

February 24, 2012

The Village of Floral Park has once again been recognized for our leadership and proactive role on important issues impacting our community. One of our top priorities remains making sure Floral Park does not shoulder an unfair share of our region's aircraft noise burden. Our colleague Trustee Mary-Grace Tomecki was prominently featured in a recent *New York Times* article entitled "A Plan to Restrict Flight Paths to Hush the Blender Over Long Island" which included an extensive discussion of the Federal Aviation Administration's intention to adopt regulations which could severely restrict flight paths of low flying helicopters over Long Island.

Trustee Mary-Grace Tomecki told *The New York Times* that helicopters passing over Floral Park in the summer sometimes sound like "being in a blender" which *The New York Times* obviously adopted to be part of the headline for the article. Trustee Mary-Grace Tomecki told *The New York Times* that the adoption of new regulations by the FAA to restrict the number of low flying helicopters over Long Island would be an "incredible improvement in the quality of life" for her constituents and neighbors of Floral Park.

Senator Charles E. Schumer, who recently visited us in Floral Park in conjunction with his promised assistance in providing funding for our outstanding volunteer Fire Department, said that helicopter noise ranks as one of the top five complaints among his Long Island constituents. "Talk to anyone who lives in scores of communities from Floral Park to Port Washington," Senator Schumer told *The New York Times*, "It's an awful disruption when you invested your savings in your home and you can't enjoy your home and you can't enjoy your house or sit in your backyard from Memorial Day to Labor Day." It is obvious that Floral Park's effort to identify and address low flying helicopter noise over our community continues to yield results in many ways.

Floral Park's well regarded Noise Abatement Committee, led by Trustee Mary-Grace Tomecki, has been tireless advocates in pursuing relief from unnecessary aircraft noise over our community. Floral Parkers understand that the physical locations of the JFK airport runways are fixed and we will always remain under the flight paths approaching JFK. The helicopter flight paths over our community however, following the LIRR train tracks as their convenient guideposts, to and from the Hamptons, has been nothing short of maddening to our residents. Despite numerous promises over the years to voluntarily relieve our community from the unnecessary burden of low flying helicopter noise, such voluntary measures have fallen short of that goal.

While the initial proposals for the FAA regulations dealt with the North Shore communities of the Long Island, it is largely as a result of Floral Park's focused attention on the low flying helicopter issue that the helicopter flight paths over our community have also been included within the scope of the FAA proposals. The helicopter industry is strongly resisting any sort of formal regulations on where and how they operate. The president of the Helicopter Association

International told *The New York Times*, for example, that they fear such regulations “will have national implications.”

Floral Park residents should be proud that our community has been credited by at least one commentator that Floral Park has “scored a victory over wealthy New Yorkers who fly helicopters over their homes towards the Hamptons on summer weekends.” Please forgive us, however, if we do not feel sorry for “the city elites – including (the chairman of a well-known real estate firm), who frequently flies there by chopper – the new regulation will make trips to the Hamptons less pleasant. There are now fewer routes helicopters can take, and the trip will be longer, less scenic and more expensive.” [Quoting *The Real Deal: New York Real Estate News* “Thanks to LI Homeowners, Helicopter Rides to Hamptons Will Become More Costly”].

While some may remain unsatisfied with the progress Floral Park has made on the aircraft noise issue, please be assured that our humblest of political subdivisions has indeed made a significant impact even on the greatest political subdivision, our federal government. Floral Park has earned our place at the table not because we protested the loudest, but because we consistently addressed these issues in a sophisticated and persuasive manner within our formally organized framework. Just as our formally organized and recognized Floral Park Mayor’s task force on the Third Track as well as Belmont Park have yielded significant dividends for our community, so too have members of our Noise Abatement Committee, led by Trustee Mary-Grace Tomecki, and deserve to be rightly proud of their great results.

For helicopter noise call 1-800-319-7410 or email erhc@planenoise.com. The Eastern Regional Helicopter Council is an association of helicopter operators and pilots who responds to concerns from, and works with, communities from downtown New York to East Hampton. Representatives from the Eastern Regional Helicopter Council have cooperatively worked with Floral Park’s elected representatives in trying to mitigate the issues from low flying helicopters and advocate a ‘Fly Neighborly’ protocol for its Council’s operators. Should you email or call please be sure to include the date and time, and if possible, any operator or aircraft number visible on the offending aircraft.