

From other pens

Looks matter

In other good news recently, East Hampton Village officials announced that they are considering ways to create a law based on the results of a survey of what kinds of landscapes and built environments residents prefer. Town officials are also said to be thinking about a law based on some version of the survey's results.

In short, the study asked residents to rate photographs of actual places around East Hampton Town and the Villages of Sag Harbor and East Hampton. About 200 people, roughly 1 percent of the year-round population, responded. There was little surprise in the results: Bucolic and wooded vistas were favored; modern beachfront residences were among the most disliked.

Property-rights advocates might be expected

to grumble about rules that might add new standards for what houses can look like. However, the privilege of owning land has always been granted subject to certain conditions, and the state program the survey was designed to implement is well established.

Outside of the historic districts here, what a house looks like is pretty much up to the property owners.

State law gives municipalities that adopt protection plans for scenic resources a far greater say in protecting views. Adopting such a plan, and giving areas of visual importance to the community at large some measure of protection, would be an important addition to the village and town codes and a benefit for us all. — *The East Hampton Star*, East Hampton, N.Y.