

Transform our land to benefit all residents

SAY NO TO KHTO

East Hampton Airport

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wainscott, NY (August 21, 2016) – Increased East Hampton Airport operations coupled with the lack of meaningful aircraft noise abatement has stimulated a new movement in the community. Quiet Skies Coalition (QSC) co-founder, Barry Raebeck, has split away from QSC to organize “Say No to KHTO”, a group dedicated to exploring environmentally friendly and far more equitable community use of the 628 acres of Town-owned land that currently contains the East Hampton Airport.

“This huge tract of Town-owned, commercially-zoned land can better serve our community in a variety of ways,” explained Say No to KHTO Chair, Barry Raebeck. “East Hampton has a paucity of commercially zoned land. The airport has over 600 acres that could be used to support environmentally sensitive businesses providing many times the local jobs that the airport does. In terms of jobs per acre, the airport is a bust, a lost opportunity for the community. We are determined to explore better uses of this Town-owned property for the people of East Hampton and the many across the length of Long Island who are being tormented by aircraft noise impacts and avgas emissions. The environmental benefits of uses other than aviation are obvious and essential to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community and residents across the East End and Long Island in general.”

Raebeck continued, “Under FAA grant agreements previously entered into, the Town is obliged in perpetuity to dedicate all revenues from airport properties solely to the support of airport operations *as long as the property is used as an airport*. If, however, the airport were closed, revenues from the property would then be available to the Town’s general fund. Land at the airport is being leased for non-aviation uses at as much as \$50,000 per acre. At those rates, re-development of the airport property, in addition to providing hundreds of local jobs, could generate \$10-\$15 million per year for the Town’s general fund and reduce Town taxes for everyone by 20-30%.

“A deal with the FAA is a deal with the devil,” commented Say No to KHTO founding member, Patricia Currie. “Since its first agreement with the FAA, the Town has received less from the FAA than the cost of the Montauk Playhouse reconstruction. For a pittance, the Town has lost control of public lands worth hundreds of millions of dollars.”

Raebeck concluded, “The airport is being operated at a huge cost to the community in lost jobs and lost dollars. We are actually subsidizing the destruction of our own environment and quality of life – simply to benefit the handful of commercial operators and their customers. This land could be used for wind and solar power generation, for affordable housing, for parks and recreation, and for low-impact businesses, among other uses. Communities across the country are struggling against unwanted and unnecessary aircraft intrusion. East Hampton should once again be in the forefront of such socially sensible and environmentally responsible efforts.”

The immediate agenda of Say No to KHTO will be to develop plans for alternative uses of the airport property so that taxpayers and voters of East Hampton can fully understand what the airport is costing the community.

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