

THE INDEPENDENT

ACTS TO PROTECT THE FRAGILE BODY OF WATER, SECOND LARGEST LAKE ON LONG ISLAND

East Hampton Town Purchases Three Acres on Fort Pond

AUGUST 12, 2020 BY | [T. E. MCMORROW](#)



The Town of East Hampton purchased the former Avalon Lakefront Resort for \$2.9 million. Independent/T.E. McMorrow

The East Hampton Town Board approved the purchase of a 3.1-acre Montauk property on a peninsula that juts out into Fort Pond from its western shore. The town is spending \$2.9 million from its Community Preservation Fund on the property, which was developed in the 1960s as a motel with cottages, known as the Avalon Lakefront Resort.

The property is one of several accessed via a private dirt road off Second House Road. It is one property removed from the Fort Pond House, already owned by the town. Between those two properties is Pathfinder Country Day Camp. There are 10 motel-type units on the newly purchased property.

It had been on the market for \$3.3 million, according to the real estate firm Compass' website.

A public hearing on the purchase was held May 7, during which Scott Wilson, who manages the town's land acquisitions, explained the thinking behind the purchase.



Beyond the parking lot of neighboring Pathfinder Day Camp is the former Avalon Lakefront Resort. Independent/T.E. McMorrow

The town plans to remove the various cottages and structures on the site, as well taking out an antiquated septic system. “The property slopes right down into the pond,” Wilson said, meaning runoff and pollution from it goes straight into Fort Pond. The goal is to create a green space, he added.

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Fort Pond covers 181 acres, with over three miles of shoreline. It is home to several species of fish including Smallmouth and Largemouth Bass.

Fort Pond is actually a lake, the second largest on Long Island, behind Lake Ronkonkoma. Because it is a landlocked body of water, there is very little natural flushing action to keep it clean, Wilson said.

According to Laura Tooman, president of Concerned Citizens of Montauk, studies done by the environmental watchdog group show that the lake is prone to sporadic spikes in the level of harmful bacteria, as well as outbreaks of blue-green algae bloom, caused by septic and fertilizer pollutants. Tooman, who has spoken to the town board on prior occasions about these issues, recently endorsed the town’s purchase of the Avalon Waterfront Resort.

The town has been actively pursuing purchases of waterfront properties on Fort Pond to protect the fragile body of water. Last fall the town purchased an undeveloped 1.26-acre site on the eastern shore of Fort Pond for slightly over \$1 million, money also drawn from the CPF fund. Wilson said this is now the fourth property on Fort Pond owned by the town