Quality of Life Task Force leads coordinated six month clean-up effort across Brookhaven

Farmingville, NY - On Monday, April 11, Supervisor Mark Lesko, Deputy Supervisor / Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh, and Superintendent of Highways John Rouse held a press conference at Pamela Lane Park in Selden to launch "Operation Clean Sweep". Operation Clean Sweep is a coordinated program spearheaded by the Town’s Quality of Life Task Force with the goal of improving the quality of life throughout Brookhaven.

The first "Operation Clean Sweep" will take place the week of April 11, 2011 in the neighborhood surrounding Pamela Lane Park, located in Town Council District 3. This area is bordered on the north by Middle Country Road, south by Mooney Pond Pond, east by South Bicycle Path, and west by College Road.

"Over the next six months, our Quality of Life Task Force is going to work in partnership with the Highway Department to give communities all across Brookhaven a make-over," said Supervisor Mark Lesko, "The Quality of Life Task Force has been successful cracking down on those who violate our code and now they are taking their efforts to the next level by focusing on a specific area and aggressively cleaning it up to make an immediate and positive impact on the quality of life of residents."
Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh, who represents Council District 3, where the first "Operation Clean Up" will take place, said, "Our Town employees will be doing a great deal of work to beautify our neighborhood during Operation Clean Sweep. While a pristine community is important to all of us, it is also vital to be aware of our work crews. Drive with caution during this project and obey traffic rules while our men and women are out there working hard for us."

"This is work we do in the Highway Department every day," said John Rouse, Superintendent of Highways. "Having a coordinated effort with other departments to make a big difference in a small area is something I'm proud to be a part of."

Over the course of this week, Town employees will sweep streets, fix streetlamps, pick up litter, install new street signs, clean catch basins, and conduct other activities to help clean up the neighborhood.

In the months ahead, there will be an "Operation Clean Sweep" in each Town Council District. The schedule is as follows:

- May 2011: Council District 1
- June 2011: Council District 2
- August 2011: Council District 6
- September 2011: Council District 5
- October 2011: Council District 4

Last week, letters were sent to approximately 1400 residents living in the first Operation Clean Sweep target area to advise them of "Operation Clean Sweep" and to ask that they remove cars from the street to clear the way for Town road sweepers and clean-up and repair crews.

Supervisor Lesko established the Quality of Life Task Force in June of 2009 to aggressively enforce the Town code to eliminate blight in neighborhoods and shutdown suburban slumlords. From June 2009 through December 2009, fines levied on code violations increased by 170% compared to the same time period in 2008.

In 2010, the Quality of Life Task Force continued its success. Compared to 2009, fines levied in 2010 nearly doubled to almost $1 million. Fines are levied through tickets issued to property owners with properties that have seriously unsafe or hazardous conditions.

One of the more recent Quality of Life Task Force investigations on March 24, 2011 took place in close proximity to the Operation Clean Sweep Target area, at 1 Howard Street in Selden. The Town's Quality of Life Task Force, assisted by Suffolk County Police Department Sixth Precinct Crime Control, executed a search warrant at an illegal multi-family dwelling and investigators observed that the interior of the house included locked bedroom doors, rooms constructed by the addition of closed walls and doors to existing rooms, and a basement apartment. The Task Force determined that the house contained a total of eight bedrooms including three in the basement. A total of six adults and two children were observed in the house during the execution of the warrant. According to the property's managing agent, who was speaking for the property owner, two additional adults also reside there, but were not present at the time. Quality of Life investigators issued 16 Appearance Tickets to the property owner and the managing agent. The court date is set for May 26, 2011.

The results of Operation Clean Sweep in Selden will be announced in the coming weeks. The next Operation Clean Sweep in May 2011 will take place in Stony Brook, off Stony Brook Road near Route 347.

If residents believe that a property is in violation of any Town of Brookhaven codes, they can call 451-TOWN to file a complaint.

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