

DRAFT

PLANNING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
SOUTHAMPTON VILLAGE  
JANUARY 16, 2026

Due notice having been given the public hearing of the Planning Commission for the Village of Southampton was held on Friday, January 16, 2026, at 3:00PM in Village Hall, 23 Main Street, Southampton, NY and via Zoom conferencing.

Chair opened meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Present were Michael Anderson  
Co-Chair Michel Brogard  
Co-Chair Christian Picot via Zoom  
Jacob Yahaiyan

Jeanne Sdroulas was absent.

Village Planner Alex Wallach was present.

MOTION by M. Brogard, second C. Picot

**To approve the minutes from the December 12, 2025 Planning Commission meeting.**

On Vote: M. Anderson, Chair Brogard, C. Picot, J. Yahaiyan

**Electoral Reform with Ballot Proposal – C. Picot** – C. Picot reviewed the reform proposal in packets. For the public, you can read it on page 2 of today’s agenda for the Planning Commission posted on the Village website. We have discussed this with many residents, past and present elected officials, and received many different opinions. The recommendation was discussed and reviewed by Village counsel. I will go through the why, what, who and the how.

**Why now:** A ballot proposal last November for Suffolk County legislature (“Prop2”) to extend terms to 4 years passed, so there is interest.

**What are we solving:** Residents overwhelmingly prefer elections every other year. Voters are divided whether terms should be extended.

**Who will it impact:** None of the current board members up for elections in 2026 and 2027 as it is proposed to start in 2028, thereby avoiding perceived self-interest.

**How to implement:** With a ballot proposal to ensure government transparency.

Whether for or against this proposal, it is important to understand you will be able to express your views in the ballot box. We know there are a lot of opinions out there. Let me quote a resident “4-year terms in a small town is a lifetime if someone poisons the waters”. Another wrote “longer terms may promote

nepotism and institutionalize mediocrity.” He noted that more will be shared during the upcoming public hearing.

A public hearing will be held on the topic, but at the end of the day, the voter will vote either way.

To recap how it currently works: (1) elections are held every year, and (2) in order to maintain a staggered board, elections are held one year for two trustees as will be the case this June, and the following year for a mayor and two trustees in 2027.

**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 ensuring continuity and stability. It still maintains accountability by your local government.
- An implementation starting in 2028 – results in an odd year election cycle thereafter.
- Elections remain in June – focus on local issues

If you were to have election every other year, should the terms remain two years, change to three, or four years?

If 2-year term, then you would have an entire board together up for elections. This is known as a concurrent, not a staggered board. That means an entire board could be changed every other year. I read someone proposing that approach “achieves administrative efficiency without weakening voter oversight.” It will become clear in a minute why this is a bad idea.

If 3-year term, you will end up with an election with one year off and two consecutive years with elections. That does not solve for elections held every other year.

Therefore, a four-year term makes sense if voters want elections every other year. That is why all Town council members have four-year terms in Suffolk County, and 60% of them also have the Supervisor with 4 years.

A chart was shown that demonstrated 4-year terms are utilized in Amityville, Babylon Village, Belle Terre, Bellport, East Hampton Village, Greenport, Islandia, Lake Grove, Lindenhurst, Northport, Ocean Beach, Patchogue, Port Jefferson and Westhampton Dunes.

Every Village in the County which has 4-year terms are for both the Mayor and the Trustees. Fifty percent of the Villages in the County have it, and many of the other fifty percent have brought up the idea at one time or another.

Five main reasons to consider:

1. **Protecting profession and administrative stability:** While residents focus on the elected officials, the people who work for them provide the services they expect for the taxes they pay. Frequent elections create a culture of administrative anxiety. Village staff, including the

administrator, building inspector, DPW, police chief and first responders who ensure your public safety, function best under a stable governing philosophy. It avoids unnecessary attrition or changes.

2. **Deepening institutional memory and expertise:** A four-year term allows a Trustee to oversee a project from inception to completion. Major infrastructure often takes three to five years from planning to ribbon cutting. Experienced members have the time to mentor new officials, without the immediate pressure of an upcoming reelection campaign.
3. **Overcoming the learning curve:** Longer terms prevent the legislative paralysis that occurs when a board is constantly in a state of flux. Municipal budgeting and land-use regulations are notoriously complex.
4. **Safeguarding against policy volatility:** Short 2-year terms often force officials into a state of perpetual campaigning. Elected officials are listening to residents regularly, not just during campaigns. 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.

A former Southampton Mayor who served many terms and wrote to me on the subject stated "I always felt that having an annual election cycle impeded progress. Sometimes board members shy away from potentially controversial issues because they were up for election."

5. **Financial:** The cost of running elections is the least and last of the many reasons. Credit rating agencies value the predictability that comes with four-year terms. The county's board of elections has withdrawn voting machine support for Villages making the process more difficult and expensive.

A second chart demonstrated implementation beginning with two trustees in 2028 and mayor and two trustees in 2029, and then two trustees in 2031 and mayor and two trustees in 2033. Every two years there would be an election for either two trustees or two trustees and mayor.

The Commission recommends a referendum with a ballot proposal in June 2026. Odd-year elections are preferable for voter to focus on local issues and not be distracted by regional or national elections. If the proposal passes, SHV elected official would initially have three-year terms starting in 2028, followed by elections with four-year terms starting in 2029.

As a conclusion, C. Picot repeated that it does not reduce accountability. Voters still have a voice every two years for half the board. None of the current board member up for elections in 2026 and 2027 as it is proposed to start in 2028, thereby avoiding perceived self-interest.

M. Anderson noted it was brought up a few years ago and one of the main reasons why it was brought up is that he watched the whole process and it is arduous to do the process for a six month election without working on Village duties, he also feels stability of Village employees having a different boss is not easy on them. If they have same boss for four years it is better and he feels the election expense (40- 50,000K) is a lot yearly. A big discussion regarding three year term limits was brought up, and this was brought up again at this consideration, but they came to realize it does not work mathematically, the cycle does not work. He is in favor of the proposal.

M. Brogard noted the Planning Commission is nominated by Mayor and they are asked to look at issues, and this is a forum and he is happy that so many are interested in the subject and he feels it is good and

what democracy looks like. Kimberly Allen, Trustee Coburn, Trustee Simioni, and Trustee Zinnanti are all present today.

J. Yahiayan looks back over the last 25-30 years, and there is a general consensus that the needs of community much more pronounced by allowing two to four year tenor. The needs of the Village are more pronounced; things are different so by mitigating needs of Village and for more continuity in Village administration it is a consideration. For him it is a micro/macro perspective.

C. Picot noted it is not unusual; half of the Villages already do this.

Trustee Eduardo Simioni, resident on White Street, feels they should look at accountability. Two-year terms mean going to the registered voters as to why remain a Trustee, he feels it is important. The campaign is two or three months, it is a real education, it gives public perspective. People will tell you how they feel, and he feels approval of community and their chance to reelect you is important. It is not frequent change; he feels continuity is not an issue. He feels that proving yourself every two years, as opposed to four years maybe not doing the job right. He is not in favor of four year terms.

Rob Devinney, High Street, felt like they are valid points, but he feels that issues are connected to function of government and how it is working, he feels people feel it could be better. They hear lack of transparency; there are some Board members not included in meetings and gender problems. Not so long ago had issues with insurance and lifetime pensions, the issue involved benefits getting earlier and quicker, some improvement was made, the resistance had to do with that issue with long term election terms. He feels issues are connected.

Trustee Lin Zinnatti, Burnett Street, all have personal opinions on issue. The important aspect is that it should be referendum, then everybody can express opinion at ballot box.

One Village resident expressed concern about the money, she feels very important that they do not overspend on elections and also four-year terms allow people to grow in their positions.

Laura Devinney, High Street, was a member of the Commission when it first came up. She wants confirmation whether Mayor and Trustee are part time positions or full positions, alluding to the fact they have interest in other ways of making income. It sounds to her like a full time position. Money, salary and benefits are her thought. She likes part-time, she recently noticed that sometimes difficult to find trustees and mayor in Village Hall. She asked if this was brought up by the Mayor. Regarding the learning curve, if this does go to public referendum, she suggest that there are series of public meeting prior so that it can be fleshed out.

C. Picot noted this is a proposal and the Trustees have to decide if it will be on a ballot, purpose of this meeting is to look at it and Planning Commission and getting community input. This is recommendation phase.

Rob Coburn, Hill Street, noted he trusts the wisdom of the voters in referendum. The State of NY is encouraging extending terms and to vote on even year cycles, but exempts Village is on mandates, have more flexibility. He looked at list and looks like few Villages have adopted four year terms, C. Picot noted that East Hampton Village is on four year terms. R. Coburn asked why three year initial terms would not

start in 2027, because it would get them on even year schedule. C. Picot noted their thought was that it moves you away from regional/national election issues, so that only local issues are on the voter minds.

M. Brogard noted it could appear self-serving by separating it more. Last point R. Coburn made was been living here for 36 years and observing local government, in all those cases stability and continuity comes more from senior administrator than elected officials. In those municipalities, the tone is set more by senior civil servants.

Kimberly Allen, noted that Village residents are smart and the vote will be in their hands. Elected officials every two years engages the community, she feels it is valuable in running for office to have both summer and year round residents. She also feels that continuity was shown in legislation regarding gas blowers, it was brought up in one administration and the next mayor took it on and continued with previous administration. Build on others, they do not agree with continuity narrative and they have institutional knowledge. Trustees are part time, here to shape policy, but running of Village is senior civil servants. She is glad they are seeking input and there are several sides to the issue.

Monda DuCille, she feels that two-year term helps in getting the itch to get involved and get to know people, she feels if the shorter terms went away those running would lose that feeling to connect with the public. She also is concerned that the average person who is going to vote would not have any idea regarding the issue.

**Public Safety Wireless Tower at Windmill Lane Fire Station – M. Brogard** – By lengthy RFP process, Diamond Communications was selected as the contractor for the new tower. They went before SHV land use boards and received all necessary approvals. The building permit was issued a few weeks ago, now at this phase they are finalizing engineering drawings and will commence construction sometime in March with completion in April. The Motorola equipment for first responders will be installed at the top of the tower and hopefully three carriers will want to rent space on tower, generating approximately 9-12k income per month, with half going to Diamond Communications and the Village receiving the other half. L. Zennati negotiated a 500,000K payment from Diamond Communication at commence. The carriers are not required to get on the tower, they all have different plans and may do small cells, and they have the right to do that on the right of ways. Crown Castle for T-Mobile is putting up over 200 small cells in East Hampton. They have the right to do so, the good news is that sometime later this year we should have at least one carrier and Motorola up and running.

Trustee Simioni asked the pros and cons of the small cell versus tower. M. Brogard noted that it is not either or, they do different things and need both because of different frequencies. They need macro towers, about every five miles for coverage is ideal, we have 3 or 4. Eventually there will be more and more nodes, and towers. The three carriers do not operate together, they are independent and it is complex.

C. Picot noted that the Commission had recommended a law on SWF (small wireless facility) to preempt under FCC guide and it was coded, but they know the nodes are coming will have a meeting with Crown Castle in early February and they know what they will tell them, that T-Mobile will need maybe fifteen or so nodes in addition to the tower. If they have a choice they need to discuss. They are a little unsightly, they can contain two carriers, but not three. The 5G network will be omnipresent, E. Simioni noted in the City they have antennas that are on top of buildings, why cannot they be on top of buildings here. M. Brogard noted that each antenna broadcasts differently. It only propagates 500', the

tower covers more and helps first responders. The point is that some resident is going to be unhappy, and elected officials will have to deal with the issue. Town of Southampton is installing two towers, one the transfer station and one at Oaklands dock in Hampton Bays, so both of those will add to the capacity. Starlink is coming and will work on cell phones with no alternatives, however, it is not a cure for everything, it is good for certain areas but more expensive. They will need to have a variety of systems.

Trustee Coburn commented that Starlink, does not propagate laterally in buildings or if there is a blind spot it does not work. K. Allen noted the antenna is ugly, but it is necessary for safety, she noted that at one point there was a flashing light at the tower near her home on Potato Field, she noted it is not flashing now and that made all the difference in the appearance, so it is a big benefit. She asked if the negotiated check was 500k free and clear, M. Brogard noted the Motorola equipment will most likely be purchased with some of it and revenues from carriers are gross and net. Diamond Communications maintains the tower; the Village does not pay for the maintenance. This tower will also allow competition against the Cablevision monopoly, once the carriers are on, we can receive 5G into homes and more competitive pricing.

Rob Devinney asked if the nodular system is a hundred percent or will scrimp on certain areas. Trees and rain degrade the signal. The towers will cover about two and half miles and nodules will not scrimp some on areas of the Village.

**Southampton Village Partnership – J. Sdroulas** – There is an article in the paper recently that described the purpose of the partnership, which is to help the local businesses in the shoulder season. J. Sdroulas has been spearheading the SVP and communicated via text that she met with smaller team on Monday and broad team meeting this Tuesday and Trustee Coburn will engage with a creative agency to build a website in our continuing discussions to a broader global goal. Trustee Stevenson and Coburn on the subject and she is liaison on this, and it is moving.

**Water tank project N. Magee/Tuckahoe Woods-SCWA update– J. Yahiayan** –This is a public private partnership project. The Village has property and is partnering with the SCWA for additional water storage capacity. It is needed because summertime use creates an empty water tower, which is dangerous when first responders need the water. The SCWA engineers, constructs, and pays the Village rent for the tank. This will provide consistent water pressure and not put Village residents at harm, a rendering was shown and it is with Village attorney and Town attorney to create easement plan and survey agreement. This will be located in the woods north of Tuckahoe school, and an easement agreement needs to be in place to make the Village parcel accessible since it has to access through Town property.

There will be both a pump station and storage tank, and the 10M cost is paid by the SCWA. This is a tank, not a tower, but it provides to the Prospect Street tower. The design is below grade; and not highly visible. There was a site tour to Laurel Lake site tank in fall that showed board members how the installation would look.

Once that is signed off it comes to the Trustees. J. Yahiayan noted that the SCWA has been great to work with and it is in the works.

**Public Tree Committee update – M. Anderson** – There is a meeting this coming Thursday, they are trying to get a maintenance budget and a removal budget sent to the Trustees. The existing trees need attention, and right now they are getting budget numbers together. Also, the Christmas lights need to come down for tree health, they are working to have 90-day period maximum for tree lights and then they must come down. C. Picot asked about an RFP to select outside contractor, and if there was any discussion on how to get that done. M. Anderson stated that they are still looking for budget figures at this point.

Sheila Piper, Hildreth Street, was glad to hear that the lights are coming off and recommended that staples not be used to install the tree lights, she feels they can be wrapped with a wire. Also, light on during the night harms trees, they need darkness to reconstitute themselves. It was noted that Village code is no lights at midnight and Town lights are out at 10pm.

**Deer Management Update – M. Anderson** – This is the fourth year with Suffolk County Deer Management, so far this year they have culled 59, less than historically, but there is progress. Public Works Department has noted that they have come down to 15 -16 deer/auto collision, down from 30-40. The deer population is estimated at over a 100 per square mile, so 650 in the Village. C. Picot noted that 30 per square mile is what it should be. They are keeping up with the fawn population at this time.

**Next step on SHV workforce housing – J. Yahiayan** – He has two pieces of information to share, first run analysis of various programs for cost mitigation to attract a developer to create workforce housing opportunity. Second, obvious barrier to entry is high cost, and the footprint is limited. He shared a screen analysis of programs, and some are not practical for our Village.

- There is Southampton CHF which offers direct subsidies to developers for projects with  $\geq 4$  units and offers up to \$150-250k per unit subsidy depending on affordability levels (targeted at  $\leq 130\%$  AMI).
- NYS County Infrastructure Grant offers funding for water/sewer upgrades required for density with grants up to 1M for projects creating 10+ units. Not possible for our Village since our Village does not allow it. About 1-4 units where it is appropriate.
- The Federal CDBG (Suffolk Consortium) offers infrastructure and “public facility” in low/mod areas and offsets site work, sidewalk and utility connection costs.
- NYS Housing Acceleration Fund offers gap construction financing for “shovel-ready” projects which provides low-cost capital to bridge the gap between bank loans and total hard costs.

Overall if it costs, at best, if it costs 700 per square foot, there is about 20% saving or about 140 dollars a square foot, and this is just a rough cut with Village Planner and Curtis Highsmith.

Second, he put up a map that showed the OD district and Hampton Corridor in SHV for work force housing, he noted that on a good day they could build 8-20 units work force housing which is incredibly optimistic. The cost of the lot is high and to build is high and it is a difficult proposition. Children cannot afford to stay here, he quantified putting all programs together, his initial study at best is 140 price mitigation per square foot. The map he shared is from the BFJ study, and all that was done was take the Master Plan and a recent study under the current administration. There are so many variables and with a possible 8-10 units, it does not move the needle that far, or do they want to take a bite one at a time.

C. Picot asked for him to comment on Hampton Road. He looked at it strictly from footprint, it is a corridor that through consultants it is plausible for rezoning for work force housing. There is not much available Village wide. There are a couple unique wild cards, one possibility being Township leaving

Town Hall. These zones were recommended by the study from BFJ, and part of the original Master Plan, and it is using their data. It does not mean it is cast in stone; it is a barrier to entry even in best case scenario with perfect circumstances. A resident mentioned the Township as an option, this is a self-reassessment, he is trying to communicate that it is so expensive but even with that, they do not have the ability to do anything of any great size because of a lack of sewer system. They can do some micro units, possibly at best, 8-20 units.

Kimberely Allen noted that the lot at 245 Hampton Road, on foiled documents there was an email regarding it and possible work force housing use, and then there was a shift of zoning to allow work force units, and that it could yield up to 14 units. She notes that there are a lot of barriers to entry, but she feels that people can find a way in. In her view an ADU is a win-win for the Village.

J. Yahiayan noted they crystalize policy to address problems in the Village.

Alex Wallach, added that ADU's are permitted in primary dwellings, no one has applied to one in four years. Some houses that are more seasonal have more challenges, it is outgrowth of Master Plan, and it replaced code that allowed for multi-family if portion was used for work force housing and determined impact to the community. It was not very optimistic for workforce housing, there is no specific plan for this area, and they would have to get Health Department approval and have to go to all of the land use boards. The idea is that you would need to have the look of single family home, it would not look like workforce housing. For every unit of workforce housing added, it is better traffic because it offsets an office use which leads to greater traffic. Office uses have not been changed; a code change modified proposal for housing. Impact will be small and minimal. There are no specific proposals are on any particular property. When he did this initial rough cut, his whole thesis is based on 1-4 at best on a parcel, and they would be small units.

Sheila Piper, she is puzzled why there would be complaints about multi family units when they already exist on Hampton Road. She does not understand why people are concerned. J. Yahiayan noted that builder grade construction would not be allowed and would Health Department approval.

A resident on Osborn Avenue is concerned, he feels it is the first he is hearing about workforce housing and wondering if they can be communicated with more directly. He is feeling that the needle is not being moved with the traffic by allowing workforce housing, a few housing units will not change the traffic problem.

R. Coburn added that it will look like any other building in the Village, also work force are households earning in 90,000-200,000 incomes, not low income. We are most pressed with lack of workforce housing. The Village is not doing anything but enabling legislation for private market to come in and make projects. HRO and OD were made and office use has been dropping off, but in theory there is an ability to be developed for future office use. This provides in theory for less traffic that what is zoned, workforce housing helps us do our part to reduce traffic. ADU's and work force housing, address two different user groups, family members or domestic workers utilize ADU, but administratively it is difficult to live in someone's house. It is an occupancy permit. Market determines the projects; there are many checks and balances on what might appear. R. Coburn welcomes workforce housing.

Mr. Slaughter, lived in Village for a long time, and there are real estate decisions that are made and he feels there are a lot of options for work force housing and mentioned specifically the old post office on Nugent Street.

J. Yahiyayan noted that there is nothing nefarious on any of these lots that have been recommended, some developers would have to step up. What he showed were potential zones only, but it needs to have developers to make these projects happen. There is a national consensus that we have an effort to address unaffordability for younger generation. It is a first cut and not perfect and at end of the day addressing only potential sites.

One resident noted that his interests are not represented as opposed to solving a hypothetical problem of those who do not live here. He is worried about his property value as his home is a large part of his net worth. J. Yahiyayan noted that it is not a hypothetical micro village problem, his own children cannot afford to live here.

J. Yahiyayan noted that this is not section 8 housing, this is higher income earners who cannot afford to live here. Kimberly Allen, feels that prioritizing ADU's and investing in sewer systems so apartments can be built over existing businesses is helpful. She has a son who needs housing as well.

Trustee Simioni noted that they are running into a lot of upset citizens, so possibly they did not realize it would be impacting residents to this degree and maybe look at it a little bit better and not in proximity to residences.

C. Picot thanked everyone for input, and he noted that Trustee Simioni served for 20 years on Planning Commission, and these are helpful conversations. Open dialogue is important; their role is to hear input so that they can be more thoughtful and then pass it to the Trustees and they are here to help them. This is what is needed and it is first time that there are 3 of 5 Trustees present today.

Next meeting of the Planning Commission will be held Friday, February 20, 2026 at 3:00pm.

MOTION by C. Picot, second M. Brogard

**To close meeting.**

On Vote: Chair Brogard, M. Anderson, C. Picot, and J. Yahiyayan

Respectfully Submitted by:

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JoLee Sanchez

File Date: February 12, 2026

Cathy M. Sanchez  
Village Clerk