

Dedication of the Brookhaven Community Court

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From Left to Right, Councilman Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld, Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh, Councilman Tim Mazzei, Supervisor Mark Lesko, the Honorable Madeleine Fitzgibbon, Supervising Judge of Suffolk County District Court, the Honorable Steven Ukeiley, District Court Judge, Patchogue Village Mayor Paul Pontieri, and Warren Clark, Chief Clerk of Suffolk County District Court

Farmingville, NY - Today, the Suffolk County Courts, along with the Town of Brookhaven, announced the establishment of the Brookhaven Community Court, a special court part of the Sixth District Court, Patchogue, dedicated to handling proceedings alleging violations of Brookhaven town ordinances and affecting the quality of life of local residents. The Honorable Madeleine Fitzgibbon, Supervising Judge of Suffolk County District Court, and Supervisor Mark Lesko presided over the dedication. Honorable Stephen Ukeiley, District Court Judge and Brookhaven Council Members Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld, Jane Bonner, Kathleen Walsh, Tim Mazzei, Connie Kepert, Dan Panico, and Patchogue Village Mayor Paul Pontieri were in attendance.

The Brookhaven Community Court is a response to cases involving nuisance properties (for example, untended yards and abandoned cars), and violations of zoning restrictions (for example, illegal apartments and businesses operating out of residential locations). Operating out of the Suffolk County Sixth District Court in Patchogue, the Honorable Stephen Ukeiley presiding, the court handles all quality-of-life cases brought by the Town of Brookhaven and provides monitoring of compliance with court orders as well as greater accountability, continuity and efficiency. The Brookhaven Community Court expands the calendar, setting aside additional days for conducting hearings and handling any overflow from the regular court calendar.

"I thank District Administrative Judge H. Patrick Leis III and Judge Fitzgibbon for establishing the Brookhaven Community Court, which will allow for swifter justice on quality of life cases important to the residents of the Town of Brookhaven," said Supervisor Mark Lesko, "the new court would allow for more efficient prosecution by the Quality of Life Task Force in cases involving egregious code violations to protect the health and safety of residents and eradicate blight in our communities. Our task force is enforcing our Town Code in every corner of Brookhaven, targeting quality of life offenders and absentee landlords, and prosecuting their violations to the fullest extent of the law."

"The Town of Brookhaven is working hard to address Quality of Life issues in an effort to preserve our neighborhoods from blight and illegal operations before they become problems in our communities," explained Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld. "As a Town Board, we established a Quality of Life Task Force within the Law Department to deal with such violations of Town Code. This Brookhaven Community Court will be dedicated to handling violations issued by town inspectors. Absentee landlords and owners of neglected and run-down properties need to be aware that we will aggressively prosecute you when you severely violate those town codes meant to protect the Quality of Life of all our

residents in Brookhaven."

Councilwoman Connie Kepert said, "I anticipate this dedicated community court will be an effective tool in enforcing quality of life violations that impact the lives of Brookhaven residents who work hard and take pride in their neighborhoods."

"I am thrilled this new initiative will improve our neighborhoods and the lives of our residents," said Councilman Tim Mazzei.

"Protecting quality-of-life is one of my top priorities. The Brookhaven Community Court is intended to ensure citizens' rights to do just that. The new court will allow these issues to be handled in a timely manner which is in the best interest of all the residents of the Town of Brookhaven," said Councilwoman Jane Bonner.

"Since its inception back in June of 2009, The Quality of Life Task Force has taken critical steps to insure that the essence of our communities is being preserved," Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh explained. "The establishment of this Community Court sends a clear and concise message to all of our residents that we, as their elected officials, deem their health and safety as our chief priority."

"One of the biggest complaints that I get is with regard to the long duration associated with prosecuting violators. I am thankful and appreciative of the work of Judges Leis and Fitzgibbon, enabling these cases to be dealt with in a more expeditious manner," said Councilman Dan Panico.

"This is a major initiative for the Town of Brookhaven to have its own Community Court. Supervisor Lesko and the Town Board realize that housing violations must be addressed quickly and effectively if we are going to maintain our exceptional quality of life," said Patchogue Village Mayor Paul Pontieri.

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