

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



KATE BROWNING
County Legislator, 3rd District
Health and Human Services, Chair

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COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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LEVY NOT BEING HONEST ABOUT LEGACY VILLAGE

Back Door Tax Increase on Longwood Residents, Contract He Touts Doesn't Exist

Mastic, NY – In an effort to push back against growing opposition to County Executive's Steve Levy's ill sighted tax increasing development proposal known as Legacy Village, Mr. Levy held a press conference today referencing a contract that has never been voted on or approved, and spoke about jobs to stimulate the economy that would not be created for 4-5 years down the road. The County Executive also stated that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was started four months ago, which causes great alarm since the scoping document based on public input has not yet been approved by the legislature.

“It is a real shame that Mr. Levy thinks he can wave his magic wand and all of a sudden a contract that can bring in \$12 million for the county simply exists,” stated Legislator Kate Browning. “The fact is the only contract is one he drafted on the 12th floor in Hauppauge that has not been voted on by the legislature and has no validity because it was never executed. You can't balance your budget on draft contracts that were written behind doors with 'Big Money Developers'.”

The County Executive also tried to minimize the real opposition by saying that legislators are pandering to a 'few' vocal activists. The truth is there are hundreds of opponents to his proposal not only because of the tax increase it will bring to thousands of residents in the Longwood School District, but also the negative impact it will have on the Carmans River at a time when local governments are doing everything in their power to protect this vital natural resource. Among some of the groups that have come out strongly against Legacy Village include:

Association of Brookhaven Civic Organizations, Brookhaven Village Association, Coalition to Save the Lakes, East Moriches Property Owners Association, Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of the Edgewood Preserve, Friends of the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, Hamlet Organic Garden, Long Island Pine Barrens Society, Long Island Drinking Water Coalition, Long Island Environmental Voters Forum, Mastic Park Civic Association, Manor Park Civic Association, Miller Place Civic Association, Open Space Council, Open Space Preservation Trust, Peconic Baykeeper, Post-Morrow Foundation, Ridge Civic Association, South Yaphank Civic Association, and the Longwood School District to name a few.

“It amazes me that over thirty civic, school, and environmental organizations translate to only a 'few' vocal activist in the eyes of the County Executive,” said Browning. “He is apparently putting blinders on to the thousands of people these organizations represent in order to promote his 'legacy'.”

The County Executive also failed to acknowledge that the \$12 million he says can be achieved for the 2011 budget represents only 95 acres of industrial land that is a part of the overall 255 acres development. Legislator

John Kennedy (R-Smithtown) has introduced a resolution that would declare only the 95 acres surplus, and would then bid this property out to all who may be interested. Kennedy's bill, IR 1670-10, could possibly see greater revenue for the county without moving forward on the negative impacts of the 255 acre development. Residents have expressed a willingness to consider this proposal if Levy would pull back his mammoth proposal.

"We may have a compromise with opponents of this development, and still be able to achieve the revenue, if not more revenue in the 2011 budget," stated Browning. "Unfortunately the County Executive does not know the meaning of compromise. He would rather take the steamroller approach. It doesn't help that he has never even come to Yaphank to discuss the project with those it will most affect."

The EIS is based on a scoping document that was formed from public input. This document has not been approved by the full legislature.

"How can the County Executive state the EIS was started four months ago when the document needed to conduct it has not been finalized," concluded Browning. "I have grave concern that he is fast tracking this and ignoring the process, which leaves many questions as to the integrity of the EIS."