Estuary Partnership are currently investigating changes to the culvert noted above designed to restore the tidal pond and adjacent areas to reduce the invasive phragmites present on the County parkland.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like any additional information pertaining to preservation efforts in this area or John Sepenoski for additional information regarding the Bay to Sound Project.

Location Map: Preserved Lands indicated with color designation

-  Town Open Space
-  County Open Space
-  Town/County Open Space



Bay to Sound Project: Trail Map

Red = Existing trails open to the public

Blue= Trails under construction, due to be completed in March 2021



Bay to Sound Project Information

- Began in 2007
- Work has been conducted on Town, County and Village preserves and parks in the Greenport area
- Current and past partners include the Town, County, NY State, Greenport Village, Peconic Estuary Partnership, Group for the East End, Boy Scouts, Audubon and volunteers from the general public
- Funding:
 - Phase 1 funded in 2008 by NYS DOT \$72,000 and Suffolk County \$35,000 with the Town, Group for the East End, Boy Scouts and Audubon providing \$52,000 of in-kind match including over 530 hours of volunteer time
 - Phase 2 funded in 2016 by NYS DOS LWRP grant for \$245,000 matched with the Town providing \$245,000 with the acquisition of the Sill property

- Phase 3 funded in 2017 by NYS DOS LWRP grant for \$120,000 matched with the Town providing \$30,000 with the acquisition of the Sill property and \$10,000 with employee and volunteer in-kind services
- Town has used CPF stewardship funds on CPF properties within the project area for trail infrastructure and regular maintenance outside of above funding
- Goals are:
 - Interconnect preserves and parks in the Greenport area via hiking trails, bike paths and blue way trails in order to create connections among the preserves and parks, including a non-motorized connection from the Peconic Bay to the Long Island Sound
 - Create additional trails on existing publicly owned open space
 - Acquire additional open space for additional trails and public access
 - Conduct habitat restoration
 - Develop, conduct and provide nature, open space and citizen science programs, surveys and educational materials
- Currently discussing and/or planning for:
 - 2.3 miles of new trails on 60 acres of Town open space
 - 1.3 miles of new trails on 75 acres of County open space
 - Conceptual plans for 25 acres of County open space
 - Additions/enhancements to bike paths as part of the County Hike and Bike Master Plan
 - Kayak launches/landings/trails as part of the County Blue Way Trail project
 - Updating Town CPF plan to include additional properties for potential fee title or easement acquisitions
 - Participation of private land owners in the project

cc: Planning Board