

# Group calls East Hampton airport noise 'intrusion'

June 23, 2013 by MITCHELL FREEDMAN / [mitchell.freedman@newsday.com](mailto:mitchell.freedman@newsday.com)



After months of internal debate about the East Hampton Town Airport, the Village Preservation Society of East Hampton has decided that the loud noise of jet planes and helicopters taking off and landing constitutes an "environmental intrusion not requested by village residents."

Preservation Society Trustee Peter Wolf presented a plan crafted by the group's members to the East Hampton Village Board on Friday, only to have Mayor Paul F. Rickenbach Jr. politely ask whether the group had made the same application to the town board, which actually runs the airport.

"We wanted to come here first," Wolf said, explaining that as the elected representatives of the village, the village board would have "great influence" with the town. "Your silence on this issue is acceptance of the status quo," he added.

The issue of airport noise has been debated in East Hampton Town for years, with complaints growing as helicopters become larger, more powerful and noisier. The town recently worked out a compromise with pilots to open two new takeoff routes, spreading the impact of sound so that more than just a few communities get the brunt of the noise.

But Wolf said he would "avoid the trap of dealing with routes," and instead offered recommendations to change airport operations.

He said no flights should be permitted over any village bodies of water, including ponds and swamps, because water reflects back noise. He also wanted airport operations limited to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and to stagger flights so aircraft are not coming in every two or three minutes.

Airport officials said 90 percent of the pilots take off and land between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., although the airport is open 24 hours. The town board has debated additional restrictions for years, but pilots are also a powerful advocacy group in the town.

"With the current constitution of the town board, I don't see any resolution of these issues in the immediate future," Rickenbach said.

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About 30,000 takeoffs and landings are logged each year at the East Hampton Town Airport in Wainscott, just outside the village line. Most of them are between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

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