



Ronkonkoma Hub / Courtesy Photo

Schacker: Stay out of our backyard

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By Gary Schacker

Do we need a group from Virginia coming to Long Island to rile up the community against responsible projects and developers (“[Activist training targets Ronkonkoma Hub](#)”)? This approach is both counterproductive and insulting.

Instead of divisiveness, organizations should be at the center of bringing government, developers and community members together. The [Commercial Industrial Brokers Society](#) supports responsible and sustainable development. We’re also proponents of real estate property rights. We strongly believe that every property owner should be compensated fairly and the government should only use eminent domain as a last resort.

There are two ways to acquire the properties for the Ronkonkoma Hub. The preferable approach is to negotiate and make the purchases at a fair market price. This is the approach Tritec is taking. The less desirable approach – and the one the town isn’t seeking – is the use of eminent domain.

Often, owners of properties needed for developments play hardball, seeking much more than properties may be worth. There’s no question that they should negotiate and get a fair price. It must be noted that even if eminent domain is utilized, owners receive a fair price, which is arrived at by conducting appraisals and through negotiation. Not following this process will lead to undesirable legal action.

Bob Coughlan and Tritec take a thoughtful approach when developing projects. Their vision is what we need more of on Long Island; they build goodwill in communities and are visionaries who are helping to rebuild. They want sustainable development, which will benefit our economy and help young people.

The Ronkonkoma Hub project is important for Long Island. It demonstrates that we’re in the midst of major change in the region, for the better. People are waking up and recognizing that in order to sustain our economy, keep our tax base growing, retain and attract young people and reduce the “brain drain,” we must build differently. We must create environments that harmoniously interweave residential, entertainment, business and transportation. Most Long Islanders agree – and we can figure it out on our own without outside intervention.

Schacker is president of the Commercial Industrial Brokers Society of Long Island.