

# Environmental review for project challenged

BY JIMIN KIM

jimin.kim@newsday.com

Five Old Bethpage residents have filed a lawsuit challenging the environmental review the Town of Oyster Bay conducted for Country Pointe at Plainview, a controversial office and housing development project.

During a hearing Wednesday in State Supreme Court in Mineola, attorneys representing the defendants — including the town and the developer — agreed no construction would take place before a follow-up hearing Justice George Peck scheduled for July 8.

The town board last month approved a plan for Beechwood Organization of Jericho to build 750 housing units, a 25,000-square-foot clubhouse and 118,450 square feet of retail space at Old Country and Round Swamp roads.

According to the plaintiffs' court petition, nearly 55 species of wildlife, including foxes and bats, inhabit the area and would be harmed by the project.

Representatives for both Beechwood and a third defendant, Plainview Properties SPE LLC of Plainview, declined to

comment.

Town Supervisor John Venditto said Oyster Bay officials "went well beyond what is required under the law in terms of environmental review" and provided myriad opportunities for public participation. "I am confident in the adequacy of the process . . . and further, I am confident that a well-informed decision was made," he said.

Kathleen DuVal, 65, a plaintiff and a resident of Round Swamp Road, said she's seen her local landscape change a great deal in the 55 years she's lived next to the wooded area where the project would go.

"We've been working on the fifth generation of our family to enjoy it, the wildlife," she said. "Whatever happens to that property has to be pulled back. It can't be so overwhelming. Bigger isn't better."

Richard Brummel, 55, an environmental activist from East Hills, helped the residents organize their complaint. Unlike previous challenges, which mostly questioned impacts on such things as traffic, theirs focuses on wildlife.

Brummel said that if the environmental review is invalidated,

said they were not aware Adam Skelos had lobbied Nassau County public works officials.

level of transparency, more than [the] state or any of its municipalities."

## RENDERINGS



Country Pointe at Plainview plans include 750 housing units.



"The next step would be to make sure the next review does what it's supposed to do and protect the environment."

Supporters have said the project would provide much-needed housing on Long Island. DuVal said 750 housing units is extreme.

"I know there are a lot of people who want to move out of a house and into a condo where they don't have to upkeep the property," DuVal said. "It's

hard to imagine what 750 housing units are going to be like, especially for the atmosphere and the forest."

"Once the issues are clarified and properly addressed in the environmental impact study, we're confident that the town will feel that the project should be limited to the central part of the property away from the forest and the majority of the habitat," said Glenn Denton, a plaintiff and a Round Swamp Road resident.

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