

EPCAL Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The Town Board has created a zoning code called "Planned Development" which allows for mixed uses at the Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL) although the public voiced objections and concern about the inclusion of housing and retail as well as the vague descriptions of allowable land uses at the site. Despite this, a 50 lot subdivision was formed from the last remaining 2300 acres of Town-owned land at EPCAL. More recently, the Town announced it has agreed to sell the entire subdivision to a single developer.

It's vital to remember that the Riverhead taxpayers were promised that there would never be any housing at EPCAL. Housing does not lead to economic development because every home costs the taxpayers more than those homeowners pay in property taxes. Housing will also worsen the burden on our crowded school system and increase school taxes as a result. Homes do not mix well with commercial/industrial development which will inevitably lead to conflicts between residents and businesses. Open space, on the other hand, is not a tax burden and increases the value of already developed land. We currently have an inventory of empty houses as well as planned housing in downtown Riverhead that will be available to potential future employees at EPCAL. But, creating broad, mixed-use zoning will only serve the purpose of potential developers and will lead to residential development at EPCAL that will be very expensive to us taxpayers. There should be no housing built at EPCAL.

Furthermore, the taxpaying public has been given precious little information concerning the future plans for development of this huge piece of Town land. Over the past two decades, there have been several potential EPCAL development deals announced by the Town. None have come to fruition. The latest deal, announced on March 30th, which would turn over the remaining 2300 acres of town-owned land to a single developer. It is for \$5 million less than the previous deal and gives 1700 acres more. All of this land is regulated by the new Town Code which allows housing. This is a huge deal about which the citizens have been told very few details. We remind the Town Board that this is public land. The Town of Riverhead and the latest purchaser must hold a series of public information meetings, where residents can ask questions about the company and the proposed development, as well as tour the area being sold. The public must be included in the process.