

**Town Board Meeting – July 9, 2024**

Item

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**TOWN OF NORTH HEMPSTEAD**

**TOWN BOARD**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**July 9, 2024 7:00 P.M.**

**COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:**

JENNIFER DESENA - Town Supervisor

ROBERT J. TROIANO - District 1 Councilman

EDWARD SCOTT - District 2 Councilman

DENNIS J. WALSH - District 3 Councilman

DAVID A. ADHAMI - District 5 Councilman

MARIANN DALIMONTE - District 6 Councilwoman

**ALSO PRESENT:**

RAGINI SRIVASTAVA - Town Clerk

NISHI SEHGAL - Deputy Town Clerk

RICHARD NICOLELLO, ESQ. - Town Attorney

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Is everybody ready? Okay, if we could please stand, if everyone would place their right hand over their heart and join me in saying our Pledge.

(WHEREUPON, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Okay, good evening, everybody, this is a special meeting of the Town Board. Madam Clerk, would you please call the roll?

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Good evening, Town of North Hempstead, special Town Board meeting, July 9th, 2024.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Troiano?

COUNCILMAN TROIANO: Present.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Scott?

COUNCILMAN SCOTT: Here.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Walsh?

COUNCILMAN WALSH: Here.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Adhami?

COUNCILMAN ADHAMI: Here.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilwoman Dalimonte?

COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: I'm here but I would like to just say something on behalf of Councilwoman Christine Liu who is not here this evening. Christine, unfortunately, had an accident and she broke her collarbone, she had surgery today. At four o'clock her husband texted me, she just got out of surgery. So I just wanted to let everyone know why she's not here. It's because she had surgery today, and I'm here.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Supervisor DeSena?

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Here, and we wish Councilwoman Liu a speedy and healthy recovery. Okay, is there anyone here for public comment not on our one Item on our agenda tonight?

(WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Okay, all right, then let's call the roll. Not the roll, I'm sorry. Please call the Item.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Item.

COUNCILMAN WALSH: We need to move to untable Item number 1.

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Oh, yes, okay. Actually, I'd like to move to untable Item number 1.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Troiano?

COUNCILMAN TROIANO: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Scott?

COUNCILMAN SCOTT: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Walsh?

COUNCILMAN WALSH: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Adhami?

COUNCILMAN ADHAMI: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilwoman Dalimonte?

COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Supervisor DeSena?

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Item number 1. A resolution authorizing the execution of a memorandum of understanding with the Long Island Railroad concerning real property at the Port Washington train station.

COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: So I would just like to read something first. The MOU was supposed to be voted on on the June 4th meeting but the Town Board knew that my father had just passed, and I did not have time to look it over. I thank the Supervisor and the Town Board for tabling the Item, and allowing me to review the MOU and speak to the Town Attorney. The Town Attorney has informed the Town Board that signing this MOU is not a binding contract but shows the LIRR that the town is interested and willing to negotiate future agreements that are necessary for the track expansion project. Furthermore, the Item called for a vote on July 2nd Board meeting, however, due to an oversight in posting the Item on the agenda, the Town Board was not able to vote on the Item, and the Supervisor called for a special meeting for this evening for the Town Board to untable the Item and vote. I would like to thank each and every one of you, again, for tabling it in June while I was going through a difficult time in my life, and I really appreciate it. So thank you. So does anyone have any comment or should we go to the public?

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Why don't we — let's start off with our public, please.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Michael Gilbert?

MR. GILBERT: Good evening, thank you. I just had a question about the Long Island Railroad's commitment to expanding express service if we agreed, if the town agrees to this proposal to extend the tracks. I think in the past, this was proposed, there were a lot of questions about whether it was worth giving up parking spots. I know that in Great Neck, they did agree to an extension, and I think a lot of people from Great Neck have found that they didn't actually get the express service that they were hoping for, and in fact, before east side access was enacted, the MTA actually proposed, as I'm sure you all remember, to eliminate all of the express service. So my concern is that if that's the mindset of the MTA, how can we be confident that by agreeing to this proposal that we're going to actually see an increase in express service which is desperately needed. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: So I do want to say that Supervisor DeSena and I, and

correct me if I'm wrong, both said that to the MTA, that we want to make sure that they will guarantee more peak service in the morning --

MR. GILBERT: Mm-hmm.

COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: — and more peak service in the evening. They told us that they cannot guarantee it, but they did say in the MOU, is to improve train service, reliability and frequency for customers. So that's the wording that they will use in their MOU. They will not put that in the MOU. We did ask.

MR. GILBERT: Thank you.

SUPERVISOR DESENA: I mean, I'll just comment that since you're, you know, commenting now on it. The whole purpose of the MOU is to restore service. There's no need to build tracks out here just for storing trains. The whole purpose of us having these negotiations, and you know, because you spoke on one of the Zoom meetings. We went through this starting in February of 2023 when Grand Central Madison was launched, and the commuters on the Port Washington line found that they lost express service. We had a series of Zoom meetings, we had -- we even had something that Residents Forward convened in the Jeanne Rimsky Theater, we had many petitions, a lot of people saying, how can we -- what can we do to restore service, and in my very first call with the President of the Long Island Railroad, and Councilwoman Dalimonte and Lurvey attended all these calls, we spoke with her together. She said, we told you ten years ago that if you did not build the additional track, you would not be able to have expanded service once Grand Central Madison was unveiled, and so here we are. It came to be last year that we did not experience any increased service. So while they cannot say we're going to put X, Y and Z in the schedule, because as you know, the schedule is complicated. The whole point of what we're doing is restoring service, bringing something back. So what we have before us is an MOU, it's the first step. There will be a survey, a study of the parking lot of what can be done, but this MOU is required for us to do anything. We either enter it tonight or we don't, and we take the chance and kick this down to another Town Board ten years down the line, and you know, I think, I've heard from a lot of residents, I think that we owe it to sit down and study the parking lot and do the best we can to restore service.

MR. GILBERT: Thank you.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Steven Hirsch?

MR. HIRSCH: Hi, thank you. So I'm a resident Thomaston, I live adjacent to the pocket track and was a very vocal critic of Newsday and other places.

COUNCILMAN WALSH: I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you said. You're a resident of?

MR. HIRSCH: Thomaston.

COUNCILMAN WALSH: Okay, thank you.

MR. HIRSCH: Okay, yeah, I live adjacent to the second pocket track.

COUNCILMAN WALSH: I just didn't hear.

MR. HIRSCH: Yeah, sorry, and although I was a very vocal critic, everything the railroad has said and then some have come true. So there's basically, during the hour it takes me to get ready, maybe there's one train in the morning that turns around there, they don't beep the horn or

anything like that that would disturb us, and I even see one train, I'm not sure which one it is, that goes backwards. In other words, I'm practically in Manhasset. It goes eastbound from where I live, I guess to the port presumably to shorten the distance. So I just, you know, though I won't be able to attend all these meetings, I just wanted to call out that, obviously, if it's ten minutes that it takes a train to go from Great Neck to the port, you know, roundtrip, I mean, we're only going to get three trains an hour, it's not rocket science. The only way to squeeze in a fourth train is if you do two back-to-back in each direction, respectively. In other words, you do two eastbound trains maybe one to each of the terminals, well, at least two westbound trains going to each of the terminals, and so forth for eastbound, maybe one express, one local. However, that's not sustainable. Obviously, the railroad needs, you know, maybe could do that once in the rush hour since some people criticize that trains are sitting there but if you had more track space, you would be able to repeat that throughout the rush hour, so -- Thank you.

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN ADHAMI: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: Thank you.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Adam Wittenstein?

COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: What was the name?

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Adam, A-D-A-M.

MR. WITTENSTEIN: Adam Wittenstein?

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Yes.

MR. WITTENSTEIN: Good evening. I am here, I live in Great Neck, New York, near the pocket track, near the borderline with Thomaston. I am here to plead with you to not approve the project for the Port Washington pocket track. The -- I'm sorry, for the Port Washington additional track space. There is plenty of -- first of all, there's plenty of room in the Port Washington yard during most hours nowadays, including rush hours. Second of all, trains are sitting in that yard, even when track space on the single track is available. This seems to just be a ploy by the MTA to fund its construction department. They, you know, they -- as with the third track in Mineola in that area, there is no service or benefits that come from these projects. The LIRR could take ten percent of the money they plan for Port Washington and spend ten percent as much as they're going to spend and just fix the train schedules, the massive gaps when the single track is open, and they're not using it. We went from five trains between 7:30 and 8:30 in the morning from Great Neck to one train. Conditions are extremely unsafe on almost every rush hour train because they're running the bulk of the trains at six and nine a.m. when nobody's using them. The issue is not storage space at the pocket track. The issue is the LIRR's failure to keep a schedule, to have an awareness of the how far apart stations are and failure to communicate with the public and show any awareness of the conditions. Please speak to the LIRR about using their money in a more appropriate way. They can fix these issues far, far cheaper than the Port Washington track. The issue with parking in Port Washington is understandably very important but it is one of the smallest reasons to reject this project with the LIRR. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Thank you for coming.

MR. WITTENSTEIN: Thank you.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Thank you. We don't have additional cards on this Item.

SUPERVISOR DESENA: No additional cards? No one else —

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: No.

SUPERVISOR DESENA: -- wishes to be heard? Would anyone from the Board wish to be heard?

(WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Okay, so I want to thank everybody for coming. As we've spoken of briefly, this is a first step, and by sitting down together, and you know, we've had many meetings with the Long Island Railroad. We had a meeting before Assemblywoman Gina Sillitti, had her son in her office, and I know that we have support from our Senate and Assembly -- our Senator and our Assemblyperson for -- and on this Board for this project for trying to restore the service that the commuters from Port Washington and Manhasset and Great Neck and other parts of the town have come to rely on. So I offer the resolution and move for its adoption.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Troiano?

COUNCILMAN TROIANO: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Scott?

COUNCILMAN SCOTT: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Walsh?

COUNCILMAN WALSH: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Adhami?

COUNCILMAN ADHAMI: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilwoman Dalimonte?

COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: Aye.

CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Supervisor DeSena?

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Aye.

**Supervisor DeSena offered the following resolution and moved its adoption, which resolution was declared adopted after a poll of the members of this Board:**

**RESOLUTION NO. 374 - 2024**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE LONG ISLAND RAILROAD CONCERNING REAL PROPERTY AT THE PORT WASHINGTON TRAIN STATION.**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of North Hempstead (the "Town") is a municipal corporation with a dedicated part-time and full-time workforce; and

**WHEREAS**, the Long Island Railroad Company (the "LIRR") is a public benefit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS**, the LIRR and the Town have a shared commitment to the people of the Town, to provide efficient and expeditious train service throughout Long Island and the City of New York; and

**WHEREAS**, to further these shared aspirations, the LIRR and the Town have collaborated to expand tracks 1 and 8 of the Port Washington Train Station, to increase and improve commuter train service throughout Long Island; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town and the LIRR wish to enter into a memorandum of understanding with respect to the relationship between the parties to further the aforementioned goals and objectives (the "MOU"); and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board wishes to authorize the Town to enter into the MOU with the LIRR.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED** that the Town Board hereby authorizes the Town to enter into the MOU with LIRR; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Supervisor or her designee be and hereby is authorized to execute the MOU and to take such other action as may be necessary to effectuate the foregoing resolution; and be it further

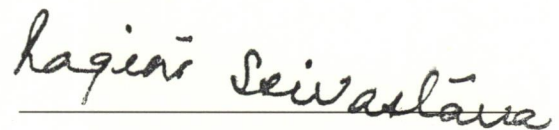
**RESOLVED** that the Office of the Town Attorney be and hereby is authorized and directed to negotiate and supervise the execution of the MOU.

**Dated:** Manhasset, New York

June 4, 2024



CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Motion to adjourn?  
SUPERVISOR DESENA: All right, I move to adjourn.  
CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Troiano?  
COUNCILMAN TROIANO: Aye.  
CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Scott?  
COUNCILMAN SCOTT: Aye.  
CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Walsh?  
COUNCILMAN WALSH: Aye.  
CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilman Adhami?  
COUNCILMAN ADHAMI: Aye.  
CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Councilwoman Dalimonte?  
COUNCILWOMAN DALIMONTE: Aye.  
CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Supervisor DeSena?  
SUPERVISOR DESENA: Aye.  
CLERK SRIVASTAVA: Thank you.  
SUPERVISOR DESENA: Thank you, everybody.



Town Clerk

The vote on the foregoing resolution was recorded as follows:

Ayes: Councilperson Adhami, Councilperson Dalimonte, Councilperson Scott, Councilperson Troiano, Councilperson Walsh, Supervisor DeSena.

Nays: None.

Absent: Councilperson Liu.

cc: Town Attorney      Comptroller   HR



