

Long Island Housing Partnership to Open Satellite Office in Town Hall to Provide Free Counseling for Town Residents, Property Owners

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FARMINGVILLE, NY - Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko and the members off the Town Board today announced the creation of a Long Island Housing Partnership (LIHP) satellite office in Brookhaven Town Hall. The satellite office will be open every Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the Third Floor of Town Hall, and will offer free foreclosure prevention assistance, mortgage counseling and homebuyer education to Brookhaven Town residents and property owners. The satellite office will open on Thursday, June 11.

"Foreclosures are occurring at an alarming rate throughout the Town of Brookhaven as a result of this economic crisis," said Supervisor Lesko. This program run by the Long Island Housing Partnership out of Town Hall will provide much needed assistance to people in our community who are at risk of losing their homes."

Long Island has seen a significant increase in foreclosure filings this year, with a 17-percent increase in foreclosure filings since last year. In Brookhaven Town, there were 437 foreclosures in the first five months of 2009, with another 1,623 trouble properties in the Town that began the foreclosure process during the same time period.

"The Long Island Housing Partnership welcomes the opportunity to work together with the Town of Brookhaven to help their residents in need at this time," said Peter Elkowitz, President and CEO of LIHP. "I want to thank Supervisor Lesko and the Town Board for being pro-active in their outreach efforts to help Brookhaven residents who are struggling to stay in their homes during this housing crisis."

Since 1990, LIHP's mortgage counseling program has helped thousands of clients achieve the dream of home ownership by providing and facilitating a variety of financing options for the homes they are about to purchase.

"Now more than ever, we need to help our working families who are struggling to make ends meet and keep a roof over their heads. Opening this weekly satellite office offering free counseling for our residents, property owners and those who work in our town will make a tremendous difference in their lives," said Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh. "Residents who want more information about this service can call 451-TOWN."

Brookhaven Town homeowners and property owners who are facing default on a mortgage can take advantage of this counseling program. The initial counseling session focuses on determining the amount and extent of the default, cause of the default and whether there is a reasonable possibility that the mortgage holder would be able to bring the account current. If it appears that the account can be brought current, the counselor works with the client and the mortgagor to arrange a mutually agreeable and realistic payment plan.

"Strong and successful communities are built through home ownership. But during these tough economic times many people are facing foreclosure, threatening the stability of those communities," said Councilwoman Constance Kepert. "The invaluable service provided by the Long Island Housing Partnership will help more people stay in their homes and help keep Brookhaven communities healthy."

"Owning a home is a part of the American dream, and a key factor in establishing financial security for most families. When foreclosure looms, however, the prospect of losing your home can be a stressful nightmare," said Councilwoman Jane Bonner. "Offering this free counseling to our residents will help so many families in communities across our Town get back on their feet, and be able to hold on to their homes, and their dreams."

"This housing crisis has affected every corner of Brookhaven, with so many families in over their heads with monthly mortgage payments on their mortgage," said Councilman Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld. "Any assistance Town government can offer to families in crisis we can, should and must provide. This is a proactive partnership that will greatly benefit our residents."

"I believe that if there is anything we in Town government can do to assist our homeowners affected by the economic situation in our country, then we should do our part for the people," said Councilman Keith Romaine.

"By making space available to the Long Island Housing Partnership here at Town Hall, we're able to offer this

invaluable service to our families who are in danger of losing their home, without incurring any additional cost to the taxpayers," said Councilman Timothy Mazzei.