



## SOUTHAMPTON VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

To be held on **Friday Jan 16, 2026 at 3:00pm**  
Village Hall

Please click the link below to join the webinar:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83929958088>

### Pledge of Allegiance

*“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”*

#### 1. Roll Call

Michael Anderson (MA) '27  
Michel Brogard (MB) '28 Co-Chair  
Christian Picot (CP) '28 Co-Chair  
Jeanne Sdroulas (JS) '27  
Jacob Yahaiyan (JH) '27

2. Motion to approve minutes of December 12, 2025 PC meeting
3. Electoral reform with ballot proposal – Christian Picot
4. Public safety wireless tower at Windmill Lane Fire Station - Michel Brogard
5. SH Village Partnership – Jeanne Sdroulas
6. SCWA Water tank project North Magee/Tuckahoe Woods - Jacob Yahaiyan
7. Public Tree Committee update -Michael Anderson
8. Deer Management update - Michael Anderson
9. Next step on SH Village workforce housing - Jacob Yahaiyan
10. Public Comments & Discussion on other subjects
11. Adjournment & Scheduling of next meeting to Friday February 20, 2026



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Southampton Village (“SHV”) Mayor and Trustees  
**From:** SHV Planning Commission  
**Date:** January 16, 2026  
**Subject:** Draft Electoral Process in Southampton Village

Southampton Village elections are held annually for a staggered board composed of a mayor and four trustees with 2-year terms each. Two trustees will be elected in 2026, and a mayor and two other trustees will be elected the following year.

There is a need for deepening institutional memory and expertise for long-term planning, overcoming a learning curve for newly elected officials, safeguarding against policy volatility, administrative staff stability, and reducing the cost and burden to conduct elections every year. These issues are discussed below. They can be solved via a referendum for longer electoral terms and elections held every other year (“biennial elections”) instead of every year. Residents can vote for a proposition to ensure continuity and stability while still maintaining accountability of their local government.

### Recommendations:

- ✓ **Referendum on June 19, 2026** -voters express their choice on a proposition.
- ✓ **Four-year terms resulting in a biennial cycle** -voters may prefer elections every other year while ensuring continuity and stability and still maintain accountability of their local government.
- ✓ **An implementation starting in 2028** -results in an odd year election cycle thereafter
- ✓ **Election remains in June** -focus on local issues.

**Implementation:**

New York Village Law allows for changes to terms of office via a referendum, and the Board may submit a proposal to the qualified electors of the village for approval at the next general election of the village to be held on June 19, 2026. This ensures that **the final decision rests with the registered voters, providing a transparent process where every voice is heard.**

The Commission recommends a referendum with a ballot proposal in June 2026. **Odd-year elections are preferable** for voters to focus on local issues and not be distracted by regional or national elections. If the proposal passes, SHV elected officials would initially have **three-year terms starting in 2028**, followed by elections with **four-year terms starting in 2029**. In addition, the Village judge’s elections are held every four years, and its next election is scheduled to be held in 2028. The term can be altered to 3 years for one cycle. This would allow for the judge’s elections not to be held by themselves in the future. Elections will begin a **biennial cycle in 2029 with four-year terms thereafter** as proposed below.

A public hearing is conducted for a new local law submitted to a public referendum at the next general Village election. The debate during the public hearing of a new local law adding Chapter 11 to the Village Code amending the terms of office of the village mayor and trustees from two to four years may be centered on whether the trustees’ and/or mayor’s term should be amended and term limits. The Commission believes the arguments for longer terms apply to both.

**Proposed Schedule: Starting in 2028 for odd year implementation thereafter**

Officials	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Mayor		X		X				X		
Trustee A		X		X				X		
Trustee B		X		X				X		
Trustee C	X		X			X				X
Trustee D	X		X			X				X
SHV Judge			X			X				X

Towns have 4-year terms for their council members and for Supervisors in many cases. The Suffolk County legislature is moving to 4-year terms after a positive response to a ballot proposal last November. Villages which adopted a biennial instead of an annual cycle include a mayor with a 4-year term.

Some residents argue that frequent elections are the ultimate check on local power and create a "permanent campaign" cycle when officials spend time listening to constituents. Arguably, elected officials are listening to constituents regularly outside elections.

The biennial model is considered the **gold standard** of stability because it gives officials **enough time to learn their roles (4 years) while ensuring that voters still have a voice every two years** to adjust the board's direction. Many Towns and Villages have this in place as noted below.

**Election Terms of Townships in Suffolk County:**

	Town Supervisor Term	Town Council Member Term		Town Supervisor Term	Town Council Member Term
Babylon	4 Years	4 Years	Smithtown	4 Years	4 Years
Brookhaven	4 Years	4 Years	Southold	4 Years	4 Years
East Hampton	2 Years	4 Years	Riverhead	2 Years	4 Years
Huntington	4 Years	4 Years	Shelter Island	2 Years	4 Years
Islip	4 Years	4 Years	Southampton	2 Years	4 Years

November Elections.

**Many Villages in Suffolk with 4-year terms:**

Amityville	Lake Grove
Babylon Village	Lindenhurst
Belle Terre	Northport
Bellport	Ocean Beach
East Hampton Village	Patchogue
Greenport	Port Jefferson
Islandia	West Hampton Dunes

## 1. Deepening Institutional Memory and Expertise

The primary benefit of a 4-year term is the cultivation of subject matter expertise. In a 2-year cycle, an official is effectively a novice for half their term.

- **Historical Context:** Major infrastructure often takes 3 to 5 years from planning to ribbon cutting. A 4-year term allows a Trustee to oversee a project from inception to completion, ensuring the original vision isn't lost.
- **Mentorship:** Longer terms create a natural seniority structure. Experienced members have the breathing room to mentor new officials on the nuances of state and county agency relationships without the immediate pressure of an upcoming reelection campaign.

## 2. Overcoming the Learning Curve

New York State Village Law, municipal budgeting, and land-use regulations are notoriously complex.

- **Legislative Continuity:** Longer terms prevent the legislative paralysis that occurs when a board is constantly in a state of flux. It ensures that much of the board is always operating at a peak level of competency and legal understanding.

## 3. Safeguarding Against Policy Volatility

Four-year terms act as a vital cooling mechanism for local democracy. Short 2-year terms often force officials into a state of perpetual campaigning, where decisions are made based on the sudden passion of the moment rather than long-term stability. Elected officials need to listen to residents regularly, and not just during campaigns.

- **Deliberate Governance:** A longer term ensures that even if a single-issue wave occurs, the governing body has the duration to work through the emotion of the crisis.
- **Stability over Populism:** With four years, officials can make necessary decisions (like a controversial zoning change or a tax adjustment) and have the time to prove the decision's long-term value to the public.

## 4. Protecting Professional and Administrative Stability

Village staff—including the administrator, building inspector, DPW head, and police chief—function best under a stable governing philosophy.

- **Professional Buffer:** Frequent elections create a culture of administrative anxiety.
- **Reduced Attrition:** When professional staff know they have a consistent board to report to, the village is less likely to lose high-quality talent to neighboring municipalities.

## 5. Financial

- **Administration:** The trend of New York State counties' board of elections withdrawing voting machine support for villages is primarily driven by a combination of technological complexity, cost, and recent changes in state electoral law. To be sure, the cost to run annual SHV elections will rise to over \$40,000.
- **Fiscal Planning:** Long-term budgeting and capital improvement plans are more credible when the board members who signed off on them are in office long enough to implement the first several years of the plan.
- **Predictability:** Credit rating agencies value the predictability that comes with 4-year terms. It signals to bondholders that the village's fiscal policies are not subject to biennial whims.

**Arguments to change for 4-Year Terms:** Proponents argue that 2-year terms create a "permanent campaign" cycle where officials spend too much time running for reelection. They suggest 4-year terms would allow for more long-term planning, reducing the increased logistical burden/cost of holding elections every single year, and increasing voter turnout. The State is encouraging the trend. The Suffolk County legislature is moving to 4-year terms following the successful Proposition 2 on the November 2025 ballot.

There is no discussion on (a) lifetime or concurrent term limits and (b) special elections instead of an appointment if a seat is vacant. These issues may distract from the purpose of simply solving for longer terms resulting in a biennial election cycle.

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