

Shadmoor Moves Ahead

While government agencies and conservation groups continue to struggle to find a way to purchase the 99-acre Shadmoor property in Montauk for preservation, an application to subdivide the property into four house lots ranging from 10 to 14 acres has been deemed complete and will be scheduled for a public hearing.

The East Hampton Town Planning Board agreed, at a meeting on Nov. 18, to move ahead into the final stages of the subdivision review.

According to a Planning Department memo, however, a plan outlining how two nature reserves totaling 50 acres will be managed falls short, and portions of a "recordation plan" detailing the property's history also leave something to be desired.

Grasses And Bunkers

The moorland property on Montauk's ocean bluffs has been the subject of preservation efforts by local and Federal officials as well as private conservation groups such as the Nature Conservancy, and is a priority acquisition in the Town and State Open Space Plans.

It is home to *Agalinis acuta*, or sandplain gerardia, a globally endangered, Federally protected plant, as well as at least 29 other protected prairie plant species and maritime grasslands, rare remnants of the

prairie that once covered all of Montauk.

The site also contains bunkers used by the Long Island Shield Harbor Defense System during World War II, which are eligible for inclusion in the National Historic Register. The owners of the property, Robert Bear and Peter Schub, have been granted permission to demolish the structures, but must submit the "recordation plan" with drawings, photographs, maps, and narratives documenting their history.

Value Disputed

Preservation efforts for Shadmoor have so far failed. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, which wants to see the site preserved, appraised the property last year at \$5.5 million.

But brokers had each of the four proposed lots listed at \$5 million, and the owners were reportedly asking around \$13 million for the whole thing.

Twice, Federal funds were earmarked to help buy Shadmoor, in 1996 and 1997, but the funding fell through each time. Efforts are continuing, however, with voters' approval of the town real-estate transfer tax, designated for land preservation, and a county preservation bond act lending new hope.

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