BROOKHAVEN, NY - Brookhaven Town Councilman Timothy Mazzei today announced a crackdown on quality of life offenses in the Town, and steep new fines for those who are found guilty. The changes to the Town Code target problem homes and businesses, including foreclosed houses and businesses that have fallen into neglect while they are empty and bank owned.

"The vast majority of our residents and businesses work hard to be good neighbors, taking pride in their property. When a home or building in their neighborhood is abandoned or becomes an eyesore because the owner doesn't care, it affects the entire area, impacting property values and frustrating those who work hard to beautify their community," said Mazzei. "These new fines and penalties are a message to the people who own these neglected properties - clean up your act, or it's going to cost you."

Mazzei's new legislation, which was approved unanimously by the Town Board, sharply increases fines for those found guilty of the types of violations that impact the neighborhoods of our Town, and the quality of life of those who live nearby. Under the new legislation, the Town Code is amended to increase the penalties for these offenses by establishing minimum fines of $500 and maximum fines of $2,000 for first convictions, and minimum fines of $1,000 and maximum fines of $3,000 and up to six months in prison for second or subsequent convictions. Each week's continued violation, under the amended code, will be considered as a separate, additional violation.

"These new fines and penalties will be used as a tool to go after the owners of homes, businesses or other properties that are a chronic problem in the community. Whether they are owner-occupied, being rented or are in foreclosure and owned by a bank, we're putting property owners on notice that with ownership comes responsibility, to your neighbors as well as to the Town Code," said Mazzei. "By increasing these fines and penalties, we're discouraging those who think they can simply violate the law and pay a small fine as a cost of doing business."

The new fines target individuals, negligent property owners and landlords who fail to maintain their residential or commercial structures, have garbage accumulating on their land, or have illegally removed trees from their property. The code amendment also addresses graffiti, defacement of property; trespassing; and other quality of life issues.

"This the second of a three phase project to address these quality of life issues. The first step was revamping and streamlining the infrastructure of the Town's complaint system, enabling all Town departments to be aware of problem properties, and be able to conduct enforcement actions more efficiently," said Mazzei. "In the final phase, Town enforcement officers will target unsightly and abandoned properties, and bring them quickly into compliance."