

Native graves?

Archaeological survey requested for building site

By Julie Lane

GREENPORT--Construction of a Greenport hamlet housing development could be interrupted if the area proves to be a Native American burial ground. The New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has deemed the Rock Cove Estates development an "archaeologically sensitive area" and requested a survey of the area, according to department spokeswoman Cathy Jimenez. Exactly what was found on the site that prompts the survey couldn't be determined.

The development is on land formerly farmed by the Burt family, immediately east of the Moore's Lane North neighborhood and bordering the Sound bluff.

Former Greenport resident Barry Webb, now of Macungie, Pa., is in town and said his 92-year-old mother, Ida, has told him about finding arrowheads in the area and that his late father-in-law, Arnold Louis "Shrimp" Gladding, was the proud owner of an Indian arrowhead he found on the Burt farm.

Mr. Webb said his mother also recalled seeing "a mess of old oyster shells" in the vicinity of the farm. He thinks that may be an indication that Indians used to roast oysters in the area.

Former Planning Board president Ben Orlowski Jr. said he knows nothing came to light during the state environmental quality review (SEQR) of the project. It was approved by the board in 2000, he said.

When the 23-lot development was okayed, it was over the protests of neighbors. The 28-acre development off Route 48 lies between private residences on McCann Lane to the east and the Stirling Eastern Shores development to the west. Neighbors feared that their roads would be subject to increased traffic and noise. In fact, what had been a dead-end road on the east was opened so that traffic can enter the new development by traveling north on McCann Road.

Riverhead attorney Charles Cuddy represented New York developers Sal and Benny Caiola during the approval process. Neither he nor the developers could be reached for comment.

Although building permits were issued to several builders who are putting in houses in the area, contractors were told one to two months ago that they might want to consider suspending their

work, according to Southold building department chief Mike Verity.

"It was just a courtesy call," said Mr. Verity. No one was ordered to stop construction, he said. But contractors are proceeding "at their own risk," he said.

In fact, neighbors report that construction on some of the homes has been stepped up in a seeming effort to complete the projects quickly.

One neighbor from McCann Lane, who asked not to be identified, complained this week about work on Father's Day that resulted in a great deal of noise from 1 p.m. until after 7:30 p.m. She said workers were playing loud music and "hooting and hollering," disturbing her family's celebration.

She subsequently learned that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation had opened a file on the development and referred the investigation to state parks department officials. DEC officials initially referred inquiries to that department, but the Southold Town Planning Board has received letters from the DEC with respect to possible findings at the site, according to Mr. Verity.

Those communications date back several months, according to Planning Board member Richard Caggiano. He said it's been too long since he looked at the letters to comment on their content, but he referred inquiries to planning department senior environmental planner Mark Terry, who couldn't be reached. Nor could Planning Board president Jeri Woodhouse.

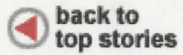
Several different builders are constructing homes in Rock Cove Estates, said Mr. Verity. Two signs on homes list Bayberry and Zoumas as contractors. Their representatives also couldn't be reached for comment. Hahn Realty in Cutchogue is listed as the sole agent for the homes, but efforts to reach a Hahn representative also were futile.

The North Fork was Algonquin territory, according to Stirling Historical Society member Vincent Quatroche. But not all Algonquins were related to the tribe native to eastern Canada, according to several Internet sources. The Manhasset Indians and a subsect called the Matinecocks were of the Algonquin race and inhabited the area as late as the mid 1600s, according to Internet sources.

Pequot Indians from Connecticut crossed Long Island Sound, raiding the local villages and "stealing" women and children, said Mr. Quatroche. He speculated that if any bones were found in the area, they might be from either tribe because of battles between the two. Relationships with white settlers of Long Island were described as generally cordial, with the newcomers usually paying

small amounts for the land they occupied.

Indians on Eastern Long Island were described as tall and straight, muscular and agile with straight hair and reddish brown complexion, according to various Internet sites.



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