

Dear Friends of Save Sag Harbor,

2008 is over, and it's time to review **Save Sag Harbor's many projects**, and to look toward the future.

It's been a tough but very significant year on many fronts. Our seven-member, all-volunteer board has certainly been kept busy. But we would be nowhere without the enthusiastic support of our members and volunteers. Together we are working to help keep the village a vibrant and thriving place.

Our primary focus this past year was the **revision of the Sag Harbor Village Commercial Zoning Code**. Our mandate from our members was to support a forward-looking code that would maintain the character of Main Street. In order to do this, the village needed to replace an older code which didn't offer needed protection from over-development and unwanted change.

Since our main thrust was to protect the village from big box and formula-based retail stores and to educate our membership on how this is achievable under present laws, last spring we contacted **Dwight Merriam** of Robinson & Cole, LLP, author of "The Complete Guide to Zoning", and **Frank Fish** of BFJ Planning, a member of the New York Planning Federation. They were hired to complement our research into the updating of the Village's zoning code and to **investigate trusts, comprehensive plans, and other creative solutions to protect Sag Harbor's integrity and character**. They produced a planning compendium, a compilation of existing techniques and laws as a way of providing a full array of the possible approaches that other communities have explored to preserve and promote their traditional downtown character, which we then shared with Village officials.

In an effort to reach consensus on the code as it affects Main Street businesses, we **met with individual business owners and renters and the** Sag Harbor Business Association. We are in general agreement on many important fronts, including stopping overdevelopment and preventing big box and formula-based retail from changing the character of the Village, the allowance of offices or other uses for second floor spaces in the code, and reducing the size of the proposed Office District near Route 114. We also found common ground regarding the restoration of the Bulova watchcase factory which, unfortunately, has been put on hold indefinitely by its developers. Most importantly, we know that much can and should be done to further the Sag Harbor business environment, since all residents benefit from a healthy business community.

Along those same lines, our **"Shop Locally" campaign** supports village businesses by reminding our neighbors of its importance. You can see our Shop Locally stickers proudly displayed on cars, in

windows and on counters throughout the area.

Last April, we **invited the National Trust for Historic Preservation to present its "Main Street Program"** to help offer our community possibilities on how to maintain a vibrant, diverse business district, while at the same time maintaining the Village's unique historic character. To that end, we reached out to Sag Harbor's shop owners as a way to begin discussions regarding how we could better market the village to enhance its year-round commercial appeal. Their presentation drew a large audience, and while we were somewhat disappointed that it wasn't more tailored to our specific community, it engendered smart discussion and gave us a template for further creative solutions.

Another of the fundamental endeavors of Save Sag Harbor has been our **"Main Street Table"**. Beginning around Memorial Day, Save Sag Harbor volunteers interacted with passers-by on Main Street, garnering opinions and educating anyone interested about the many issues facing Sag Harbor. The table is a great venue for people to share their ideas and join us. In one weekend, prior to an important village meeting, volunteers obtained over 850 petitions supporting an effort to focus on making the Zoning Code Revision effective against big box and formula-based retail. Since its inception, our table has produced close to two thousand email and physical addresses from concerned citizens. And our Main Street table has helped maintain interaction between Save Sag Harbor and the community.

One of our most important decisions this year was to **retain local lawyer Jeff Bragman**, whose counsel, excellent research, and ability to communicate and demystify complex legal issues has aided us greatly. His depth of experience in real estate law has been essential as he has **spoken on our behalf at village community and municipal meetings**.

Another focus in 2008 was the **One Ferry Road Condominiums** proposed by East End Ventures, a development that would be located at the base of the Sag Harbor/North Haven bridge on the Village's side. This development threatens to permanently alter the landscape of Sag Harbor, our waterfront, and the view from the bridge itself, a viewshed specifically protected by the Village's Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

In response, at a critical Scoping Session of the Planning Board this past September, both **Save Sag Harbor** and **Save Our Waterfront**, a grassroots group examining the development, as well as a host of impressively informed, intelligent, and concerned citizens, most of whom are our members, presented a roster of questions and concerns. Speaking on behalf of Save Our Waterfront, **Mr. Bragman presented a thorough analysis of the negative impact of One Ferry Road**

on the community. The scoping session was designed to bring to light the impact of all aspects of this project, so that the Planning Board can hear the concerns of area residents. We are following this issue very closely and **will continue to keep you posted** about developments.

In other news, **Save Sag Harbor has received 501(c)4 status** from the Internal Revenue Service. Although we had originally applied for a 501(c)3 well over a year ago, it was recently proposed by the Internal Revenue Service that we first acquire 501(c)4 status. This was suggested because some of our activities, like our "Shop Locally" campaign, belong to the category of a civic association, in which funds are devoted to charitable and educational purposes for the community. Unfortunately, contributions to this type of organization are rarely tax deductible. We are now beginning the process of organizing a **second non-for-profit corporation** which will house our activities that are more in keeping with the activities of one having a 501(c)3 status.

Save Sag Harbor has continued to bring our members our popular and useful **e-Newsletter**, like this one, which provides updated information on a regular basis, along with notification of many important village, government and community events. We have also continued to develop our **Save Sag Harbor website where relevant documents (such as an explanation of SEQRA, the State Environmental Quality Review Act, our planning compendium, links to the proposed zoning map and the draft revision of the Zoning Code, etc.) are posted**, along with links to other important sites (not to mention our safe and secure online donation option!). Please note that we are increasingly relying on the internet to reach our members in the interest of broad dissemination of information, as a money-saving measure, and for quick contact on important issues. If you know someone who would like to be notified of our activities, we welcome all to join us via www.savesagharbor.com.

In 2008 Save Sag Harbor had two fundraising events. The first, at Whaling Museum in August, featuring a **concert by the remarkable Alexa Ray Joel**, was organized by Samanthe Lobosco and our volunteers, and we heartily thank Alexa Ray as well as her parents, Christie Brinkley and Billy Joel, for their continued generous support of Save Sag Harbor. All proceeds from this event were generously donated to Save Sag Harbor.

In November, our second event, **a successful art auction**, took place at the Old Whalers' Church. We received superior artwork from 48 East End artists, and the proceeds again greatly helped us with our funding. And like the earlier event, it was great fun and a wonderful celebration of our creative community!

We have rigorously kept our **expenditures for these and other**

events to an absolute minimum, keeping our venues and materials modest, depending on our wonderful volunteer staff, and looking for donations whenever possible. Monies we have received have been judiciously used for lawyers', experts', planners' and accountants' fees.

We invited the community to attend **open meetings** held by us and by other **community organizations like CONPOSH (the Coalition of Neighbors for the Preservation of Sag Harbor), 725 Green, Spokespeople, and other proactive community groups, and have supported local charitable and historical organizations** who represent both our spirit as a community and its important past. Save Sag Harbor has encouraged the public to support the efforts of the **Sag Harbor Chamber of Commerce**. We have met with **school organizations** as well, alerted the public about developments concerning the **John Jermain Memorial Library**, and more recently spearheaded the formation of the **Save the Sag Harbor Cinema** group, with which we remain actively involved. We are in contact with the **Dark Sky Society**, which looks for creative ways to save energy and appreciate the night sky. Most recently, our website has been updated to include a "**service**" page on which a wide listing of volunteer and other community activities is available for anyone interested. You can always reach us at **info@savesagharbor.com**.

Once again, 2008 has been a difficult, challenging and-yes!-exciting year for Save Sag Harbor and the community we live in and serve. We spent the year educating ourselves and sharing information with our friends and neighbors, and interacting with the public and various government regulators and legislators. **Our goal in 2009, as in 2008, is ultimately a simple one: We want Sag Harbor to remain as vital and healthy as it can possibly be.** And, like the year we just wrapped up, we are relying on your help and continued involvement to achieve our goal!

All the best,
Mia Grosjean, President, and the
Board of Save Sag Harbor:
April Gornik
Susan Mead
Helen Samuels
Robert A. Stein
Lester Ware
Jayne Young