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PRESS RELEASE

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Joe McKay Honored by the New Suffolk Waterfront Fund

GREENPORT, N.Y., August 16, 2022 – The New Suffolk Waterfront Fund proudly honored Joe McKay of Greenport at their Summer Soirée on Sunday, August 14. The evening recognized the founding board member and longtime supporter who helped pioneer New Suffolk’s waterfront preservation efforts four decades ago and continues to be involved today.

“The New Suffolk Waterfront Fund is excited to recognize Joe McKay as this year’s honoree because of his forty-year dedication to the preservation of both the hamlet of New Suffolk and the New Suffolk Waterfront,” said Patricia Lowry, board chair of the New Suffolk Waterfront Fund. “He was there from the beginning helping to write our mission and continues to dedicate his time year after year in the best interest of our community.”

McKay, having spent weekends on the East End throughout his career in New York City, moved to New Suffolk in 1982. He immediately joined the New Suffolk Civic Association, supporting its mission to protect and conserve the rural atmosphere and beauty of the village. From 1982 through 1986, McKay also owned and operated the former New Suffolk Emporium on First Street, fully immersing himself in the village.

After many repeated attempts were made throughout the 1980s and 1990s to build condominiums, hotels, and even a conference center along the marina, the Civic Association created a watchdog committee to keep a close eye on the waterfront property.

“From the beginning, I knew how very special this place was, and I felt we just had to preserve and honor its rich maritime history,” said McKay. “It’s been a working commercial waterfront with a steamboat, an oyster processing factory, and scallop shacks. With its uniquely deep waters, it was the site of trials for the first submarine commissioned by the U.S. Navy. It is also the former site of the North Fork Shipyard. All of that history would have been wiped out, and that’s what got me motivated from a preservation standpoint.”

In 2004, yet another large-scale development threatened the waterfront, and committee members agreed that buying the property slated for development was the only way to

ensure it would be developed appropriately, according to the organization's website. The committee created the non-profit New Suffolk Waterfront Fund in 2005, run completely by volunteers, and successfully pursued the purchase of the waterfront property with assistance from the Peconic Land Trust.

"The New Suffolk Waterfront has such a true sense of place that is magnificent in every way. The natural beauty, the 200-year history – it is the heart of the village," said McKay. "There is nothing that will galvanize you like seeing something so special be threatened."

As a founding board member of the Waterfront Fund, McKay helped see the property through repeated threats of development, the initial purchase and loan period, destruction from Hurricane Sandy, and countless other challenges. He remained on the board until 2013, assisting the non-profit with its many activities and fundraising continuously for ongoing site renovations to preserve the natural beauty for future generations.

Today, McKay lives at Peconic Landing, a continuing care retirement community on the Long Island Sound in Greenport, where he serves on the board and faculty of the community's Lifetime Learning Institute. He still owns a cottage in New Suffolk where he spends every weekend and continues to volunteer his time as a committee member and advisor to the New Suffolk Waterfront Fund.

"Joe has been an integral member of the Peconic Landing community for 20 years, and he truly embodies our philosophy of staying engaged in your passions and serving the greater good," said Robert J. Syron, President and CEO of Peconic Landing. "On behalf of the Peconic Landing family, we congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition."

Peconic Landing is a nationally recognized, equity-based Continuing Care Retirement Community overlooking the breathtaking Long Island Sound. Located on the North Fork on a half-mile of private Sound Beach, the organization works on a mission of being the retirement community of choice for individuals age 62 and better by encouraging our members to enjoy a vibrant lifestyle and presenting ample opportunity for members to pursue their interests and passions to the fullest. For more information on Peconic Landing, please visit www.peconiclanding.org.



Joe McKay (Photo Credit: Christopher Fenimore)



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