

# Ms. Hamm Dissembles

State lawmakers Gail Hamm and Eileen Daily were wrong to craft a legislative amendment this year that bars a developer from razing East Hampton Mall. By now announcing conditions for repealing that law (after her re-election), Ms. Hamm has compounded that wrong by dissembling.

The amendment was tacked onto a House bill in the waning days of the regular session. It prohibits the construction of commercial buildings larger than 12,000 square feet within 2,000 feet of a lake 500 acres or more in size. Ms. Hamm admits the amendment was meant to temporarily stymie Landmark East Hampton LLC from evicting tenants at the mall, razing it and building a supermarket.

Landmark appears to have treated its tenants shabbily. With their amendment, however, Ms. Hamm and Ms. Daily unfairly changed the rules. This fall, East Hampton's planning and zoning commission cited the law in rejecting Landmark's supermarket plan.

Prior to her re-election, Ms. Hamm vowed to repeal the law in the next legislative session. But now it has come to light that she has imposed conditions for repeal: compensation for tenants, an updated town plan of development and a plan for protecting the Lake Pocotopaug and Salmon River watersheds.

Ms. Hamm says she has always made these terms clear. Yet prominent supporters of Ms. Hamm, including two Democrats on the council, had no knowledge of such conditions.

Ms. Hamm says she fully outlined her position in the River-east News. In that letter, however,

which was published May 28, Ms. Hamm only expresses hope that the amendment will accomplish those objectives. She does not cast them as conditions for repealing the law.

This sort of dissembling is unbecoming. When it is committed by someone of Ms. Hamm's stature, it is also disappointing. Ms. Hamm and Ms. Daily should press for repeal of this law — unconditionally.

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