



Newsday Photos / Kathy Kmonicek

Left, the Barsky family outside their home on Silas Woods Road in Manorville. Steve Barsky, a speech pathologist, is among those Silas Woods Road residents who support a bid to block off the end of nearby Beech Street, which intersects Ozone Street, right.

A Community Divided

Manorville neighborhoods clash over effort to close off street

By Indrani Sen

STAFF WRITER

On peaceful Silas Woods Road in Manorville, with its gracefully spaced, new Victorian houses, immaculate gardens and hedge sculptures, residents complain of beer bottles thrown from cars, obscenities yelled from speeding vehicles, even an ornamental windmill stolen from a front lawn.

Just footsteps away, on Beech, Orchard and Ozone streets, residents of this decades-old neighborhood of ranch houses and lichen-covered oaks say they get the cold shoulder from some of their Silas Woods neighbors — children on skateboards shooed away, hostile stares in return for waves from adults.

There has been little real contact between residents of Silas Woods and the three small streets to its west since December, when the Brookhaven Town Board denied a petition by Silas Woods residents to make Beech Street a dead end. The petition, which cited through traffic as the main reason for the closure, also would have separated the two neighborhoods, much to the chagrin of those in the older section.

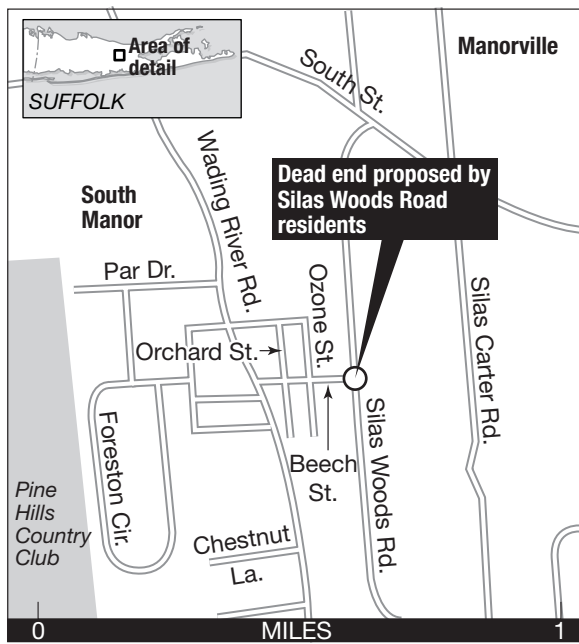
The petition was denied because of concerns about access for emergency vehicles, but things had gotten ugly before that, as the two neighborhoods faced off, trading accusations on town hall microphones.

Half a year later, continued resentment and an almost total lack of communication have sharply divided this leafy corner of Manorville. Residents on both sides say class is to blame.

"It's almost like a tracks thing," said Joanne Quick, an electrocardiogram technician who lives on Ozone Street. "Like we're from the other side of the tracks."

Silas Woods resident Steve Barsky, a speech pathologist whose half-million-dollar house is on the corner of Beech, said class issues don't come from his street. "I really think the bottom line behind it is the jealousy and the resentment factor," he said. "They resent the fact that this neighborhood was built, and that it's probably an upper-scale neighborhood, compared to theirs."

People in the older neighborhood say if there's any resentment on their side, it has to do with the road closure attempt last winter. Barsky and his wife got more than 70 signatures on their petition — all from Silas Woods Road, where the houses were built in the past six years. They didn't notify the adjoining neighborhood.



Newsday / Linda McKenney

"In the beginning, we did all take offense to what they tried to do," Quick said. "Everybody in this neighborhood felt that they should have asked us if we wanted the road closed."

It wasn't an intentional oversight, Diane Barsky said. "We wanted to correct what was happening in our neighborhood," she said. "I honestly didn't even know what was happening in their neighborhood."

Nevertheless, those living on and around Beech Street got wind of the petition and turned out in force to oppose it at a public hearing in November.

"All of a sudden, these people from behind us who we've never even met in our lives are yelling and screaming about how my husband wants a private road and we want a country club," Diane Barsky said. "It's not like we were trying to segregate. We were just trying to keep our community, our kids, safe."

Scott Macdonald, a vocal opponent of the street closure, who lives on the corner of Orchard and Beech streets, said after the petition was denied, he and his neighbors believed the issue was resolved. "We pretty

much thought it was a done deal, a dead issue," he said.

As far as the road closure goes, it is a dead issue, Town Supervisor John Jay LaValle said. "I don't expect us to change that policy," he said. "It's the right policy."

Silas Woods residents say they're still terrorized by speeding cars, trucks and all-terrain vehicles, and have endured harassment in the form of vandalism, trash dumping, and yelled abuse from the older neighborhood's residents. They have complained to police, their county legislators and their state representatives and were told nothing can be done.

"We're like the platoon that's been vacated on top of a hill with no backup," Silas Woods resident Linda Warren said.

Residents of the Beech Street neighborhood flatly deny any harassment of their Silas Woods neighbors.

"That's ridiculous," said Nan Peel, 47, a library director who lives on Ozone Street. "This smacks of paranoia and delusion."

She scoffed at Warren's analogy. "Most of the people in our community are mothers raising children," she said. "They're not biker chicks. Nobody's going to go after someone with a chain or anything."

Local teenagers may misbehave, Quick said, but they don't represent the whole neighborhood. Besides, she said, "If the teenagers hear that they want to be separated from us because we don't have \$400,000 houses, then they're going to get a little out of joint."

It's "unfortunate," Town Board Member Edward Hennessey, of East Moriches, said, but not all that surprising. "[It's] symptomatic of the classic problems that we see at our level of town government with existing residents responding to new development," he said.

Hennessey suggested the two neighborhoods get together for a meeting.

That's not likely to happen, Steve Barsky said. "I would be willing to discuss this, but you know they're not rational about it. I don't think they would be willing to meet with us," he said.

Not so, said John Peel, Nan's husband. "If they really wanted to meet, if they wanted to talk, we'd be more than happy," he said. "But they wouldn't even think about it."