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## **SEEK DOUBLE DENSITY DEVELOPMENT IN PINE BARRENS Commission Considers Granting Builder Unprecedented 2<sup>nd</sup> Waiver**

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Richard Amper (631) 369-3300**

**Meeting: Wednesday, March 17, 2 p.m. Media Room Brookhaven Town Hall**

The developer of a high-density housing project in rural East Moriches is asking for a “hardship waiver” from the New York State Pine Barrens Commission that would double the density of his development because the project the Commission approved in 2006 is not selling.

The Commission may allow the developer of the “Hamptons Club” to increase the size of his development from 55 units to 119, despite the fact that the project would increase sewage flow, traffic and the intensity of use of the site which environmental and civic leaders oppose.

“Under state law, the Pine Barrens Commission may not consider the economic viability of a development in deciding whether or not a waiver should be issued,” said Pine Barrens society Executive Director, Richard Amper. “The Commission’s job is to protect drinking water and preserve habitat in the Pine Barrens – not to help a failed development project succeed by allowing the developer to build twice as many housing units.”

The “Hamptons Club” project is located on the north service road of Sunrise Highway between the intersections of Route 111 and Route 51. The land has been heavily cleared but construction has been slowed by failure to sell many of the units. “It would be a bad precedent to give developers ‘a second bite at the apple’ to get permission to build even more in the Pine Barrens than was originally allowed,” Amper said.

MaryAnn Johnston, President of the Affiliated Brookhaven Civic Organizations, a 40-member civic association umbrella group, said, “Permitting another request for a hardship exemption will form ‘a slippery slope.’ If all we’re worried about are how many trees are going to be removed, we’re missing much of what the Pine Barrens Act requires. Merely measuring a footprint and pretending that twice the amount of density is similar, is like saying that a size 10 is a size 6.”

The Pine Barrens Society’s Board of Directors has not yet decided whether to challenge any Commission approval, if the high-density waiver is granted.