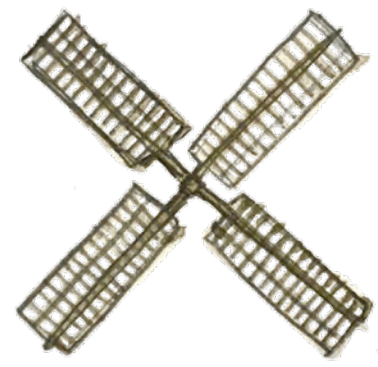


THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF EAST HAMPTON

SPRING NEWSLETTER
2026



VPSEH

Village Preservation Society
of East Hampton

• The Board of Trustees of the Village Preservation Society of East Hampton •

Invites you to our Welcome to Summer Party!

Saturday, May 30, 2026 • 6 pm – 8 pm

New site this year! LongHouse Reserve, 133 Hands Creek Rd., East Hampton

Space is limited so get your tickets early!

631-324-3524 or Kathy@VillagePreservationSociety.org

CALL FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD APPLICATIONS!

Stay involved!

Each year awards are presented for outstanding private and public historic preservation projects. You can help us identify future historic projects by recommending candidates for the award. Application forms can be found at: <https://villagepreservationsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Historic-Preservation-Award-Application-8-22-2025.pdf>

Our award process is in its' eighth year and each time we identify new preservation projects, it is our hope that it will raise the awareness of the community to the importance of preserving our Village's heritage. We invite you to join our efforts by submitting an award candidate, and/or coming to the award ceremony that will take place on September 26.

VILLAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

By Kathleen Cunningham

The consultants hired by the Village, BFJ Planning from New York, have continued their work to update the Village's Comprehensive Plan, partnering with the Village's Comp Plan Steering Committee. A public workshop held on March 6, 2026 at the Emergency Services Building on Cedar Street was well attended with fifty-seven attendees. VPSEH had good representation there, with a majority of our Board of Trustees in attendance, as well as many Society members, and representatives from sister organizations such as the LVIS and the Historical Society. The PowerPoint presentation presented by the consultants that evening which summarized the work to date, can be reviewed at this link: <https://ehvplan.wixsite.com/home/documents>

Overall, thus far, the Plan seems to reflect most of the concerns that VPSEH has voiced as part of the process to date though there is still room for improvement. Issues for which

continued on p. 4

THE JOHN OSBORN HOMESTEAD: LAYERS OF SIGNIFICANCE IN WAINSCOTT HISTORY

By Esperanza Leon, President, Wainscott Heritage Project

The turn onto Wainscott Main Street marks a shift in the air as one nears the ocean. The modern pace of “The Hamptons” gives way to a broad, bygone landscape. While the street traffic moves toward the future, the Osborn homestead on Wainscott Main Street remains a rare, framed vista that anchors time.

Traveling along this road, one is compelled to pause and take in this exceptional viewshed, the only remaining parcel in Wainscott where the dwelling has not been divided from the original farmland. Historian Robert Hefner highlighted this significant quality in a 1990 survey of historic and architectural resources. It offers a captivating view that has remained largely unchanged for over 350 years. In 2024, the Town of East Hampton expended \$56 million to acquire

The significance of both these structures is of course undeniable. In a study conducted by Zachary N. Studenroth, principle of Architectural Consultant and Steward Preservation Services LLC, the barn features post-and-beam and mortise-and-tenon construction, which, along with newspaper documentation, verifies the origins of this structure as the original barn that stood adjacent to the seventeenth-century salt box that existed on the property until the 1940s. He concludes that this structure quite possibly is the oldest timber-frame barn in East Hampton. In a presentation made by Hilary Osborn Malecki that is available on the websites of the Town and Wainscott Heritage Project, is a vivid narrative about this structure that includes tenants like Frank Serpico, who inspired the 1973 movie starring Al Pacino.

The two-story farmhouse built by the widowed Louisa Edwards Osborn (1851-1926) and designed by her son Thomas, a civil engineer, represents late-Victorian vernacular architecture and vividly portrays the beginning of the resort period. As Osborn Malecki, a 10th-generation descendant, notes in her research, its 1904 construction marked an economic shift. The house was designed with extra bedrooms to accommodate summer boarders, allowing the family to supplement their farming income during the early days of the East Hampton summer colony. This coincides roughly with

the formation of the nearby Georgica Association in 1892 by William H. S. Wood as an elite “settlement” for members comprised of wealthy, established families.

In the 1950s, the property’s architectural narrative expanded with the addition of a “playhouse” to the site. This small, possibly early twentieth-century structure adds a layer of mid-century social history to the homestead, representing a time when many of the area’s older outbuildings were repurposed for recreation or seasonal guest use as the community transitioned away from pure agriculture. According to Osborn Malecki, this building had been occupied by a family of four in East Hampton before it suffered a fire—a common occurrence in worker housing at the time, often due to the use of kerosene heaters.

The farmhouse, barn and playhouse are all examples of vernacular architecture that are inseparable from and of equal historical significance as the surrounding land,



The Osborn salt box at left (demolished) and barn, right; earliest photo known of the barn taken in 1891.

Image Courtesy of Hilary Osborn Malecki

this iconic property using the Community Preservation Fund (CPF) to make a historic investment in public land.

Now known as the “John Osborn Homestead Historic Landmark”, named for the first Osborn to settle this land, the 30-acre parcel located at 66 Wainscott Main Street and fronting Wainscott Pond represents a physical timeline of the hamlet’s evolution. Today, it has the potential to serve as a model for a Wainscott historic district.

While the Osborn family settled there in 1668, the property is defined by three distinct structures that reflect different eras of life in Wainscott: the early eighteenth-century Osborn-Hedges garage/barn (moved to its current location on the western edge of the property and converted to a home and garage by the Hedges family in the early twentieth century), the 1904 Louisa Edwards Osborn House, and a small accessory building used as a playhouse since the 1950s when it was moved from Further Lane.

forming a complete narrative that connects the homestead to the fabric of Wainscott's seventeenth-century origins interlaced with the hamlet's evolution over three centuries. Their value is tied to the open fields and the view toward Wainscott Pond. Landmarking the buildings and underlying land will fully protect the historic setting, a compelling and cherished viewshed that serves as a documented record of Wainscott's economic, cultural, and social shifts.

Aerial view over Wainscott toward Wainscott Pond and the Atlantic Ocean; Osborn Homestead in the middle ground.

Image Courtesy of Hilary Osborn Malecki



EAST HAMPTON DURING THE REVOLUTION

By Colin Kelley

Introduction: As part of the East Hampton Historical Society's celebration of our nation's semiquincentennial, a podcast, written and recorded by East Hampton High School Senior, Colin Kelley, has been created as a monthly timeline of events in East Hampton during 1776. The podcast began in January of this year, and plots the course of East Hampton's early involvement in the movement to break from English rule, with details about events and activities of local residents, many whose ancestors still reside here. It's a fascinating study, a great podcast and we thank Mr. Kelley and the EHHS for allowing this reprint. We urge you to listen from the beginning. This article reports the month of April 1776 in East Hampton. Each installment is about 3 minutes long and can be found at this link: <https://leathamptonhistory.org/2026/01/05/spirit-of-76-east-hampton-in-the-american-revolution>

By April 1776, East Hampton found itself caught between two pressures of war – supporting fighting far from home while facing danger close to its own shores. The town was asked to provide men for the broader Revolutionary effort, even as British ships appeared just offshore. April became a month where distant battles and local fears collided.

One connection to the wider war was the Canadian Campaign. In late 1775, American forces had marched into Canada attempting to remove British control and possibly bring Canada into the Revolution. The campaign was difficult and marked by long marches, disease, and harsh winter conditions. By April of 1776, American forces were retreating,

and colonies like New York were being pressed to supply more men to replace losses.

Captain John Davis of East Hampton had been among the soldiers fighting in Canada. By April 1776, he had returned home and wrote a letter to the New York Provincial Congress acknowledging his responsibility to recruit more soldiers. His role highlights how East Hampton was drawn into the war beyond its borders, supplying men for a campaign hundreds of miles away, even as the town itself remained vulnerable.

That vulnerability became alarmingly clear on April 9, when Reverend Samuel Buell reported seeing a British fleet off Fisher's Island, just across the water from East Hampton. Buell urgently wrote to the Provincial Congress asking for one or two regiments to protect the area. His pleas suggests that town leaders understood how exposed East Hampton was and feared that an attack from the sea could come at any time.

The danger did not fade. On April 17, Burnet Miller also wrote to Congress reporting the same fleet. Multiple sightings confirmed that this was not a false alarm. British ships were present, visible and close. Unfortunately, these appeals for protection went unanswered, increasing frustration and anxiety. For East Hampton, war was no longer something that was happening elsewhere. By April 1776, it was quite literally on the horizon.

VILLAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE *(continued from p. 1)*

VPSEH has advocated emerged from the meeting which we were gratified to see included. Chief among them is inclusion of a Vision Statement, which serves as the guiding principle for all recommendations to follow in the Plan itself. Additionally, the deadline for public input was extended for one month, until April 30th, so please make sure to read the plan and make your recommendations before that date. Comments can be submitted in writing via US Mail or online. Please see this link: <https://ehvplan.wixsite.com/home>

Several members of the public offered salient and important comments, some of which centered on issues already identified in the plan, but one commenter addressed the absence of quiet in Village life and how noise in general has increased over the decades. Light trespass was another issue raised by attendees. Both noise and light can disrupt not only the peaceful enjoyment of home and property, but the breeding cycles of nighttime dependent flora and fauna,

treatment plant, about which some on the VPSEH Board have mixed feelings. On its face, a sewage treatment plant would be a huge benefit to purifying waste water which has a negative impact on our surface water bodies and drinking water. However, siting a plant will be a big challenge and the impacts on village streets including residential properties will be extraordinary. Moreover, the development that such a plant might create, will be unmanageable because of a significant, long standing, well established deficit of parking spaces, even for present uses in the commercial core. VPSEH is not anti-development, but uses require parking spaces. With a current 1700 space deficit, creating more uses requiring parking seems impractical.

VPSEH crafted its own comments on the Draft Plan, developed by our Comprehensive Plan Update committee which included Trustees, Gene E. Cross, Jr., Bruce A.T. Siska and Peter M. Wolf. The committee conducted a careful review

of the Draft Plan and submitted comments which were discussed and edited, approved by the Board, save those of our members already serving on the Steering Committee, who had no input, and then submitted to the Consultants. Those comments are a part of the public record.

The next step is for the Steering Committee to work with the consultants to integrate these newer issues brought up during the public portion of Public Workshop #3 into the draft Plan which will be

issued for public comment and a public hearing, likely held sometime during the summer.

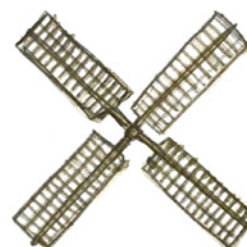
We are eager to see what the next iteration of the plan includes regarding these vital aspects of Village life. Please stay tuned and plan to participate in this important public process.



Photo Credit: Emily Tolbert

which has serious environmental impacts. We hope to see recommendations on how to govern these issues included in the new draft of the Plan.

The first of two important issues of prime concern for the VPSEH is the establishment of an Historic Planning department in Village Hall or, in the best case, an Historic Planning Commission. This is suggested in the Draft Plan, and would support the Design Review Board by specializing in Historic District applications and help to add more historic designations to our community among other responsibilities related to historic preservation. East Hampton's unique heritage and sense of place is manifest in its preserved historic character and is what anchors not only our identity, but real estate values, which have skyrocketed over the decades. The other critical issue is the Draft Plan's emphasis on development in the Gingerbread district, including a proposal for a sewage



VPSEH

Village Preservation Society
of East Hampton

WELCOME OUR NEW TRUSTEE!

Cynthia Gowen Crawford has lived in East Hampton Village year-round, part-time, her entire life. Her grandparents started coming to East Hampton in the 1940s, and she grew up in a John Custis Lawrence house near Main Beach. A passionate historic preservationist and conservationist, Cynthia worked in the arts in New York City and Boston.

She has served on historic district commissions and on conservatory and library boards and volunteers in her community. Dividing her time between Southport, CT and East Hampton, she and her husband are frequent floaters on the Bridgeport - Port Jefferson ferry. With a BA from the University of Virginia in art history with a concentration in architecture, Ms. Crawford has extensive experience in preservation and conservation activities both as a professional and volunteer. She serves on the Boards of the Historic District Commission and Historical Society of Wilton, CT and the Southport Conservancy and Pequot Library of Southport, CT. An old shingle house, recently purchased by her daughter and husband, makes the fourth generation of the family to own a home in the Village. We are very excited to welcome Ms. Crawford to our Board and look forward to a long working relationship with her.



Photo Credit: Crawley Family



**Please fill out, cut along the line and mail to THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY
P.O. Box 2015, East Hampton, NY 11937 • 631-324-3524 • www.villagepreservationsociety.org**

Please enroll me as a member of The Village Preservation Society of East Hampton
for the Membership Year from January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email address _____

Number of Members in this Membership _____

For year round Newsletters and information, please print winter address

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Contributors of:

\$ 25,000.00 will be listed as **Chairman's Circle**

\$ 10,000.00 be listed as **Visionary**

\$ 2,500.00 will be listed as **Advocate**

\$ 500.00 will be listed as **Patron**

\$ 100.00 will be listed as **Friend**

\$ 15,000.00 will be listed as **President's Circle**

\$ 5,000.00 will be listed as **Champion**

\$ 1,000.00 will be listed as **Benefactor**

\$ 250.00 will be listed as **Supporting Member**

Regular Membership (\$50) _____

The Membership Year runs from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026.

I would like to be active. My special interests are: _____

I (We) support VPS principles but do not wish to be listed as a member. Enclosed is a contribution of \$ _____

THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2015

East Hampton, NY 11937

www.villagepreservationsociety.org

ST. MATTHEW'S CHAPEL

By Jaine Mehring

The Freetown St. Matthew's Chapel was built in 1852 as a place of worship for three diverse cultural groups including White settlers, newly freed Black slaves and displaced indigenous Montaukett Indians, who lived in Freetown, just north of North Main St and worked in the Village and Town.

For over a century, St. Matthew's Chapel was used for Sunday services, baptisms, weddings, funerals and meetings. More than a place of worship, it was a focal point of the Freetown community. After the African American members of the Chapel left to build their own Calvary Baptist Church in 1958, many other members dispersed to other houses of worship within East Hampton, especially East Hampton Presbyterian Church and St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

The small Freetown Chapel was in desperate need of repair, heated only by a pot belly stove in winter. Ultimately, the parcel was sold, leaving the Chapel vulnerable to demolition by the new owner. In 1976, to save the Chapel from demolition, Richard Sage, then-owner of the Maidstone Marina, bought the Chapel for \$500 and moved it to the Maidstone Marina at Three Mile Harbor Hog Creek Road, now known as East Hampton Point Resort and Marina.

Under the care of Richard Sage and then, Ben Krupinski, the Chapel was well maintained and the historic



Photo Credit: The East Hampton Star, Cal Norris Archive

elements and structure protected. Mr. Krupinski expressed a desire to return the Chapel to the Town to further its protection, but after his untimely death in 2018, East Hampton Point was sold to hedge-fund owner Heath Freeman and a group of private investors. The Chapel is presently used as a small 'fitness center' for the Resort's guests.

In 2024, Preservation Long Island (PLI) issued a Letter of Recommendation enthusiastically supporting Local Landmark

Designation Status. Although the interior has been altered somewhat for the present use, PLI finds that the historic integrity of the structure remains intact and the Chapel

"...meets and exceeds several criteria for designation as a local landmark under the Town's preservation code."

A group of local historic preservation groups, including VPSEH, met earlier this year to demonstrate support for a Town effort to designate this important historic and cultural asset as a landmark through the regulatory process available through the Town Code. Further efforts to potentially return the building to the Freetown area might also be explored, as it was a desire of the late Mr. Krupinski, who grew up in the Freetown area, to see the building moved back to its more historically accurate, original neighborhood.



Photo Credit: Betsy Petroski