

OPINION

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EDITORIAL

A welcome addition

Upon hearing of the formation of a new political watchdog organization in East Hampton, the Group for Good Government, a local political insider was said to be dismissive, suggesting that its members were naive to think they could do anything to improve the sorry state of town government. He couldn't have been more wrong. Founders of the organization say they were spurred into action late last year as the town's fiscal crisis seemed to grow worse by the day. Their first order of business, they say, is to encourage more capable candidates—specifically people who have the skills necessary to run a government with a \$68 million annual budget—to enter the political arena. While organizers say they have no immediate intention of supporting specific candidates, they are making it clear they want to use their organization to gain access and have influence in town affairs. And while the group draws its members from a cross-section of year-rounders and second-home owners, it plans a major emphasis on encouraging second-home owners to register to vote here. According to the group's recently launched website, the GGG is “a non-partisan coalition organized for the specific purpose of promoting and supporting a government that will bring fiscal responsibility, transparency and accountability to the people of the Town of East Hampton while maintaining the town's beauty, social services and character.” So far, the GGG's suggestions are modest. It wants the town to consider establishing a town-manager type of government and hold more night meetings to make it easier for more people to attend. It says it will insist on transparent and civil governance by whomever is in office. Late last month, the GGG held its first public event, a meet-the-candidates party at the East Hampton home of its president, Jeffrey Fisher, that gave both office seekers and citizens the opportunity to meet and discuss issues in a convivial atmosphere. By having already brought candidates from both parties together in a decidedly civil way, the GGG has already proven itself to be a welcome addition to the political landscape.