Councilwoman Kepert Appears Before County Legislature in Support of Relocating "Trap and Skeet"

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Planning Steps for Trap and Skeet relocation parcel is temporarily setback

Farmingville, NY - Councilwoman Connie Kepert attended the Suffolk County Environment and Planning Committee on Friday to testify in favor of authorizing a planning steps resolution, sponsored by Legislator Kate Browning, for the acquisition of property to relocate Suffolk County's Trap and Skeet range. Councilwoman Kepert stated, "This committee has the ability to end the pain of residents who live adjacent to the facility and are unable to enjoy their own backyards due to the noise of gunshots."

Since reopening in 2006, the Trap and Skeet range has caused strife for surrounding neighbors. The community, along with Councilwoman Kepert and Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning, have been fighting to resolve the issue and bring peace and quiet back to the neighborhood adjacent to the range. "Authorizing these planning steps is a move in the right direction for the residents who have suffered for almost 6 years now. The parcel in question is an appropriate location for trap & skeet, since the closest resident is over a mile away," stated Kepert. John Palasek, who lives close to the range stated, "These planning steps make sense for all parties involved. It will benefit not only the community, environmentalists and park patrons, but the shooting community as well. They can enjoy their sport without the controversy and conflict within the community. It's really a win-win."

The subject property is a 75 acre parcel located to the north of Gabreski Airport in the Hamlet of Westhampton. The parcel contains an active gun range which has been located on the site since the late 1940's. At the committee meeting staff from the Suffolk County Planning Commission raised a concern over the parcel being located in the Pine Barrens Core. However, the Councilwoman underscored that the current Trap and Skeet range is also located in the Pine Barrens Core. The court has ruled that recreational use in the core is permitted, and considers Trap & Skeet to be a recreational use. Thus, there is a precedent for trap and skeet use in the Pine Barrens Core.

Unfortunately, due to an issue with the funding program identified, the approval of the planning steps resolution was delayed until January. Johan McConnell, president of the South Yaphank Civic Association commented after the vote, "I'm disappointed that the planning steps did not go forward. Several of the questions raised at the hearing could have been answered had this been passed. It's not a mandate to purchase the property for this use, it's just the chance to take a close look at the property and determine if it's feasible."

Kate Browning will revise the resolution for a meeting in January. In the meantime, "Trap and Skeet" continues to disrupt the lives of residents. "Suffolk County needs to step up to the plate and find an alternative location for this facility. It is time give back to the residents of this community their right to live in peace," concluded Councilwoman Kepert.