

Sandra Melendez

March 20, 2020

1. Residential neighborhoods are feeling the impact of frequent short term rentals via Air B'n'B and VRBO among other social media outlets. The Village Code regulates single family residence short-term rentals to two two-week periods in any year. Would you use this provision to regulate Air B'n'B and VRBO? If not, why not? If so, how would you enforce this regulation?

I support short term rentals of two-week period. In my opinion the Village needs the tourism and the economic benefit it brings. Short term rentals can be perceived as disruptive, but that can be easily fixed by enforcing the code or making fines higher for noncompliance. I understand that their might be a concern for our local Inns and B&Bs, but short term rentals allow our village to accomodate more visitors and help our businesses.

2. The Village Comprehensive Plan, which helps to guide development in the Village was adopted in 2002. As adopted, the Village agreed with a key recommendation to produce a new Comprehensive Plan by 2022. What is your position on updating the Plan? And, if so, what specific recommendations would you seek to include in this update?

The Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated. We need to work on a plan that benefits our residents and businesses alike. We need to take into consideration the changes in technology and the concerns of our residents. I would like to see a more family friendly Village with affordable rents for local stores and the implementation of workforce housing.

3. Deer tick bites often come with other co-infections like babeseosis, erhlicchiosis, tuleremia, etc. In our area, there are more Lone Star ticks than deer ticks yielding greater numbers of the alphagal meat allergy & ehrlichiosis cases. We have more ticks than ever and Lyme is still the number one tick-borne infection in the country. What do you propose to control the tick disease epidemic?.

The solution lies in controlling the number of ticks and the only way to attain this is by reducing the animals that carry them. I believe we need to get an expert opinion on how to achieve the solution. First, it should be established if it is problem cause by deer or rodents and then we will be able to appropriately tackle the problem. The safety and health of our residents and visitors should be a priority for the Village Board.

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4. The Village Preservation Society has been concerned about the growing deer population in the Village and its surrounds. Deer are a scientifically accepted vector in the spread of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses. Several years ago, the Society proposed sterilization for the Village as middle ground to doing nothing or a baited cull. What do you propose to control the deer population? Do you endorse culling? Do you endorse sterilization?

I am against the inhumane treatment of animals. The board should get the help of experts to find the best solution to the problem. If there is a problem with the deer population then the Board will find a solution taking into consideration that our most important goal is to preserve the health and safety of our residents, without drastically disrupting our ecosystem. Sterilization was tried already by the Village and it is my understanding that it was an inhumane process. I would not support a cull either. However, if there is a way in which we can address the concerns of deer population in a manner that keeps our environment and our residents safe and healthy then that will be our next step.

5. Aircraft noise is a big quality of life issue for Village residents, as well as communities all over the East End. How do you propose to address aircraft noise impacts on Village residents? When legally possible, what is your position on closing the airport?

The airport is good for our economy and a convenient alternative for our commuters. Closing the airport is not something that I support. However, I do not oppose restricting flight time hours or other regulations to control the noise.

6. What role, if any, does local zoning play in relationship to nitrogen loading and other challenges to ground and surface water purity? What will you do to monitor and protect our water resources? What is your position on dredging Town Pond?

The zoning code is necessary to protect our ground and surface water therefore any changes to the code that might affect it should be considered responsibly. Dredging Town Pond was recommended to improve the water quality, so in order to protect the health of our residents and visitors I believe that it should be done.

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7. The Village has long served as the cultural, commercial, educational and religious center of Town. The congestion these uses create can have a negative impact on the quality of life for Village residents. What steps would you take to mitigate this problem?

In my opinion the Village does not have a problem with congestion or that it creates a negative impact in the lives of our residents. All activities that take place in our Village have been a success because of how the Police Department has worked to minimize the impact to the traffic and to help keep the pedestrians safe. Being a village in which our residents can come together as a community in so many different aspects, I believe, positively impacts quality of life for residents. However, if there are any issues that residents want us to consider I will be always open to hear their concerns and make it a priority to address them.

8. Widening the Stephen Hands Path trestle, has long been on the VPS LIRR wish list. Renovating that trestle would route truck traffic around the Village, particularly as trucks heading north on both North Main St and Accabonac Rd, are headed into the northern reaches of Town. What will you do to address this issue for Village residents?

Working with LIRR and the Town of East Hampton, if necessary, to improve the quality of life of our residents is something that should be done. I would support renovating the trestle to reroute the trucks. I will always strive to achieve solutions to the problems that affect our residents.

9. Our communities are particularly vulnerable to coastal erosion, sea level rise and extreme weather events. While Village beaches are included in the Town-wide coastal area resilience study, we are very much an add-on. Would you have the Village fund a study of Village dunes and beaches to assess their condition? What use would you make of the results of such a study?

A study would be beneficial to be able to use the knowledge when reviewing the zoning code. Knowing how those issues would affect the Village will help the Board make more educated decisions instead of relying on a study that does not focus on the Village specifically.

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10. With McMansions scattered in neighborhoods with more modest homes, how should neighborhood character be treated within the zoning code? Is it desirable to achieve a balance and how would you do so under zoning?

The Village should be able to preserve its character and at the same time be considerate of the needs of its residents. Restrictions on the use of the lots should be done responsibly. There should be a basis in which to balance the home size to the lot size.

11. What businesses do you think contribute the most to the economy of the Village? What steps would you take to encourage these businesses?

All businesses are important to the economy of our Village, but because of the nature of our code restaurants probably bring in the most revenue. To address this I would like to make the code more business friendly and to change the provisions that hurt them. The actual code makes it a crime to call or attract attention to a business. The basic principle of a thriving business is the ability to attract clients in order to prosper. The Village should hear the needs of our businesses and have an open-door policy to address the concerns of the business owners. Working together we can achieve a great community.

12. Village residents remain concerned about the way PSEG-LI commandeered the public right of way to replace utility poles with larger, more toxic versions of what had been there for 60 years, allegedly to strengthen storm resistance, when it is clear that burying the lines is the proper solution. How will you negotiate the 'monster pole' issue? Please be specific.

In order to address the issue of the monster pole I believe that our first priority to work with PSEG-LI and the residents to go on and resolve this issue and find a solution that works for everyone. Finding a different location for the monster pole is imperative.

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12. Enforcement of laws that govern inappropriate signage, contractor parking on roadsides that rut the grasses and kill native plants, have a direct impact on Village residential life. How will your administration work to better enforce existing regulations to prevent this type of degradation to neighborhood character? What will you do to ensure that the Public Works Department is responsive to repairing this damage?

Education, training and enforcement are a key to prevent the damage of our village ecosystems. In order to assess the issue I would work with the board to find new ways to educate the public in order to protect our Village. It is important that we keep vehicles off of village grass and on the streets to prevent further damage.

13. Many Village streets have very poor drainage, especially in the western area. What will you do to address this?

With the help of the Highway Department we can find the solutions to better those areas. Researching the cause of the problem will help us determine the best way to correct it.

14. What is your approach to public participation in government?

I believe that public participation is really important especially in our Village. The voices of our residents is essential to creating a community that works together to better our Village. This is why I decided to be run for Village Trustee. Our Village is so diverse and I think that in order to create a thriving community we need to listen to everyone. I care for our Village and I am ready to work with the other board members to serve the needs of our residents and businesses. I want to create a welcoming environment so we can benefit from new ideas.

