

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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LEGACY VILLAGE PARCEL PRESERVED

Legislator Browning Adds 23 Acres of Controversial County Land to Southaven Park



(Pictured Left to Right: John and Johan McConnell, South Yaphank Civic Assoc., Martin Van Lith, Post Morrow Foundation, Robert and Audrey Kessler, Yaphank Historical Society, Tom Williams, Post Morrow Foundation, Sharon Wiesmann, resident, Chard Trusnovec, Yaphank Taxpayers & Civic Assoc., and Legislator Kate Browning.)

Yaphank, NY – In 2010 County Executive Steve Levy proposed the development of 253 acres of county land in Yaphank, also known as “Legacy Village”. The land is located in the Carmans River watershed and surrounds the historic community of Yaphank. A piece of the county holdings, known as Parcel A, was originally proposed to have two 5,000 seat arenas constructed on it. Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) whose district includes Yaphank, led the fight to stop Legacy Village, and last Thursday she secured the unanimous support of her colleagues at Suffolk County’s legislative meeting to transfer 23 acres to the Department of Parks and Recreation. This portion of the county owned land is now forever preserved. What was once slated to be two massive arenas along the shore of the Carmans River is now an extension of Southaven Park.

The Legacy Village proposal was immediately met with opposition from residents and environmentalists when County Executive Levy finally unveiled the plan after years of meeting with developers behind closed doors. Soon after Legacy Village was released the Town of Brookhaven began work on the Carmans River Protection Plan. The town plan made it clear that areas surrounding the river should not be developed and any waste water credits should be directed away from the river. The economy also continued to weaken and support for Legacy Village quickly dwindled. The Suffolk County Legislature eventually approved legislation that prevented the county from moving forward with “Legacy Village”.

“Legacy Village was an unsustainable plan from the start, and was in direct conflict with the Town of Brookhaven’s efforts to preserve the Carmans River,” stated Legislator Browning. “Killing the County Executive’s project was only the first piece of the puzzle.”

However, the legislature still voted to surplus some of the property in Yaphank to the highest bidder, which Legislator Browning opposed, so she immediately introduced I.R. 1267-11 to preserve the most sensitive land in order to prevent any sale of this important buffer. The 23 acres is all wooded and falls within the 0-5 years contributing area of the Carmans River., and also contains the old Almshouse cemetery. The county is still trying to sell other county land in the area.

“This land should never have been proposed for development,” stated Legislator Browning. “It is directly adjacent to the Carmans River and would have had a negative impact on the environment. I am grateful that my colleagues saw the importance of preserving this parcel.”

“The Yaphank Historical Society wishes to thank Kate Browning for preserving another small piece of our beautiful town,” stated Historical Society President Robert Kessler.

“A special thanks to Legislator Kate Browning for all her dedication to the environment,” stated South Yaphank Civic Association President Johan McConnell. “The protection of this parcel is another example of her listening to the residents and responding to the issues that matter.”

“The Yaphank Community is extremely grateful for Legislator Browning's efforts,” stated Chad Trusnovec, President of the Yaphank and Taxpayers Civic Association. “Because of this, another piece of environmentally sensitive land will forever remain protected.”

“This preservation broadens the protection efforts underway to safeguard the Carmans River Watershed and our ground water,” stated Sharon Wiesmann, a Yaphank resident who owns property adjacent to the Carmans Rivers’ Upper Lake. “The preservation of this property is a remarkable illustration of the ability of all involved to protect this precious environment in our area. We applaud and thank Legislator Browning for recognizing the importance and for making this land preservation come to fruition.”

The bill is still awaiting the signature of County Executive Levy.