Supervisor Romaine and Councilwoman Cartright Announce Purchase of Historic Gentlemen's Driving Park in Port Jefferson Station

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Town planning passive park with walking track on site

Farmingville, NY - Supervisor Ed Romaine and Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright announced today that the Town has closed on the acquisition of 5.75 acres of open space in Port Jefferson Station known as the historic Gentlemen's Driving Park. This purchase includes 21 single and separate parcels that add to the Town's previous purchase of 5.1 acres in 2011 and 2013. The site is the only remaining example of what was once a number of horse racing parks found throughout Long Island and the Town expects to adaptively reuse it as a passive park with a safe hiking/walking path for area residents. Its wooded nature provides both wildlife habitat and groundwater recharge value. The purchase price of $1,180,000 was paid from the Town's open space fund. Pictured left to right are Councilwoman Cartright, Cumsewogue Historical Society president Jack Smith, Terryville-Port Jefferson Station Civic Association president Ed Garboski, and Supervisor Romaine.

Supervisor Romaine said, "Gentlemen's Park is a nostalgic reminder of a bygone era in Brookhaven and it's important that we preserve it. There is not much more open space in this area of the Town, so we need to save what's left for our residents to enjoy."

"Gentlemen's Driving Park is an important part of the Town's history. The purchase of these parcels allows us to preserve both open space and a window into the past," said Councilwoman Cartright. "Thank you to Jack Smith for his expertise and support, and to former Councilman Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld for his work towards acquiring other parcels at this site in the past. I look forward to working with the Port Jefferson Station-Terryville Civic Association, Cumsewogue Historical Society, and other community groups to implement the plan for a passive park at this location."

"Gentlemen's Park played an important part of our community's history. I want to thank Supervisor Romaine and the members of the Town Board for pursuing the purchase of this critical piece of Port Jefferson Station's history, and forever preserving it for future generations to enjoy," said Ed Garboski, president of the Terryville-Port Jefferson Station Civic Association.

"The Cumsewogue Historical Society is pleased that the purchase of the last remaining parcels of the Gentlemen's Driving Park has been completed and that the site has been preserved in its entirety. The Society is also grateful for the strong support and diligent efforts of Supervisor Ed Romaine and Councilwoman Valerie Cartright in preserving

this important and colorful part of Brookhaven Town's history. We look forward to working with the Town Parks Department as it turns this beautiful open space into a historical park for the enjoyment of our residents, said Jack Smith, president of the Cumsewogue Historical Society.

Gentlemen's Driving Park was founded circa 1880. The track itself is located in the woods east of Morgan Avenue and northeast of Canal Road. Races at the track were held in the post-civil war era and it was used for harness racing until about 1946, but most of the racing was up until about the time of WWI.

The aerial photo at left indicates the parcels previously preserved by the Town in green and the new parcels are outlined in red. The property outlined in black has yet to be purchased by the Town. The aerial photo at right shows the existing quarter mile track which was once Gentlemen's Riding Park.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor
One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258