



Filtration plant debate heats up

Quakers' Austa Devlin and WJWW's Paul Kutzy trade verbal blows on stopping the land swap

By Dick Hubert

Thursday, March 9, 2023 1:53 AM

Austa Devlin, a lawyer, Port Chester resident, and board member of the Purchase Friends (Quaker) Meeting, sent an e-mail to the Westmore News late Tuesday, Feb. 28 denouncing the Westchester Joint Water Works (WJWW) and their planned filtration plant on behalf of the Quakers.

This newspaper sent the e-mail to Paul Kutzy, manager of the WJWW, for a response, knowing it would be too late for inclusion in last week's edition.

Hence this week's published debate.

Readers curious to see the full extent of the positions on both sides can read the Quaker lawsuit against the WJWW environmental review and the plant's location at westmorenews.com.

Kutzy advises that: "A brief comparison between the Airport Site and the site that WJWW currently owns can be found at DemandSafeWater.org with further details found in SEQRA documents at www.wjwwfiltration.org."

Which location is best for the filtration plant?

Devlin: The Quakers' position is that the WJWW should go ahead and build the filtration plant on the property they already own, and have owned for years, up Tower Road. They have already taken down hundreds of mature trees on that other site, and they put down anti-vegetation mats to stop plants from growing back. They have no need to "swap" that property for the land on Purchase Street which is owned by the airport/county.

Kutzy: WJWW was forced to look elsewhere beginning in 2008 when the Harrison Planning Board chose **not** to complete the SEQRA review process for the property WJWW currently owns. Without completion of the SEQRA review process, **no** further action could be taken to construct the filtration plant at the property WJWW currently owns.

It should be emphasized that WJWW **had** completed its obligations as the applicant for full compliance with the SEQRA review process by submitting a proposed Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to the Planning Board in July 2008.

This is detailed in FAQs at www.wjwwfiltration.org. Since that time, on Oct. 12, 2022, WJWW completed its SEQRA review process as lead agency with the adoption of a SEQRA Findings Statement, which concluded that the Airport Site for the filtration plant is superior to all alternative locations investigated, including the site that WJWW currently owns, and this fact remains unchanged.

Does the proposed filtration plant pose a threat to the watershed?

Devlin: The land along Purchase Street is within the watershed of the reservoir - which provides water for residents in both Westchester and NYC.

Building along Purchase Street would irreparably harm the watershed of Rye Lake and endanger the drinking water reservoir - we're talking about a building one acre in size, going down 40' into the watershed ground, plus another acre of paving around it, encircled by a tall, spiked fence.

Tearing out another several hundred trees and building this huge industrial-sized building would also destroy the natural green buffer on that side of the airport.

Kutzy: The claim that "Building along Purchase Street would irreparably harm the watershed of Rye Lake and endanger the drinking water reservoir is untrue.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the filtration plant demonstrates that the facility will **not** harm the environment. The EIS along with all SEQRA documents can be found at www.wjwwfiltration.org. Kensico Reservoir/Rye Lake is a water source for WJWW, and as such, WJWW is keenly aware of the necessity of protecting the Kensico Reservoir Watershed.

WJWW currently has water treatment and other facilities within the Watershed, and we have operated within the Watershed for 75 years without incident. Hazen and Sawyer, our project engineer, has been working collaboratively with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) towards approval of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the filtration plant site.

In November 2022, our engineers submitted a complete application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit along with a NYSDEC Freshwater Wetlands permit application. We expect both NYCDEP and NYSDEC approvals to be forthcoming, validating our determination that the filtration meets the stringent environmental standards to protect the Watershed.

Which site is cheaper for constructing the plant?

Devlin: The WJWW and Mayor Murphy have stated it would be less expensive to build on the Purchase Street site—but this is untrue, based on their own Environmental Impact Statement - have you read that? It expressly states that there's no appreciable difference in the cost of building on either site. In other words, the WJWW has literally expressed no reason why they should want to swap their land and build along Purchase Street.

Kutzy: Cost is only one factor in considering where to site the filtration plant. The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Findings Statement adopted by WJWW, as lead agency, on Oct. 12, 2022, considered many environmental factors and concluded that the Airport Site for the filtration plant is superior to all alternative locations investigated, including the site that WJWW currently owns.

A portion of the filtration plant will be underground, not visible to the public, while the above-ground portion has been designed to be consistent with the character of the Purchase Street neighborhood. The plant will be located behind an existing buffer of natural trees and vegetation and will be enhanced by landscaping and architectural elements.

The height of the building will comply with neighboring residential zoning. There will be an 8-foot-high security fence required by New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) which will be ornamental in design and setback from Purchase Street closely hugging the perimeter of the building's driveway.

The filtration plant project site is adjacent to an active area at Westchester County Airport, which comprises commercial, business and private aviation services. The vast majority of the Airport Site was previously cleared of trees prior to the 1940s and over half of the second growth on the Airport Site is populated by trees which can be found on the NYSDEC invasive species list.

The filtration plant project site will be cleared of 549 second-growth trees; however, the landscape plan for the Airport Site will include restoring 302 native trees, adding extensive native plantings, and reintroduce more than 55 native and site-appropriate species to rebuild the local ecosystem. An architectural rendering showing the landscaping plan for the filtration plant site, and further details on the appearance of the plant, can be found under FAQs at www.wjwwfiltration.org.

Search GO

Westmore NEWS Weekly Round-up Sign up for news delivered right to your inbox

Tax cuts for seniors
A new law allows seniors to take a tax credit for property taxes. The credit is based on the amount of property taxes paid. The credit is available to seniors who are 65 or older and who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. The credit is available to seniors who are 65 or older and who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

Funding crisis
The New York State Office of General Services is looking for ways to reduce the state's budget deficit. The state is facing a funding crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The state is looking for ways to reduce the state's budget deficit.

Legacy of the field
The Port Chester County Historical Society is holding a meeting to discuss the legacy of the field. The meeting will be held on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 7:00 PM.

Not sober by morning
A new study shows that drinking alcohol in the morning can lead to a hangover. The study found that drinking alcohol in the morning can lead to a hangover. The study found that drinking alcohol in the morning can lead to a hangover.

Bulk trash collection
The Port Chester County Office of Public Works is offering bulk trash collection. The office is offering bulk trash collection. The office is offering bulk trash collection.

WJWW's 2022 Annual Report
The Westchester Joint Water Works (WJWW) has released its 2022 Annual Report. The report provides information about the WJWW's operations and financial performance. The report provides information about the WJWW's operations and financial performance.

Blind Brook hosts free Narcan training
Blind Brook Community Center is hosting free Narcan training. The training is for anyone interested in learning how to use Narcan. The training is for anyone interested in learning how to use Narcan.

B.B., P.C. schools address nationwide opioid epidemic
Blind Brook and Port Chester schools are addressing the nationwide opioid epidemic. The schools are addressing the nationwide opioid epidemic. The schools are addressing the nationwide opioid epidemic.

Westmore News
Follow Page 2.2K followers

Westmore News
on Tuesday

A few of the Port Chester School District's capitol projects are underway, including the roof repairs to the high school and Park Avenue Elementary School and the playground equipment replacement at John F. Kennedy Elementary School

WESTMORENEWS.COM
Capital projects underway at ...
At the Jan. 19 meeting of the Port Ch...

1 Comment Share

Westmore News

HERE'S MY BUSINESS CARD
TO PLACE YOUR BUSINESS DIRECTORY AD CALL (914) 339-6864

FOUNDING AND HEATING CONTRACTORS
100% MEMBER DISCOUNT
Joseph L. Sappia & Sons, Inc.
125 West Putnam Street
Port Chester, NY 10573
914-939-0257 • 203-591-6847
Fax: 914-939-1000

BioHeat
is the fuel of the future and we have it now!
Westmore
www.westmorenews.com
100 Irving Avenue, Port Chester, NY 10573

ROOFING • SIDING • WINDOWS
DOUBLE A CONTRACTORS
www.doublea.com
1-800-237-6864
15 South Wacker Drive, Port Chester, NY 10573
Double Family Owned and Operated

RICHARD ANNE REALTY
Richard Anne Realty
327 Irving Avenue, Port Chester, NY 10573
914-939-6864

Advertising
Doesn't Cost, It Pays.
Contact Richard at 914-939-6864
or publisher@westmorenews.com
for information on promoting your business or service.

TONY'S AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR SHOP
Tony's Automotive Repair Shop
36 College Street, Port Chester, NY 10573
914-939-9404 • 914-939-5454
Tony's Manager



What can **hearing better** bring to your life?

Anthony Mancini
M.A., C.C.C.A., F.F.A.
N.Y. State Licensed & ADHA Certified Audiologist