



LEGISLATOR SARAH S. ANKER
LEGISLATOR KARA HAHN
 Suffolk County Legislators



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INFORMATION RELEASE:

February 3, 2017

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Legislators Take Action to Protect County Parks from Vandalism and Illegal Dumping



From left to right: Suffolk County Parks Commissioner Phil Berdolt, Legislator Kara Hahn, Legislator Sarah Anker, and Suffolk County Police Commissioner Tim Sini.

HAUPPAUGE, NY – On Friday, February 3rd, Suffolk County Legislators Sarah Anker and Kara Hahn were joined by Suffolk County Parks Commissioner Phil Berdolt and Police Commissioner Tim Sini to announce the implementation of a surveillance camera pilot program that would create greater oversight at county parks to deter vandalism and illegal dumping

“The cameras will help prevent vandalism, graffiti, and illegal dumping in our county parks. These activities present environmental and economic issues that affect property values and the health and safety of residents. Illegal dumping may contain toxic chemicals that can contaminate our groundwater,” said Legislator Anker. “I strongly encourage residents to alert the Suffolk County Police Department if they see illegal activity in our parks. It is important that if you see something, say something.”

“Over the past 40 Years, Suffolk County taxpayers have spent over \$3 billion to acquire nearly 70,000 acres of sensitive lands in an effort to protect our environment, preserve our history, and invest in our quality of life. The vandalism and dumping within our parklands not only devalues the public’s investment, but is a direct attack on the shared commitment we all have made to make Suffolk County a place we are proud to call our home,” said Legislator Kara Hahn, Chairwoman of the Legislature’s Environment, Planning and



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Agriculture and Parks and Recreation committees. “As these acts of vandalism and dumping are far more than just inconsiderate actions, I welcome any assistance that can be provided through the implementation of technology as both a deterrent and as an investigatory tool.”

Legislator Anker and Legislator Hahn believe that a camera program would not only catch perpetrators of vandalism and dumping, but also discourage further illegal activity in our active and passive county parks. Commissioner Berdolt and Commissioner Sini will work with the Legislators and community leaders to identify high priority areas to place the initial surveillance cameras. Similar programs have been highly successful in other municipalities across Suffolk County. The Town of Babylon implemented a camera surveillance pilot program in 2009, which has since grown to include the installation of cameras at all 38 of Babylon’s town parks and in some downtown areas.

“The Suffolk County Police Department looks forward to working with the Suffolk County Legislature and the Parks Department to ensure that our parks are protected from vandalism and illegal dumping. As Police Commissioner, I will ensure that the Police Department does its part in this important endeavor,” said Commissioner Tim Sini of the Suffolk County Police Department.

The request for a camera surveillance pilot program follows the unanimous approval by the Suffolk County Parks and Recreation Committee to advance Introductory Resolution 1004-2017. The resolution, sponsored by Legislator Hahn and co-sponsored by Legislator Anker, directs the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation to establish a Parks Watch program, similar to the Neighborhood Watch program facilitated by the Police Department. The program would encourage residents to be vigilant and report suspicious activity in county parks, as well as establishes a dedicated website, hotline, and email for reporting. The resolution will be voted on this Tuesday, February 7th at the General Legislature Meeting.

For more information, please call Legislator Sarah Anker’s office at 631-854-1600.

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