

Town to accept Group for the East End grant

by Julie Lane

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Town Engineer John Cronin won the day with enough Town Board members agreeing Tuesday to accept \$4,000 from the Group for the East End to pay a student intern to collect records on existing septic systems and cesspools.

Only Councilman Ed Brown at the board's work session hesitated at taking the money from the Group for the East End, concerned that it might try to influence results. But his colleagues saw it as a way to get the data collection started. Based on Mr. Cronin's estimates, an intern could likely get through about 80 building records a week.

Once an intern begins the work, the board will have a better idea of how long the full project might take and can then either seek other sources of funding or begin to budget to complete the project. It's also possible the intern might acquire data from Suffolk County microfiche records. But Councilman Peter Reich pointed out that information is static and can't be tracked as it can be by entering it into a GIS system locally.

When the idea first surfaced for the study, Mr. Cronin was like a lone wolf trying to drive home his concerns about the dangers antiquated septic systems and cesspools posed to the community. He even offered to cut his own salary to pay for the intern if the money couldn't be found elsewhere.

But by Tuesday, the board had come around to embracing the importance of getting the project started.

"I see this as a proactive rather than a reactive approach," Mr. Cronin said.

A few weeks ago, Group for the East End President Bob DeLuca told the board that creating a database of such information is "crucially important to developing informed recommendations and ultimately solutions for what is increasingly important water quality issues facing our entire region."