

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*The Leader* has received several unsigned letters to the editor. We will respect an author's request for anonymity, but must have your name, address, and phone number. We want to hear from you and publish your opinions, so in the future, kindly include the above requested information.

## ED SMYTH: LIPA DEAL WAS THE BEST OPTION

*To the Editor;*

The LIPA resolution was the best resolution to a decade-old, unwinnable problem.

Town Board members Mark Cuthbertson, Joan Cergol, Chad Lupinacci, and I voted to resolve the case, joining the Northport-East Northport School Board who voted 6-1 to accept the settlement.

In a recent editorial, a Northport-based newspaper misinformed its readers. Taxes will not increase by "well over 50%". The widely-circulated settlement terms are unambiguous and show this is false. This idea that the settlement was "misguided" ignores that it was approved 6-1 and 4-1 by both Boards, and supported overwhelmingly by the public – finally ending a decades old fiasco. The two individuals who voted "NO" failed to articulate a legally and financially coherent alternative plan. They made a politically motivated decision, failed to protect taxpayers, and demonstrated an appalling lack of leadership.

Every sober lawyer, financial consultant, tax expert, and engineer advised both Boards that this was the right deal at the right time. That diverse team of advisors put politics aside and calculated, properly, that the settlement achieved the greatest possible benefit to the Town and School District under the circumstances. The true fiscal impact to Northport residents will prove less than was originally estimated, and further mitigated by the direct payments of millions of dollars to the School District over the life of the settlement.

To further reinforce this, other municipalities on Long Island have tried to get the same terms from LIPA only to be rejected each time. LIPA has made clear...the deal we struck will not be re-created.

Any analysis, whether agreeing or disagreeing with the end result, must start with facts. The Town had no appraisal to challenge LIPA's assertion

that the plant was over assessed. The Town searched but no appraiser would testify the power plant was worth anywhere near the assessed value of \$3.4 billion. The Town had no expert who could contradict LIPA's \$200 million appraisal in court. Most importantly, Huntington taxpayers faced an \$825,000,000.00 refund due back to LIPA. I have yet to hear any plausible way to pay this massive refund. The settlement required LIPA to waive this refund.

The Town had a strong argument with the widely discussed "promise", but those arguments were dismissed by the Court and reduced to a political argument. I strongly believe New York State failed us. They failed to uphold The Promise made between a government and its people. Even if not legally enforceable, The Promise could have been legislatively ratified, but Albany wouldn't even consider it. This failure to uphold this promise represents an unwinding of trust between Albany and the people it serves.

Once The Promise argument failed, and without an appraisal, the Town and School District were legally defenseless. In a court, the Town and School District were going to lose and were going to lose BIG.

The lone Town Board member who opposed the resolution, Eugene Cook, ignored all sound advice to the contrary. In the past year, he has filed various frivolous lawsuits based on absurd legal theories, made incoherent arguments which have not stood up to basic legal scrutiny. Each case has been dismissed by the Court. He has been forced to withdraw cases and has done so quietly without ever

acknowledging the absurdity and incoherent nature of all of his legal arguments. In fact, he previously advocated in favor of a worse settlement, attacking then Town Supervisor Frank Petrone for not settling the case. In short, those who opposed the resolution have never presented an alternative workable plan, because there is none. They've offered rhetoric and bumper sticker slogans, and have

changed positions with the political winds.

You can agree or disagree on the LIPA settlement. However, misleading the community with continued false information and false hope is irresponsible. The terms are the best course of action for the Town and the School District based on the facts.

In the end, there is one stubborn fact at the heart of this issue: the power plant was over-assessed.

Edmund Smyth  
Huntington Town Councilman  
Candidate for Town Supervisor

## SNAKES IN THE BASEMENTS...

*To the Editor;*

I have lived on Long Island for most of my life, but this is the first time I have ever found a snake in my house - in the basement.

John James  
Centerport



## MORE SNAKES!

*To the Editor;*

I moved to Laurel Hollow a few months ago and was so happy not to have any crickets in the basement...

Until I saw this 3' Garner snake!!

Elissa Hannigan  
Laurel Hollow

