

THE EAST HAMPTON STAR



Deserve More Attention

Montauk

March 3, 2025

Dear Mr. Rattray,

In the discussion of East Hampton Town's proposal to amend the zoning code to reduce house sizes there has been a focus on the aesthetics of overlarge houses and on preserving rural character, both of which are important. However, Concerned Citizens of Montauk would like to remind everyone that the environmental impacts of large houses, particularly their energy and resource demands, deserve more attention in the discussion.

Quite simply, bigger houses use significantly more energy to run and more natural resources to build. Building materials, energy required for extraction, manufacturing, transport, and assembly, alone can account for up to 50 percent of a house's total energy demand.

And while you may retrofit a house to be as energy efficient as possible, the size of the building is still the largest factor to consider. Research shows that building size is by far the strongest predictor of residential energy consumption, more important than retrofit measures.

Beyond materials, larger houses often have a higher life cycle energy demand due to larger areas that need to be heated, cooled, and lit. This is partly because the share of energy consumption that goes to appliances, electronics, and lighting has risen. This makes intuitive sense, since large homes often have more or larger appliances and luxury items like hot tubs.

This doesn't even touch on the strain large houses place on other natural resources including our water systems. Larger buildings create more impermeable areas, such as covered and paved surfaces, reducing water's ability to soak into the ground and undergo natural filtration. This increases runoff pollution and limits the replenishment of our drinking water supply.

C.C.O.M. supports the recommendations that resulted from intensive study by the town's zoning code amendment working group reducing the gross floor area formula to 7 percent plus 1,300 square feet.

Sincerely,

REBECCA HOLLOWAY

Concerned Citizens of Montauk