



July 14, 2015

CCOM represents 1200 families, businesses and individuals that live or work in Montauk or enjoy visiting our community.

Montauk is in a state of crisis. The town needs to massively scale up our response to the out of control party scene that has come to define our community. As things stand, residents are unable to live their lives or conduct their business because of the chaos that has taken over Montauk.

East Hampton Town Police, Code Enforcement, Town Attorney's and the Building Inspector's offices are operating in triage mode. Our neighborhoods and commercial centers are overwhelmed. This situation has gotten so far out of hand that this week you have heard calls of "enough" even from those who advocate most strenuously for giving business free reign to operate unregulated.

We all understand and welcome the seasonal and resort nature of our community. It is our economic lifeblood. But things have gone too far. Should we be content to be the epicenter of Long Island's 10-week Spring Break party or is there a better example of the kind of Town we will become?

Illegal share houses, business that have illegally expanded their operations by 200 or 300 percent with no corresponding expansions of their septic systems or parking, restaurants and hotels that have become constantly booming nightclubs. Annual bashes hosting 500 plus people that masquerade as fund-raisers for New York City charities.

The cumulative impacts are real and the costs are being borne by those of us who have invested in the community. Our property values are impacted, our taxes are affected, our beaches, harbors, bays and even the ocean have been pushed past what they can absorb. Our reality is not improving. It is getting worse. Rather than addressing water pollution, or even holding the line, we are forced to document its decline.

As you know, following the Fourth of July weekend, scientists from Stony Brook University began investigating Fort Pond after two dogs required medical treatment following a swim. At last report, cyanobacteria or blue green algae was the suspected culprit. According to the NYS DEC, human contact with cyanobacteria can cause “nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin or throat irritation, allergic reactions or breathing difficulties. Blue-green algae can also produce toxins that affect the liver and nervous systems...”

Fort Pond is likely to join south Lake Montauk as a no-go zone for safe swimming. Unfortunately, our pollution crisis is not limited to the bayside. Water samples from the dreen at Surfside Place, also known as Lowenstein Court, have exceeded safe levels of enterococcus bacteria, in 9 of twelve samples collected since July of 2014. The highest reading of 7,270 colony-forming units per 100 milliliters was collected on June 2nd of this year. 104 colony-forming units per 100 milliliters is considered unsafe for bathing beaches.

What is the impact to a resort community surrounded by water when there are no fish to eat and swimming is not safe? Who will come to Montauk when all we have left is the drunken party, illegal sharehouses, throngs of taxis lined up outside illegal nightclubs and overworked volunteer EMTs stuck in traffic struggling to get to the latest drug overdose or to pick up the pieces after another barroom brawl?

Your neighbors are here today seeking your leadership in finding a new direction for our community. People are watching their investments go down the drain. Their quality of life is being sacrificed for the quality -- and quantity -- of someone else's party.

In the words of Richard Henrickson, one of the sages of the east end, and one of our wisest elders, if we keep on this path, we will lose the thing we came for.

I come to you seeking your help, seeking your leadership, asking that you employ extraordinary measures, do everything legally possible, increase the budget for police, code enforcement, planning, the building inspector's office and Town Attorney's, whatever is necessary, so that we can get our lives back, so that we can reclaim our community.

This problem was not created overnight. It is a decade in the making. But it is also fair to say that our response is not yet proportional to the problem we must solve.



Jeremy Samuelson
CCOM Executive Director