Acting Supervisor/Councilwoman Walsh and Councilwoman Kepert Announce Open Space Purchase of 15.5 Acres in Yaphank Located in Carmans River Watershed
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Undeveloped parcel is first to close through LIPA Natural Resources Benefit to Protect Natural Lands While Advancing Renewable Energy

Pictured are Treasurer of the Yaphank Historical Society and Coalition to Save Yaphank Lakes Vice President Audrey Kessler, Acting Supervisor/Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh, Councilwoman Connie Kepert, John McConnell and former President of the South Yaphank Civic Association Johan McConnell.

Farmingville, NY - On Tuesday, October 9, Acting Supervisor/Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh and Councilwoman Connie Kepert held a press conference to announce that the Town has taken title to 15.5 acres of open space on Park Street in Yaphank. The property was purchased as part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) that provides the Town with funds for the purchase and preservation of open space in the 0-5 year groundwater contributing area of the Carmans River. The LIPA / Town of Brookhaven MOU is part of the "Natural Resources Benefit" associated with the 32megawatt solar power generating facility that was constructed at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

This property lies within Long Island's Pine Barrens region and is undeveloped, heavily forested and home to a wide variety of wildlife, including mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles. The previous owner of the property was Ronkonkoma-based R & H Real Estate. The purchase price was $1,433,000.

Acting Supervisor/Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh said, "I commend LIPA for working with the Town to protect open space and for their efforts to advance a very important solar energy project. This piece of undeveloped land will now be protected from development and thanks to LIPA, the Town was able to purchase the property without spending any taxpayer money."

Councilwoman Connie Kepert said, "I’m truly proud that the Town, LIPA and the community joined forces to preserve this ecologically sensitive land where active grey fox dens were sited and prevented the development of 14 single family homes that would have compromised the health of the Carmans River. As the Councilwoman representing the communities within the Carmans River Corridor, it's my priority to use open-space funds to preserve lands that will protect the Carmans River and this purchase meets that standard."
"LIPA was pleased to work with the Town on the acquisition of this land, which is consistent with the Natural Resources Benefits package provided for the Long Island Solar Farm. This acquisition fulfills LIPA and its partner's commitments, which is to advance renewable energy on Long Island with the largest solar farm in the state of New York, while protecting the precious natural resources of the Pine Barrens," said Michael Hervey, LIPA Chief Operating Officer.

The Long Island Solar Farm at Brookhaven National Lab provides LIPA customers with 32 megawatts (MW) of solar energy. This project consists of two large-scale solar arrays, a Laboratory-dedicated array of 1 to 2 MW, and a solar research facility.

The 0-5 year groundwater contributing area was identified by the Carmans River Study Group as the area around the River where it takes 0-5 years for groundwater, or anything that seeps into groundwater, such as nitrogen, to reach the Carmans River. Since 2009, the Town has preserved over 400 acres of open space, including the acquisitions of the 31 acre Lake Grove School property located within the Carmans River Watershed, 16 parcels in the Terryville Greenbelt conservation area, the 75 acre Vasillaros property in Miller Place adjacent to the Andrew Muller Primary School and five parcels of upland and wetland open space in the northwestern corner of Lake Panamoka.

For more information about the Town of Brookhaven, go to www.brookhaven.org.