

Keperter Creates Anti Graffiti Task Force

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Committee to Assist Town with Graffiti Prevention Measures

Farmingville, NY - It is estimated that Graffiti mitigation costs the Town of Brookhaven close to \$200,000 per year to clean up. Graffiti vandalism costs the entire nation more than \$8 billion a year to clean up. That cost does not include the negative visual impacts graffiti vandalism has on neighborhoods, cities and towns across the country.

"If graffiti is allowed to remain, it sends the message that no one cares about a community, or neighborhood and becomes an open invitation for more graffiti, littering, and crime. Graffiti hurts property values and frightens away businesses," stated Councilwoman Keperter. "The best way to prevent graffiti is to remove it as fast as possible," continued Keperter.

Data shows that removal within 24 to 48 hours results in a nearly zero rate of recurrence. "As a civic leader in the 1990's I served as the chair of the Anti-Graffiti Committee for the Town of Brookhaven, and now I am proud to be joined by Supervisor Lesko and the entire Town Board in renewing that effort by establishing an Anti-Graffiti Committee for the Town of Brookhaven," stated Keperter.

Supervisor Lesko, who was a co-sponsor of the resolution, added, "I have made the investigation and prosecution of quality of life offenses a cornerstone of my administration. The eradication of graffiti goes hand-in-hand with those efforts. I commend Councilwoman Keperter for her initiative on this issue and I look forward to the recommendations from the task force on how to combat these types of public eyesores."

"Graffiti is a scourge inflicted upon our community. We hope and entrust this Task Force will help us proactively combat this form of community demoralizing vandalism," stated Councilman Steve Fiore Rosenfeld.

Councilwoman Jane Bonner has been fighting graffiti in her district for many years before being elected added " I was proud add my name as a co-sponsor on this important piece of legislation. It is my belief that if we all work together on this issue in a bi-partisan fashion we can really make a difference in the quality of the lives of all of our mutual constituents".

Committee's Charge: Clean Up, Prevention, Education

Clean Up:

Encourage citizen reporting by using the TOB 451-Call center and TOB Web site: Publicize 451 town as means of reporting Graffiti vandalism. Create opportunity on Brookhaven's web site in which the public can report graffiti vandalism, as well as, find information about graffiti and anti-graffiti programs.

Conduct an Annual Graffiti Survey: This is a snapshot in time. Data will be compiled and compared to other years to determine trends and potential problems. Committee will reach to various civic and community groups as well as TOB Public Safety and Law investigators to develop data base.

Work with Town Council to enhance enforcement of anti-graffiti laws within the TOB: Enhance existing laws and ensure that any existing anti-graffiti laws are being enforced. A survey of arrested taggers found "fear of getting caught" was the top response when asked what would get them to stop tagging. Apprehending graffiti vandals is a strong deterrent. Work with both the TOB Law Investigators and Public Safety and Suffolk County Police Department to create recommendations which will enhance opportunities to apprehend graffiti vandals.

Create: an "adopt-a-spot" program which partners with businesses, the Keep Brookhaven Beautiful Committee, and community organizations: Committee will seek out partner organizations both business and citizen volunteers with the goal of providing them with graffiti cleanup kits to keep an area they have "adopted" graffiti free. This program improves awareness and engages citizens in graffiti prevention. Committee may elect to organize a "Paint the Town Clean Event" in which they will work with businesses to donate paint to volunteers which matches previously identified buildings that were substantially hit with graffiti.

Monitor graffiti-prone locations: Get the support of SCPD to step up police monitoring of locations that are frequently hit by graffiti. A few communities are using some type of security camera in areas that are frequently graffitied. Also consider organizing a "Block Club" to keep an eye on targeted sites.

Prevention: Create a paint-brush mural Identify areas chronically hit by with graffiti. Use a community mural to restore a wall. Graffiti vandals rarely tag a paint-brush mural, and they are a great way to get the community involved in graffiti prevention. Murals can involve local artists, youth and community volunteers, and the local paint store, which may be willing to donate paint and brushes.

Education: Educate Youth. Create PSA and programs which educate the public as to the impact of graffiti vandalism. Use the Graffiti Hurts® curriculum - KAB - to incorporate graffiti education and prevention into classroom activities, after school programs, and youth group activities.

The Committee shall be comprised of the following members:

- One member of the Keep Brookhaven Beautiful Committee
- One member for the Brookhaven Youth Bureau Division
- Two members of Brookhaven Youth Agencies
- One member from the Suffolk County Police Department
- One member of the Brookhaven Chamber of Commerce
- One member from the local PTA
- One Mural Artist
- One member appointed by each Council District and one member appointed by the Supervisor
- All Council members are deemed ex-officio members

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

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