

Billy Joel attends Oyster Bay town meeting

August 9, 2011 by BILL BLEYER / bill.bleyer@newsday.com



Billy Joel, who owns a mansion in nearby Centre Island, is frequently spotted around downtown Oyster Bay, eating at restaurants and attending events. But he rarely shows up at town board meetings.

Tuesday, however, the musician-songwriter came to a meeting to learn more about and support the board's vote to create the latest section of a statewide Blueway Trail highlighting paddling routes and shoreline attractions.

The board approved a resolution to hire **Nelson, Pope & Voorhis** of Melville for \$134,000 to map out a water trail along the North Shore showing launching areas and other services.

Though Joel had to leave before the vote, on his way out he called it "a great idea. I'm surprised it hasn't been proposed earlier. There is such a rich heritage here, such beauty that can be seen by boaters."

The Piano Man, who owns two fishing boats, a landing craft, a commuter yacht and a steel cargo ship, knows local waterways well. "But I can always use more information," he said. "I'm always looking to utilize our water and waterfront. That's why I have boats."

The town's participation in the new statewide program was suggested by local environmental group Friends of the Bay. Pat Aiken, executive director of the group, after the meeting called it "a fabulous thing for the North Shore. I think it's going to help a lot with encouraging tourism."