Farmingville, NY - To the delight of the North Bellport community, Councilwoman Kepert hosted the grand opening of the Robert Rowley Park on July 16. "This park, once marred by gang and drug activity has been transformed into a fun and positive place for kids to be," stated Councilwoman Kepert.

When the community came together back in 2007 for their community visioning it was clear that the revitalization of Robert Rowley Park was their priority. This park is a result of the community working side by side with the Town of Brookhaven Parks Department to improve on an existing park that has been notorious for its criminal activity and turn it into an attractive recreational space that will invite all age groups.

Robert Rowley Park, located on the corner of Patchogue and Hoffman Avenues in North Bellport, has a history of gang and criminal activity. For years, prior to Councilwoman Kepert coming into office, the park had been neglected by Town officials. With the leadership of Councilwoman Kepert, a strong advocate for community planning, the community united and completed a visioning in 2007 which resulted in the Greater Bellport Sustainable Community Plan in 2009 that has been accepted by the Town board. A major goal of the plan was to improve the recreational space for the community, which has a large youth population. With the direction of the community, the Councilwoman allocated over $1 million dollars for the improvements of the park. The improvements include new basketball courts, handball courts, three separate playgrounds for toddlers to older kids, a walking path, shade shelters and picnic tables. The community also identified the need for security at the park, as a result the town and community has worked with the 5th precinct to increase the police presence at the park and the Town will be installing 6 security cameras.

"The renovations that the Town has undertaken restored Robert Rowley Park which is a focal point of the community," stated John Rogers, president of the local community group the Greater Bellport Coalition. A companion to this new focal point will be the brand new state-of-the art facility for the Boys and Girls Club of the Bellport Area (which will have its grand opening in mid-August) located behind the park. Tracie Romandetti, executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of the Bellport Area stated, "It's an exciting time for this community. This newly renovated park combined
with the new Boys and Girls Club facility will create an overall wonderful space for the youth of North Bellport.