

Brookhaven Weighs Going It Alone

By Mitchell Freedman

Brookhaven town is peering down the path of secession, but is likely to have a hard time finding its way on a trail that has not been used since early this century and is strewn with economic and political obstacles.

The town is setting up a charter review committee following a finding last month by a town task force that a Brookhaven County would be feasible. It hopes to hold a charter referendum before the end of the year.

But interviews with state and local officials point up many unresolved questions. There are conflicting opinions on the value of county property in the town and questions about the economic viability of a new county in which the Shoreham nuclear power plant accounts for more than a quarter of the tax base. There are questions about exactly how the new county would be formed and about whether the rest of Suffolk has any say in the matter.

"It's the same as with school district mergers. The law provides much more easily for a marriage than a divorce," said State Sen. Kenneth P. LaValle (R,C-Port Jefferson).

Still, LaValle said that if Brookhaven County can be created in a way that will not cost taxpayers money, he will introduce a bill to create the new county. "Personally, if I can be convinced the cost is not out of sight, I would move very aggressively with the supervisor to make it happen," he said.

The town's supervisor, Henrietta Acampora, is ready. "The people have an opportunity now to draft their own form of government," she said. "It's a new Continental Congress."

Acting Suffolk County Executive Michael LoGrande said that, as a former Islip town supervisor, he can understand the feeling in Brookhaven that "the county gave them the short shrift . . . but we want the opportunity to change that." He declined to say what he would do if the town actually took steps to become a county, saying "it will never come to that."

Part of Brookhaven's discontent stems from actions taken by the county to control development in the town, and recent political reversals for Brookhaven politicians who sought the two top jobs in Suffolk County government. Acampora was a contender for the county executive appointment that went to LoGrande and Legis. Ed Romaine (R-Center Moriches) was seeking to be the legislature's presiding officer.

If the town moves from discontent to secession, it will have to travel through some murky territory. Bill Brown, a spokesman for the secretary of state, said the state constitution is unclear on whether the rest of Suffolk would have a say in whether Brookhaven becomes independent. It's "virgin territory," he said.

The state constitution says that a new county can be formed when the geographic area considering the change holds a referendum and approves a "home rule" message to the State Legislature, which then decides whether to create the new entity. The last county to be created was the Bronx early in this century.

Just as important as the legal questions are the economic ones.

The revenue on which the town's task force based its economic projections included property taxes on the Long Island Lighting Co.'s Shoreham plant,



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which accounts for more than a quarter of Brookhaven's tax base. The town controller's office says that property in the town has a taxable value of \$526,954,000, of which the Shoreham plant represents \$146,134,000.

Patchogue attorney Victor Yannacone, who headed the town study, said that if Shoreham did not operate as a nuclear plant, it might still produce some tax revenue. He also said that any loss of Shoreham taxes would hurt Brookhaven, whether or not the town becomes a county.

But Thomas Gamello, a municipal-bond expert with the investment firm of Prescott, Ball & Turben Inc., said that the proportion of the town's tax base represented by Shoreham would become a major consideration in the sale of any Brookhaven County bonds.

"In general, you have to look at any municipality where a single taxpayer makes up a large portion of the tax base," he said. "We consider excessive reliance on a single entity, and when it is the Long Island Lighting Co., the concern may be even higher . . . it's a big credit consideration."

In 1984, LILCO withheld \$52 million in property taxes from Suffolk County because of the county's opposition to Shoreham's opening. When LILCO withheld its taxes, there was little direct effect in Brookhaven because the county tax act requires that all local agencies such as school and fire districts, be paid in full before any payment goes to the county. As a county, Brookhaven would have to absorb such a loss in similar circumstances, Town Controller Frank Faber acknowledged.

The money was eventually paid, but LILCO has filed appeals each year with the Brookhaven assessor, charging that the still-unopened nuclear plant has been overvalued for tax purposes.

Brookhaven's study assumes that Suffolk would

reimburse Brookhaven for the share of county facilities paid for by Brookhaven residents. In turn, the town would be liable for paying for county facilities already existing in the town, such as parks and office complexes.

The Brookhaven report and a county study differ on the costs in each case. In listing the current value of county buildings within Brookhaven, for example, the town estimates \$88,416,281 while Suffolk puts the value at \$79,753,726. Brookhaven lists the value of county buildings outside the town at \$358,668,530, while Suffolk lists it at \$492,380,853.

Town officials charge that the county's report inflated some cost figures. Smith Point County Park, for example, was listed as covering 2,295 acres at a value of \$100,000 an acre. The Brookhaven study says 1,149 of those acres are underwater, worth only \$100 an acre according to the State Department of Environmental Conservation's value standards. The difference makes the park worth \$91.7 million, compared to the county's estimate of \$229.5 million.

Whether or not a new county could make a go of it financially will weigh heavily in the political jockeying in the State Legislature. Assemb. Dennis Gorski (D-Erie), chairman of the Assembly's committee on local government that would debate the issue, said, "The state would have very strong reservations about creating a political subdivision without the wherewithal to comply with its mandates and be economically viable."

Still, Gorski says if he can be satisfied that Brookhaven County would be economically sustainable, he would be intrigued with the idea of forming it.

Although the Brookhaven study does not deal with the future of the East End, East Hampton Supervisor Judith Hope said the creation of a Brookhaven County would inevitably lead to the creation of a Peconic County in eastern Suffolk.

The five East End towns have considered forming Peconic in past years, but have not pursued the plan because the population wasn't big enough.

Members of the Long Island delegation in Albany said the Brookhaven proposal needs more study before they make up their minds.

State Sen. James Lack (R-Northport), whose district includes a portion of Brookhaven, said no one has discussed the idea of Brookhaven County with him. And, he adds, until he sees some figures on the cost of the town's becoming a county, he won't make up his mind.

Assemb. Robert C. Wertz (R-Commack), who represents parts of both Smithtown and Brookhaven, has already decided it is a bad idea. "Instead of cutting ourselves into pieces," he says, "we should be getting together with Nassau and working as a single unit."

County Accepts Sewage Settlement

By Joshua Quittner

Suffolk County has agreed to accept a \$1.65-million settlement for claims against the engineering firm that designed the problem-ridden Bergen Point Water Pollution Control Plant in the Southwest Sewer District.

"It's an absolutely excellent settlement," said Jonathan Sinnreich, the attorney representing the county. Sinnreich said Consoer Townsend and Associates will pay \$1.5 million in cash and forego \$150,000 in engineering fees the county owed it.

The settlement is to offset \$1.5 million the county paid as a settlement to three of four contractors who built the plant and sued the county, in 1981. The contractors charged that the county was responsible for cost overruns because of delays in opening the plant; negotiations with the fourth contractor are still under way, Sinnreich said.

Kevin Smith, the engineering firm's attorney, said the money will be paid jointly by Consoer Townsend and its insurance company. He said payment will be made to the county within a month of the agreement papers being signed.

Consoer Townsend also will provide technical assistance in the county's \$20-million lawsuit against Zimpro Inc., a Wisconsin subcontractor that provided sludge treatment equipment. The equipment doesn't work and is responsible for foul odors around the plant, Sinnreich said.

"All of the equipment provided by Zimpro turned out to be lemons," he said. Zimpro has said the allegations are entirely without merit.

Residents of South Shore communities in Babylon Town have been complaining of noise and bad odors from the plant ever since the controversial \$932-million Southwest Sewer District went into operation in 1981.

A New County Should Bloom In Brookhaven

By Victor John Yannacone Jr.
and R. E. Watson

RECENT HISTORY shows that Suffolk County is essentially unmanageable and almost ungovernable. The twisted, inscrutable political processes that characterize Suffolk government have failed to balance the interests of the urban west and the rural east. Brookhaven, as the frontier, has become a political battlefield.

There is no longer any serious doubt that an independent Brookhaven County is economically feasible. Brookhaven Town is geographically larger than Nassau County and makes up one-third the land area of Suffolk. If Brookhaven were a city, its population would make it one of the largest in the state and one of the top 50 in the United States.

The natural geopolitical division of Suffolk County would establish the Island's four western towns — Babylon, Huntington, Islip and Smithtown — as Suffolk County and allow the five eastern towns of Riverhead, Southampton, East Hampton, Shelter Island and Southold to become the Peconic County they have always wanted to be.

Long Island is more than a bedroom community supplying an endless stream of weary commuters trekking and schlepping to and from midtown Manhattan on an aging, decrepit mass transit system and choked highways that misanthropic planners euphemistically called "parkways" or, with more optimism than common sense, an "expressway."

The decision-makers in Albany and Washington must recognize that the interests, concerns and needs of New York City and Long Island are not necessarily the same.

County government is merely a political convenience for a region as large as Suffolk. When a county ceases to be of real public service to the people who live in its towns, it is time to restructure the county. Rewriting a county charter and reorganizing the bureaucracy of the Suffolk County government is not enough.

An independent Brookhaven County would bring officials closer to the taxpayers they serve and should allow more responsive interactions between the county and volunteer organizations such as fire and ambulance services. Duplicate services could be eliminated and efficiency gained if we merged, for example, town and county highway departments.

Water epitomizes the issue of local control. The western towns and the East End already have contaminated drinking water. They intend to rely primarily on Brookhaven as their fresh-water reservoir. As an independent county, Brookhaven could better protect water quality for the benefit not only of its own residents, but for all the people of Long Island. It is Suffolk County permits that have allowed the groundwater contamination.

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The geopolitical integrity of the incorporated villages within the present town would not be compromised within an independent Brookhaven County. In fact, the incorporated villages would have another opportunity to vote on whether to provide for local village police services, in addition to the county police.

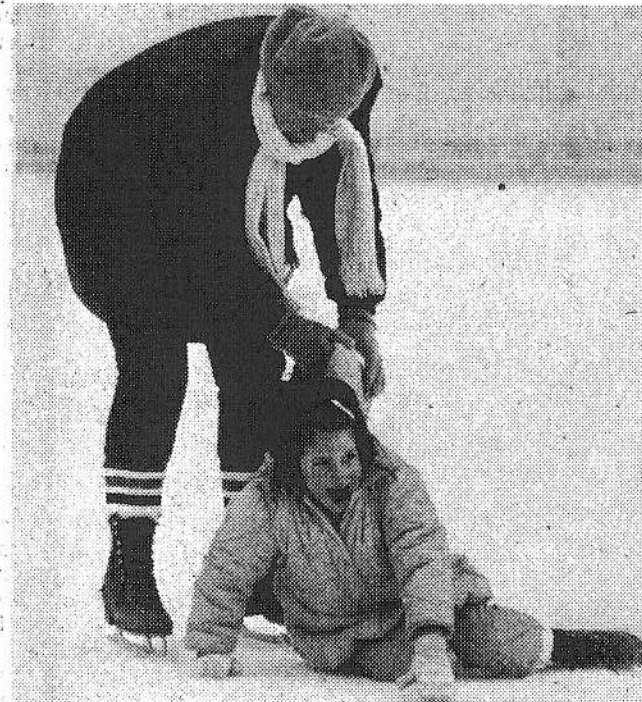
Central to any consideration of establishing Brookhaven County is the question, "How much will it cost?" A study by the nationally respected accounting firm of Ernst & Whinney shows that if Brookhaven had been an independent county in 1986, the typical homeowners would have paid almost the same total tax they actually paid that year.

The issue confronting all the people of Suffolk County is whether it is time to restructure Suffolk and restore government to the people.

Victor John Yannacone Jr., a Patchogue attorney, serves as special counsel to the Town of Brookhaven on environmental matters. R.E. Watson is a senior scientist at Brookhaven National Laboratory. They were chairman and vice chairman, respectively, of the Brookhaven County Study Committees.



It Isn't Always . . .



Newsday Photos / K. Wiles Stable

So Nice on the Ice

Five-year-old Alanna Sheehy of Little Neck found it mostly smooth going during her first ice skating lesson with her mother, Cathy, in Christopher Morley Park in Manhasset. Despite her fall, Alanna's smile never slipped away, and like a trouper, she happily took a few more turns around the park.

Brookhaven Secession Good Idea, Report Says

By Laura Muha

It is not only economically feasible for Brookhaven to become New York's 63rd county, but it could be economically desirable as well, according to a 100-page report by a committee studying the issue.

The report, to be presented to the town board next week, says that if the town secedes from Suffolk and forms its own county, property taxes would not go up more than 0.8 percent — about \$5 per \$3,000 of assessed valuation for the average homeowner — and would more likely drop.

"Secession is not easy, but it's very do-able," said attorney Victor Yannacone, chairman of the committee, which has been studying the possibility since 1984.

Supervisor Henrietta Acampora said she had not yet seen the report and could not comment, but she believes the town board will accept the committee's recommendations. "I'm almost sure the town board will want to go with it," she said.

If the town board agrees to secede, voters would have to pass the measure in a referendum. It would then have to be approved by the state Legislature.

The report, drawn up by the New York accounting firm of Ernst and Whinney, disagrees with a 1984 study by the Suffolk County Planning Department, which said the average Brookhaven resident could expect a tax increase of \$625 a year if the town seceded.

The new report contends that Brookhaven homeowners have shouldered about 25 percent of the county's property tax burden over the past 10 years and should therefore be reimbursed for 25 percent of the value of all county-owned property in Suffolk if the town secedes. Under that scenario,

Suffolk County could actually owe Brookhaven money if the town secedes, and taxes could dip by up to 13.8 percent, or \$93 per \$3,000 of assessed valuation.

But Suffolk County Planning Director Lee Koppelman rejected that premise. "That's like joining a club and paying the dues, and then when you decide to quit the club, you want to have all your dues paid back," he said. "It doesn't work that way."

Koppelman, who called the report "absolute nonsense," said that if the town tried to secede, he would recommend "that the people of Suffolk County get back every penny that was invested there." The investments in Brookhaven include parks, roads, the county center in Yaphank, Suffolk Community College and the Pine Barrens.

County Legis. Ed Romaine of Brookhaven, a former member of the study committee, said he would support secession if it were economically feasible. "I've always felt personally that we have too many levels of government," he said. "Brookhaven is large enough to be a county."

But even if the town, the largest in Suffolk in population and size, doesn't actually secede, he said, the secession movement has served a purpose. "I think what Brookhaven is doing . . . is sending a clear message that as the largest town in Suffolk County, it certainly doesn't enjoy the influence it should in the county legislature," he said. The town, which is as large as Nassau County, has four legislators whose districts are entirely within the town — the same number as Islip, which is geographically and population-wise much smaller — and four others whose districts overlap Brookhaven boundaries.

Newsday

In Brookhaven

A weekly report for the communities of southern Brookhaven • January 8, 1987

Brookhaven County? Report To Argue Secession Would Work

By Mitchell Freedman

The committee studying whether Brookhaven should secede from Suffolk and form its own county is nearing completion of its report, and town officials said they are encouraged by what they see.

The study looks at four possible ways of dealing with existing county property within the town, three of them leading to tax reductions and the fourth calling for a "slight" tax increase, according to committee chairman Victor J. Yannacone Jr. "The report addresses every major concern," he said. "In three of the four cases, there is a substantial tax reduction."

The panel, the Committee to Study the Proposed Brookhaven County, is expected to submit the report to the town in two weeks, according to Deputy Supervisor Peter Scully.

Supervisor Henrietta Acampora said that while she hasn't reviewed the document, she has been given a hint on the economic impact of secession from Suffolk: "It's possible," she said.

Yannacone said all four approaches are based on two assumptions — that there will be no lowering of the level of county services now provided, and that there be no lowering of existing county pay scales.

Yannacone said one key reason for the economic benefit of becoming a county is that the town would gain extra income from all state and federal grants

that now come to Brookhaven through the county. "All those fees stop at the county for an overhead charge. It adds up," he said.

But Yannacone said the main reason for becoming a county is not economic, but to preserve the environment. "The primary question is home rule," he said. "The real issue is that the principal cause of the environmental degradation of Brookhaven is the Suffolk County Department of Health and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation."

The committee, which has been meeting weekly on its study for the past year, has come up with several ways of handling existing county facilities within the town.

Under one approach, Suffolk officials would have to agree to such things as a bi-county operation of the Suffolk Community College campus in Selden. There have been preliminary discussions with some county officials on the matter, but no agreements have been reached, Scully said.

"It will be a bi-county or a tri-county college like they have upstate," Yannacone said. "We don't want to buy one, and I'm sure Suffolk County doesn't want to run one itself."

Brookhaven officials have been talking about forming their own county for decades, and have been

seriously studying the question since 1984. In 1985, in response to the formation of the committee to study the formation of an independent county, the Suffolk County Planning Commission issued a report stating that Brookhaven homeowners would face an average property tax increase of \$625 a year if secession succeeded.

Town officials criticized that county report, saying it assumed Brookhaven would have to buy — at current prices — all the county facilities now in the town, including police headquarters, the county farm and minimum security prison in Yaphank, and the Selden campus of Suffolk County Community College.

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The members of the committee who were reappointed are: Pamela Bethel, Coram; John Black, Patchogue; Mrs. Robert Burmeister, Port Jefferson Station; Linda Petersen, Yaphank; Harold Pryor, East Setauket; Thomas Scionti, Shoreham; Richard Watson, Brookhaven; Charles Kelly, Centereach; Richard Lusak, Port Jefferson; Frank Mooney, Patchogue; Victor Yannacone, Patchogue; Harold Zimmerman, South Setauket; Jeannette Beardsworth, Patchogue.

Storm Puts Shore in Jeopardy

1-13-87

Ellen Barohn -

Mid - Island News.

265-2100
Deadline



Advance

DATE: JANUARY 22, 1987

SUBJECT/FILE: BROOKHAVEN COUNTY

Town takes next step towards independence

by Judy Hogan

Brookhaven Town took a step closer towards the creation of an independent Brookhaven County Tuesday night as they requested public participation in the organization of a Brookhaven County Charter Commission that would be responsible for "investigation of alternative forms of county government and preparation of a charter" to be presented to voters sometime next summer.

The action follows an economic feasibility study by the firm of Ernst & Whinney, and was recommended to the town board by the Brookhaven County Study Committee. Last week the committee released their final

report on the merits of Brookhaven establishing itself as a county, with one township, Brookhaven. Supervisor Henrietta Acampora directed Town Clerk Stanley Allan to draft an application for residents to submit for participation on the charter commission.

"We would like a representative from all the civic groups, church groups, anyone who would like to be a part, to get involved in this innovative undertaking," she said.

Town officials said that if town voters approve the county charter, the board will send a "home rule" message to the State Legislature, "urging the passage of the necessary enabling

legislation which will permit the residents of Brookhaven Town to establish an independent Brookhaven County."

The final report states that a county government would bring residents and elected officials closer together, provide better protection of water quality, and would not, as a Suffolk County report stated, increase taxes.

The report states four scenarios of cost estimation by the consulting firm. Three of the scenarios yielded tax decreases of \$44, \$83, and \$93 while one produced an increase of \$6. The committee in publishing its conclusions, states that "there is no longer any serious doubt that an independent

Brookhaven County is economically feasible and socially desirable."

The most important aspect of the county charter, said committee members, will be the type of governmental rule established. Supervisor Acampora said that "we have a rare opportunity, the people of this town can decide on whether they want a county legislature, a county manager, a board of supervisors, whatever they want."

Victor Yannacone, a member of the study committee, told the town board that the people, "through the establishment of an independent county, will determine how Brookhaven Town will face the twenty-first century."

THE MID-ISLAND NEWS

Local News

the Ronkenhoses, Centereach, Selden, Lake Grove, Coram, Holbrook, Hellsville,

DATE: January 15, 1987

Brookhaven County? Report Goes To Town Board

By Ellen Barohn

Brookhaven County could be a reality by July, 1988, according to Victor J. Yannacone, Jr., the chair of the 13-member Brookhaven County Study Committee.

In a report submitted to the Brookhaven Town Board this week, the Study Committee "concluded that in the interests of preserving groundwater, regulating growth in an environmentally and socially responsible way, and in making government more accessible to the needs of Brookhaven residents, an independent Brookhaven County would be desirable."

(Continued from page 1)

The report notes that all of the existing incorporated villages within Brookhaven Town will continue to exist as "villages within the Town of Brookhaven after an independent Brookhaven County is established." The Town of Brookhaven will continue "to exist in an independent Brookhaven County and the institution of the Trustees...will continue to maintain the tradition of protecting our natural resources that has been theirs since colonial times."

The Study Committee suggested that the only major new building needed for Brookhaven County would be a jail. Existing buildings would serve all other needs. A police department would be formed in conformance with Suffolk County Police Department salaries and services now given the town in the Fifth and Sixth Precincts.

Properties now in the town that are owned by Suffolk County would either be acquired by Brookhaven County or be shared by the residents of both Brookhaven and Suffolk Counties. Other property — such as vehicles and office supplies — "can be divided according to

The result of an economic feasibility study done by the accounting firm of Ernst and Whinney, the report recommends that a Brookhaven County Charter Commission be appointed "immediately...to investigate the alternative forms of County government available to an independent Brookhaven County and prepare" a county charter in time for a summer, 1987, referendum.

The report lists four economic scenarios under which the town could become a county. At most, the report concludes, taxes would rise \$6 per \$100 of assessed value,

but would most likely drop.

Mr. Yannacone said in an interview that he had rejected the idea of a separate Brookhaven County as a member of a similar commission in 1963. The present commission came about, he said, "because a number of people raised serious questions about Suffolk County — is it manageable and governable in its present state? We concluded that the idea of Brookhaven County is economically feasible and it may very well be socially and politically acceptable."

As a major advantage, he listed the removal of one layer of govern-

ment. "There will be a direct link between people and their elected representatives."

The disadvantage, he said, "is the responsibility of government services and management of resources for generations yet unborn."

The committee report says "water epitomizes the issue of local control...The Western Towns and the East End already have serious water problems and they intend to rely primarily on Brookhaven as their fresh water reservoir."

(Continued on page 2)

the Brookhaven share of the Suffolk County property tax (24.99%)."

Mr. Yannacone repeatedly stressed that the Charter Commission would be the key to a successful Brookhaven County. "Suffolk County was conceived in back rooms by a few politicians and a sprinkling of concerned citizens."

"We have suggested," he said, "that all interested people be invited to join the Charter Commission. That way you will have, through participatory democracy, something that hasn't been seen in Suffolk County for the last 150 years."

Mr. Yannacone said, "Every element of the charter process raises serious choices. Do the people want a County Executive or a County Manager? Will there be a County Legislature? If so, will the legislators be elected by district or at-large?"

"We hope the charter effort produces widespread citizen involvement in government. Since there's no political position involved, this is almost an experiment in pure participatory democracy," Mr. Yannacone said.

He said that, if the Town Board decides to go ahead with the Charter Commission, the question of secession will be put to a referendum in July. If that passes, Mr. Yannacone said the town would send a home rule message to Albany requesting the State Legislature's permission to secede from Suffolk County. That would take place during the state legislative session that begins in August, 1987. If the legislature approves the move, the town has 90 days to hold a referendum. If the election is favorable, the Brookhaven County Charter can be adopted. The town would officially become a county when the Secretary of State certifies the approval vote.

"If all this happens," Mr. Yannacone said, "Brookhaven Town could be Brookhaven County by July 4, 1988."

Commenting on the County Committee's Report, Suffolk County Planning Director Dr. Lee Koppelman said, "I am opposed to any secession within the county including Brookhaven's because I think it's a poor idea. It will cost the people far more and further fragment government."

"At the time it was suggested it was because the political leadership in Brookhaven thought the town was being short-changed. They had some beefs — and they were legitimate — about the political control in the county resting with Babylon and Islip."

"But," Dr. Koppelman added, "in 1990, after the new census, there will be no question that Brookhaven will get its fair share of government positions. To push for this at this time is just poor government."

Deputy Brookhaven Supervisor Peter Scully said, "With all due respect to Dr. Koppelman — and he's entitled to his opinion — the question of a separate county came up because of the water problems in Suffolk. The Western Towns were relying on Brookhaven to give them clean drinking water in the future without compensation."

The Town Board will officially receive the Study Committee's report at its January 20 meeting, 6 p.m., in the town offices at 3323 Route 112, Medford.

Today in Newsday

DATE: 1/8/87

SUBJECT/FILE: Brookhaven Co.

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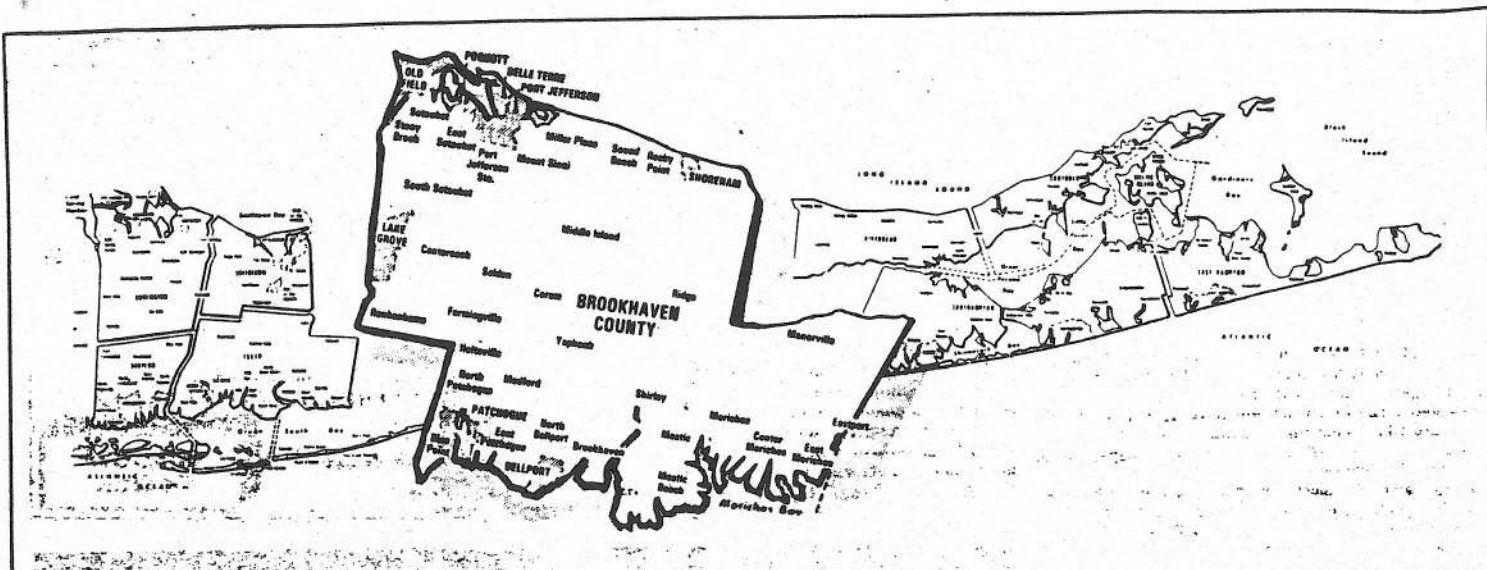
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Cty. status 'feasible, desirable' for B'haven

By Michael Graca

Imagine, if you will, living or working in Brookhaven County.

According to the Brookhaven County Study Committee's final report, "an independent Brookhaven County is not only desirable, but also economically feasible."

In addition, the study urges the town board to establish a Brookhaven County Charter Commission to draft a charter, which would be presented to town residents in the form of a referendum during the summer of 1988.

After reviewing the plan early last week, town officials welcomed the committee's conclusions and indicated that the town board would soon move to appoint a charter commission.

"The recommendation from the study committee is that it's a favorable thing to do," said Councilman George Davis, who supports an independent Brookhaven County.

A full presentation of the report, and its financial aspects was to have been made at yesterday's town board meeting.

A town official said that residents interested in participating on the charter commission will be solicited for input.

Following the charter commission's final reports, the town board would send a resolution to the state legislature, clearing the way for legislation that would set up a voter referendum in 1988, according to the recently released report.

Victor Yannacone, chairman of the 13-member committee, said he could envision Brookhaven County being established by July 4, 1988.

Comments from a number of other town and county officials, however, indicate that establishing an independent county could be much more time-consuming.

Financial Report

One Suffolk authority has criticized the plan as

"nonsense" and accused Brookhaven officials of presenting the study for political purposes.

Suffolk County Planning Director Lee Koppelman said the independent county financial report, prepared by Ernst and Whinney, was "misleading" and simply justifies what town officials want to hear.

"I think the cost to Brookhaven in setting itself up as an independent county would be prohibitive," said Koppelman.

Yannacone said the \$97,000 financial study proves setting up a Brookhaven County might save taxpayers money.

"Of course, the consensus... is that (establishing a Brookhaven County) is economically doable, socially desirable and politically necessary," Yannacone replied, defending the report's conclusions.

According to figures in the financial report, a first year operating budget for a Brookhaven County would range from \$67.5 million to \$84 million (Brookhaven Town's 1987 operating budget was approximately \$91 million).

One of the key factors in the financial feasibility study is the exchange of assets—such as roads, land and county buildings—between Brookhaven Town and Suffolk County. Brookhaven would receive approximately one-quarter of county assets in other parts of the town; Suffolk County would be entitled to three-quarters of its property within Brookhaven.

Warren Greene, chief spokesman for the county executive, said that setting up Brookhaven County would be "disastrous." Future Lawsuit Possible

"Of course, we wouldn't condone... the secession of Brookhaven County," said Greene. "We do not agree with the report."

Working out a mutually-agreeable exchange of such county assets could be a

major stumbling block to the establishment of Brookhaven County, town officials say.

Town Supervisor Henrietta Acampora, who supports the county study, said she does not expect to be in government when Brookhaven becomes a county and admitted a lawsuit might be necessary to complete an exchange of assets.

"Any final settlement would be adjudicated in the courts," Deputy Town Supervisor Peter Scully reiterated.

Koppelman seemed to agree with the town's executive office, foreseeing conflicts in the exchange of assets. "What incentive would Suffolk County have for giving Brookhaven County a

free ride?" he asked. Greene strengthened the county's stance, saying the question of exchanging assets could very well lead to a lawsuit. "Most... many of our county-owned facilities are in Brookhaven."

Yannacone, however, was confident the county would not obstruct the town's efforts "as soon as the four western towns realize that it's in their own best financial interest." The East End

In addition, Brookhaven's county initiative might also breathe new life into the East End towns' dormant campaign for Peconic County, encompassing Riverhead, East Hampton, Southampton, Southold and Shelter Island.

Among Suffolk Life's sources, there is a general agreement that an independent Brookhaven County would force the separated eastern Suffolk towns to secede also.

Southampton Town Attorney Fred Thiele, Jr., who was involved in the Peconic County initiative in the late 70's, said, "I think Brookhaven's movement, coupled with the tax increases the East End ex-

pects, could go a long way towards breathing new life into the Peconic County movement."

Thiele was not sure the "legal complications" that stalled the movement in 1980

would still apply today, but added that "it probably is a better idea now than it was then."

Roadside litter dumps proliferate in B'haven



MIDDLE ISLAND—This is the dumpsite on Cedar Avenue, Middle Island that resident Judy Modeste said is a spawning ground for the rats that have invaded her toolshed. Photo by Michael Graca. (E28F-1)

By Michael Graca

The illegal dump on Cedar Lane in Middle Island has Judy Modeste frightened and frustrated. Despite several calls, the mounds of assorted garbage remain, a breeding ground for the rats she says have taken over her toolshed.

Brookhaven's deputy commissioner of roadside litter and enforcement, Robert Reichert, says he is frustrated, too.

After nearly two months in the department, Reichert says illegal dumping has increased dramatically due, in large part, to Brookhaven's recently-enacted ban on construction and demolition material at the town's Yaphank landfill.

"Everyday, we're finding new and larger dumpsites in the area. It's unbelievable," he said.

Just recently, department investigators say they identified an illegal dumpsite on Route 24 in Calverton. Town officials allege the site was being used to dump construction debris. The owner reported that the material was being used to absorb stray shots from a nearby rifle range.

But that dump site is one of hundreds in Brookhaven, according to Reichert.

In November, the town beefed up security forces at the 280-acre Yaphank landfill to keep trash from other towns out of the facility. One month later, the town banned commercial con-

struction debris from the municipal dump.

"Now, it (roadside dumping) is getting to be a major problem in Brookhaven. It's just horrendous," he said.

And the increase in illegal dumps has created a waiting list in clean-up and enforcement of the roadside dumpsites, said Reichert.

"The manpower I have is not capable of covering all the sites in the town," said Reichert. If a citizen reported an illegal dump today, said the deputy commissioner, it would take two or three weeks before one of the department's five clean-up crews would be able to get to the site.

Cont. on page 12.

Patchogue, N.Y.

The Main Street Press

Brookhaven County Idea Is Launched - '88 The Goal

In a history-making recruiting campaign, Brookhaven Town Supervisor Henrietta Acampora on Tuesday issued a town-wide call for volunteers to help shape the proposed independent Brookhaven county.

Zimmer Buzzes Lo Grande About Those Skeeters

Brookhaven Town's one-man "swat team" - Town Councilman Donald Zimmer, announced yesterday that he has launched his 1987 program against Suffolk's seasonal foe - the mosquito.

Zimmer said he has written a letter to Acting Suffolk County Executive Michael LoGrande to renew a plea that the County Vector Control Bureau be granted an expanded personnel to "better battle this pestiferous problem."

Zimmer stated that "each summer Brookhaven Town's South Shore is raided by hordes of blood-thirsty mosquitoes - bugs that are not only a nuisance, but also a serious health threat."

Zimmer stated that he has requested "time and time again that the County Vector Control Bureau be expanded to better battle this pestiferous problem."

"You could imagine the disgust of Brookhaven residents," he said, "when they learned that the 1987 county budget does not include any additional funding for this important bureau and that a proposal was even put forth to cut Suffolk's mosquito control efforts."

Zimmer said his plea is made "on behalf of all residents who become prisoners in their own homes each summer to avoid the skeeter onslaught."

The call for volunteers was made following a press conference announcing details of the proposed Brookhaven county, a plan that has been under study and research by a citizens advisory committee for nearly two years.

The recruiting of volunteers was authorized by the Town Board on Acampora's recommendation.

It was explained that those recruited will help to choose the type of county government that will be placed before the Town's voters in referendum, probably in 1988.

Shortly after Acampora sounded the call, she was asked, "What if you get hundreds of volunteers?" The supervisor thought for a moment, then replied, "In that case, we'll get a bigger hall for them to meet."

The action was taken on recommendation of Town Supervisor Henrietta Acampora, who based her request on the report just issued by the Brookhaven County Study Committee, which concluded that "an independent Brookhaven County is not only desirable but also economically viable."

This conclusion, the committee said, followed an economic feasibility study done by the New York accounting firm of Ernst & Whinney.

The proposed charter committee, Acampora explained, is to consist of a large cross-section of the town's population and will be organized with the help of the 12-member county study committee headed by Patchogue attorney Victor J. Yannacone Jr.

Brookhaven, which has been part of Suffolk County for over 300 years, is the state's largest populated township and, with

nearly 400 square miles, is greater in size than Nassau County.

The Ernst & Whinney report stated that the "combined town and county property taxes which Brookhaven homeowners would have paid, if Brookhaven had existed as an independent county in 1986, would be nearly equal or even substantially less than the taxes actually paid that year by Brookhaven residents."

The proposed charter committee is to initiate a study of alternative

(Continued on page 3)

Brookhaven County

(Continued from page 1)

forms of county government available to an independent Brookhaven County and prepare a charter for Brookhaven that could be presented to the town's voters in referendum probably early in 1988, Acampora said.

Then, if the voters approve a county charter, the Town Board would send a home rule message to the State Legislature, urging passage enabling legislation needed to establish an independent county.

The study committee said it based its investigation on the economic factor, eliminating one level of government, bringing elected and appointed officials closer to the residents, more stringent control of water quality in the

town's underground fresh water reservoir and the ability to meet the demands of the town's 400,000 population that is expected to double within 20 years.

The Brookhaven proposal would leave Suffolk in two separated sections, the east of which talked of secession nearly 20 years ago, when an attempt was made to form a Peconic County out of the five eastern townships, Riverhead, Southampton, Southold, East Hampton and Shelter Island, a plan that failed to meet the population standards required by State law. However, the recent heavy increase in Suffolk taxes prompted talk of reviving the Peconic County plan.

A County of Brookhaven

by Jim Gallagher

Lift up your head Brookhaven! Do we want councilmanic districting to insure localized representation, or do we want a Brookhaven County?

A Brookhaven County would be the 11th largest in population in New York State; 11th out of 64 counties. Adding Brookhaven to the current 62 counties should also allow our friends to the east their own Peconic County, if for no other reason than geographic isolation.

If we were a state, we would not be the largest by measure; however, the State of Alaska only has 400,481 people. Brookhaven's official count was 361,812. If we were to opt for a city status, we would be the second largest in New York State. We are more populous than Buffalo! We also have more people than Cincinnati, Ohio; Birmingham, Alabama; Fort Worth, Texas; Omaha, Nebraska; Minneapolis, Minnesota; to name a few.

Jim Gallagher is president of a management consulting firm and lives in Brookhaven.

The question to ask yourself is: Do the people of Brookhaven, as a group, have equal influence over their community and region as do the people of Buffalo or any of the other localities named?

So councilmanic district be damned! What is at issue here is second class citizenship.

Brookhaven has more than 25 percent of Suffolk's population. With a land size of 326 square miles, it is greater in area than Nassau County. We are the sleeping giant and we have been asleep. Look at how Brookhaven's influence was diluted in the gerrymandering of the Suffolk County Legislature. I believe that that representation will eventually allow us to pay for the sewer district we don't use!

I also have qualms about Huntington residents deciding whether I can evacuate my family in the event of a Shoreham nuclear accident.

With Burrough's Corp. about to depart Brookhaven, and the local rate of joblessness so high, especially in our minority areas, I have problems with Suffolk's emphasis on the Route 110 corridor.

If Suffolk planning is not a euphemism, why was the

argument over where to place the court complex limited to Riverhead or Hauppauge, and not the heart of the county — Brookhaven?

Think about the current duplication of town and county government departments. Think about a \$ million town budget and our share of the \$869 million county budget. Think about a budget of roughly \$2 million a year under clear eyed management rather than cronyism. Then tell me we can't improve the quality of life in this, our garden spot of the world. As resident of Brookhaven for over 25 years, I don't want escalating taxes forcing me to enjoy the pleasures of our area as a tourist.

I know skepticism dies hard and this proposal may at first seem radical, but can we enter the 21st Century with 18th Century solutions? The time has come to examine this idea before the forum of public opinion. The time is now for all of Brookhaven — Independents, Democrats, and untrenched Republicans — to roar. Let the Islip triumvirate with Sun Suffolk and their vested interest cohorts know the Brookhaven will have its due.

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Three Village Herald 3/7/84

B'haven County has merit

Brookhaven Town's interest in breaking off from Suffolk and forming its own county government has a great deal of merit.

Suffolk County has grown with a steady march of population from west to east. A great disparity of interests, needs and aims for the future has developed between the residents of the eastern and western towns and their lifestyles are very different.

It has also produced an imbalance that often results in the East End and Brookhaven Town getting short-changed in the expenditure of tax dollars. The Southwest Sewer District is but one example of this.

While creating a new county is a complex and difficult process, much information on how that can be accomplished was gained in the movement to establish the five eastern towns as a Peconic County. At the time the towns involved did not have sufficient population to meet state requirements; however, that may very well change.

Public support for Peconic County is alive and well and Brookhaven's efforts are a source of additional encouragement.

Brookhaven, with a population exceeding 375,000 and more land mass than Nassau County or the five boroughs of New York would not have that problem. By any measurement, Brookhaven is large enough to establish a local government which could best meet the needs, hopes and aspirations of its people.

There are, of course, many things to consider before taking such a step. The geographical distribution of county buildings and properties, the bonded indebtedness and many other factors would have to be taken into consideration.

The bottom line, of course, is the feasibility in terms of cost and the impact on taxpayers.

State Senator Ken LaValle
Port Jefferson

Three Village Herald 3/7/84

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