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## **New East Hills Fire House is a Monument to Government Corruption**

East Hills, NY, 9-8-13 -- The new firehouse on Harbor Hill Rd. represents the dominance of insiders and well-connected players over open government and environmental responsibility. The firehouse will in the future most likely become a noisy, busy nuisance to the residential community it sits in.

A half dozen nearby residents had seriously considered going to court after the secretive process became public in 2011, but became confused by the legal issues involved.

Numerous flaws in the process were used to shove through this new firehouse without the awareness of the community, until the process was already completed. It is a story of government failings -- a corruption of the process, the accountability, the environmental review.

The most serious condemnation is deserved by members of the Zoning Board, led by Michael Kosinski of the Roslyn Water District, who had a duty to thoroughly review the variances, and Mayor Michael Koblenz, who kept the community in the dark.

In addition the deeply-politically connected Sahn law firm presented highly deficient information on behalf of their clients and made transparent representations to the Zoning Board. (See [Planet-in-Peril.org/easthills/east-hills-firehouse.html](http://Planet-in-Peril.org/easthills/east-hills-firehouse.html).)

Among the serious problems with the process and the new firehouse:

- Rather than essential to this community, the triple-sized new facility -- capable of housing NINE fire vehicles -- is most likely designed to serve the 10 other towns and villages -- like Greenvale, Brookville, and Old Westbury -- that have expensive contracts with the fire company. The added capacity may encourage further contracts -- and more and more activity.
- No studies of traffic, diesel emissions, and noise were done prior to the issuance of multiple variances by the East Hills Zoning Board;
- A required state Environmental Review was never done, the Zoning Board claiming the fire house would have no environmental impact despite its obvious massive expansion;

- No one clearly notified told residents that the fire district was voting on the fire house at its annual meeting in 2010 or 2011, or its \$3.4 million expenditure -- funds for which had been accumulated in a slush fund in prior years;
- No one told residents of East Hills that the substantial variances were being considered by the zoning board. Neighbors of the location said a letter notifying them did not give any hint of the massive work planned;
- Almost every tree on the site was destroyed by the construction, many apparently carelessly due to undermining of root systems (a common failing in East Hills). Among the trees were beautiful age-old pine trees;
- The small firehouse that existed prior to the demolition was allowed by a state judge in 1962 in a residential area, over the objections of residents who sued, only as a small outpost to serve the eastern part of the fire district. The new fire house is designed to serve over 10 other communities that have expensive fire contracts with the agency;
- Numerous legal flaws and contradictions were found in the public record. (See [Planet-in-Peril.org/easthills/east-hills-firehouse.html](http://Planet-in-Peril.org/easthills/east-hills-firehouse.html) for coverage.);
- Local media failed to bring out the relevant facts and tilted coverage to the official stories;

There are really very few fires and similar emergencies in East Hills.

The new firehouse is a costly vanity project that might serve other communities largely at the expense of the peace and quiet of residents in Norgate and other nearby neighborhoods.

Richard Brummel is an environmental activist who lives and grew up in East Hills. His website [Planet-in-Peril.org](http://Planet-in-Peril.org) details his activities and concerns, particularly about the destruction of the suburbs and their ecology on Long Island.