

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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

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COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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SHAMELESS LEVY DOES IT AGAIN

Takes Credit for Stopping Auction He Vowed to Hold

Mastic, NY – What should have been a good story for the newly formed Mastic Beach Village turned into another shameless political stunt yesterday when County Executive Steve Levy completely rewrote the history behind a county-owned parcel that was pulled from auction last week.

Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) was the person who asked Levy to take a number of parcels off the auction block to protect threatened communities, but Levy absolutely opposed doing so, as e-mails to Legislator Browning make perfectly clear. Legislator Browning sent a letter on September 19 to Pamela Greene, Levy's Director of Real Property, accompanied by letters and e-mails from local civic leaders, requesting that numerous parcels be withheld from the auction for the betterment of various communities. Further e-mails in response to these requests clearly state that Levy declined the communities' requests and that all parcels would be auctioned off.

Legislator Browning then sent an additional request to Director Greene with new information that was put together by the Osprey Pointe Civic Association. In particular, Evan Proios from the civic association was integral in researching these parcels and identifying the most important ones. The second attempt asked that since the first request was denied they would like to have one parcel of particular importance removed. This parcel is located within the newly formed boundaries of Mastic Beach Village and could play a vital role for the new government.

After a month and a half of battling the County Executive over pulling parcels from the auction, Legislator Browning was informed a few days after the auction that one parcel, #105, had been removed from the auction list.

Shamelessly, in a press release he sent out yesterday, Levy tries to rewrite reality and claim credit for taking the parcel off the auction block.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," said Legislator Browning. "He was dragged kicking and screaming into taking just one parcel off the auction block. If he had real concern for our embattled neighborhoods, he would have removed all the parcels.

"I was happy to be informed that after 45 days of advocacy through my office, the Osprey Pointe Civic Association and the Mastic Beach Property Owner's Association that we were successful in getting the County Executive to at least change his position on this one important parcel," said Legislator Browning.

Unfortunately, after being informed of the County Executive's eleventh hour flip-flop because of pressure from the legislator and civic associations, Levy sent out his press release completely skewing the facts about what really happened. Going even further, Levy's press release made it look like he had worked with civic leaders all along, and his public relations staff made up quotes for those civic leaders and then asked those leaders to sign off on the quotes.

"It's a shame that Steve Levy's ego gets in the way of being honest," stated Browning. "He clearly is willing to cross the line of journalistic ethics for a two-minute sound bite. The civic leaders know how hard I worked to get this parcel removed and Steve Levy fought me every step of the way. At the last minute he conceded to the public pressure and then attempts to re-write history."

Browning had also requested 10 parcels to be removed in North Bellport on behalf of the Greater Bellport Coalition and Victory Housing, who wanted to turn the properties into homeownership. Levy refused the request and auctioned the parcels to the highest bidder last week.

Any e-mails and correspondence are available upon request.

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