

Green Garden Is a Go

Town Pond to get pollution-filtering plantings

By Christopher Walsh | April 21, 2016 - 2:39pm

The combined efforts of East Hampton Village and the Ladies Village Improvement Society to upgrade the health of the village's greens and ponds got a boost on Friday when a horticulturalist offered to design a rain garden at the Town Pond green.

The rain garden, which removes nitrogen and phosphorus before water seeps into groundwater, is a component of a larger improvement project that includes the installation of bioswales, drainage courses that trap and filter pollutants, near Hook Mill.

Tony Piazza of Piazza Horticultural of Southampton told the East Hampton Village Board that he would lend his expertise to the project, and in the process demonstrate that abandoning chemical fertilizers and pesticides does not mean sacrificing aesthetically appealing landscapes.

“The concept we’ve discussed is to install a rain garden that would allow rain runoff from the street to soak into the ground naturally and would be filtered of pollutants from this flow before they enter the ponds and, eventually, the ocean,” he said.

Stephen Mahoney of Mahoney Farm and Nursery of East Hampton appeared with Mr. Piazza, saying “landscapes, over the decades, have become much more managed and, in many, many cases, over managed.” Mr. Mahoney and Mr. Piazza are members of the Surfrider Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting oceans and beaches. The group’s Clean Water Initiative includes the Ocean Friendly Gardens program, an effort to filter pollutants, conserve water and wildlife habitats, and retain rain as the first source of irrigation.

Surfrider’s eastern Long Island chapter has received grants from the Walrath Family Foundation and the Elkes Family Foundation, money which would be used at the village green, which Mr. Piazza said was “an ideal site to demonstrate to residents “how they

can landscape and care for their properties to minimize impacts on surface water quality.”

Mr. Piazza asked the village board to allow the Surfrider organization to document the rain garden’s installation in a short, educational film. The rain garden can be “greatly enhanced, as far as the plant material selection, to be a maybe a little more colorful,” he said.

“On behalf of the board, we welcome the opportunity to hopefully work in earnest with your group and the L.V.I.S. as a partnership,” Mayor Paul F. Rickenbach Jr. said. “We totally support what you’ve offered today.”

In other news from the meeting, the board amended the village code to change the parking limit from 15 to 30 minutes in several spaces in the Reutershan parking lot and to restrict five spaces in the Barns Schenck lot, north of Newtown Lane, to 30 minutes. The intent is to make it easier for patrons of nearby businesses to find parking for short periods. The law also renamed the lot on the east side of Main Street generally known as the Bank of New York parking lot to the 66 Main Street lot.

The Department of Public Works will install new signs once the law is registered with the Department of State, which is expected within two weeks.

The board also modified its Railroad Avenue, Newtown Lane, and Gingerbread Lane Improvement Project, voting to change specifications for lighted crosswalks from push button-activated to motion-activated, such as recently installed on Main Street in Bridgehampton. The change will add \$36,894 to the project’s cost.

An additional amount, up to \$150,000, was also approved for the roads’ improvement. Becky Molinaro, the village administrator, explained that winter weather and work by the Suffolk Water Authority and National Grid had contributed to the roads’ deterioration. The utilities had offered “some level of restitution, knowing we were doing our own road project,” Ms. Molinaro said, which would lower the village’s cost. The project is also eligible for funding from the state’s Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program.