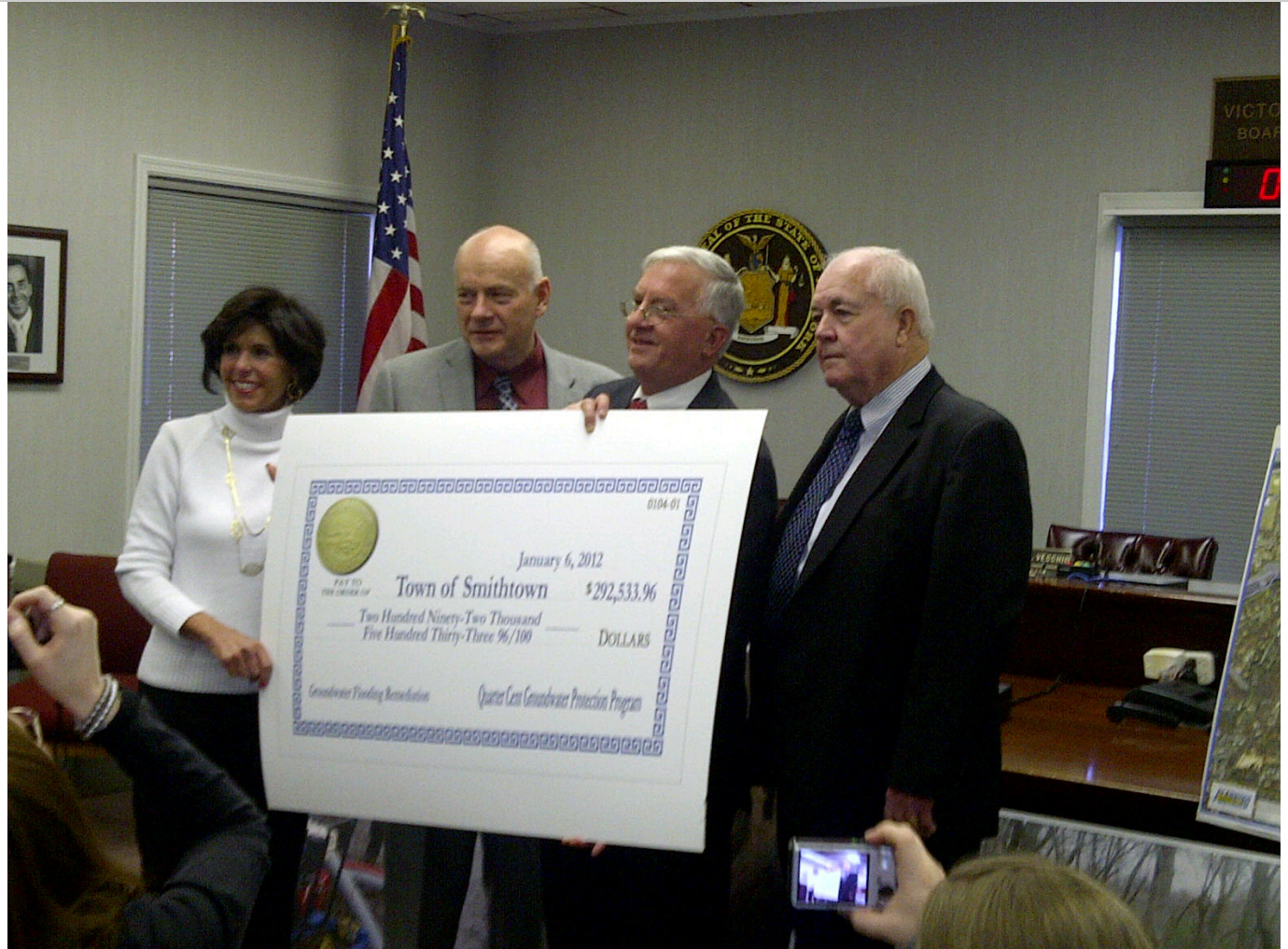


**PRESS RELEASE FROM
LEGISLATOR JOHN M. KENNEDY, JR.**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 9, 2012**

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“PROMISES KEPT:”
COUNTY KEEPS ITS PROMISE TO DELIVER IN FIGHT AGAINST GROUNDWATER
FLOODING

January 9, 2012: Suffolk County Legislature Minority Leader John M. Kennedy Jr. (12th District) and Legislator Lynne Nowick (13th District) today presented the Town of Smithtown with close to \$300,000 in reimbursement for ongoing efforts to improve storm water runoff and groundwater drainage. This joint effort has been designed to address decades of home flooding and environmental contamination across the town.

“Today’s payment shows that Suffolk County has kept its promise to share the load with the Town of Smithtown in Smithtown’s long-term, multi-tiered battle with a chronically elevated water table that has caused immeasurable property damage and ongoing hardship for town residents over the past five years,” Legislator Kennedy said. “I plan to ensure that the county remains a full partner with

Smithtown and the Village of the Branch as these municipalities continue to plan and implement the groundwater remediation program that has already witnessed measureable success over the past two years."

In attendance for the presentation Tuesday morning at Smithtown Town Hall were: Suffolk County Legislators Kennedy and Nowick, Smithtown Supervisor Patrick Vecchio, Smithtown Town Council Members Kevin Malloy and Bob Creighton, Suffolk County Planning Director Sarah Lansdale, Smithtown Engineering Department Director Ted Sanford, Village of the Branch Trustee Mark Delaney, Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality Member Michael Kaufman, Steven Hyman, Vice President and Director of Civil Engineering for H2M Architects and Engineers, and Will Bowman, Senior Scientist for Land Use Ecological Services, Inc.

Of the total funding presented today, \$223,822 represents the final installment payment for Phase I, and \$68,711 an installment payment for Phase II, in the three-part project to counteract the region's swollen water table and mitigate resulting damage to residents' property from groundwater flooding. Beginning in 2010, Phase I saw the removal of silt from the Northeast Branch of the Nissequogue River, in the portion bounded by the Village of the Branch and Route 347, to restore proper flow to this fundamental regional avenue for groundwater drainage. Phase II similarly featured silt removal from the Northeast Branch from Route 347 south to the Bow Drive culvert and footbridge. Phase III, which is still in development, is generally aimed at improving drainage infrastructure across Route 347.

Phase I has to date cost a total of \$500,000 for engineering, construction and inspection, of which the Town of Smithtown contributed \$250,000, which Legislator Kennedy matched with \$250,000 obtained from Suffolk County's Quarter-Cent-Sales-Tax Drinking Water Protection Program, a separate public fund established by county voters to contribute a designated portion of county sales tax proceeds toward environmental protection programs. The total cost to date for Phase II has been \$448,000 for engineering, construction and inspection; here again the county Quarter-Cent fund has reimbursed the Town of Smithtown for half the expense, i.e. slightly less than \$224,000.

In addition to silt removal from 1200-foot and 2600-foot portions of the Northeast Branch respectively, Phase I and Phase II also included removal and replacement of invasive species that prevent the proper drainage functioning of wetlands in Smithtown, as well as installation of drainage structures to prevent man-made sediment and pollutants from entering this vital ecological corridor.

Kennedy also partnered with the Town to fund a series of roadway drainage infrastructure improvements in the Loft, Croft and Link neighborhood of Smithtown hamlet. These improvements aimed at combating groundwater build-up and preventing road runoff from contaminating environmentally sensitive habitats in the nearby Blydenburgh County Park. County reimbursement payments for this project are currently being processed. Over \$600,000 was delivered to Smithtown in October 2011 for this project.

Simultaneously, Kennedy is working with Village of the Branch officials to conduct similar groundwater remediation concerning the portion of the Northeast Branch within the Village. Kennedy also has secured \$400,000 from the Quarter-Cent fund to underwrite planning and engineering activity by H2M associated with this Village project. The Village and County plan to conduct silt removal through another 7500 feet of Nissequogue River Northeast Branch running through the Village of the Branch, for which Kennedy anticipates applying for an additional roughly \$1.5 million in Federal Emergency Agency funding.

Moreover, Kennedy is pursuing county funding for engineering studies of the spillways at Miller's and Stump ponds to determine the optimal levels at which to maintain the water in these weirs, whose regulation contributes to Northeast Branch flow and drainage.

Photo Captions: Legislators Kennedy and Nowick present a check from the Suffolk County Quarter-

Cent Sales Tax Drinking Water Protection Program to Smithtown Town Councilmen Kevin Malloy and Bob Creighton.