

Town Dedicates 46-Acre Parcel in Setauket as the Dr. Lee Koppelman Nature Preserve

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Farmingville, NY – On April 13, Supervisor Ed Romaine and Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright announced the dedication of a 46-acre parcel in Setauket as the Dr. Lee Koppelman Nature Preserve. The parcel is heavily wooded with a variety of tree and shrub species and understory, providing an excellent example of a North Shore deciduous forest. The property was acquired approximately 45 years ago as passive open space, and the Town is in the beginning stages of pursuing an additional 11 acres in the area to add to its Nature Preserve portfolio. Currently, the Town has dedicated 13 other properties to the Nature Preserve system, including the nearby Laurel Ridge-Setauket Woods Nature Preserve along Belle Meade Road in Setauket. Pictured at left (left to right) are Councilwoman Cartright, Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Supervisor Romaine and Dr. and Mrs. Lee Koppelman.

Supervisor Romaine said, "It is an honor to recognize Dr. Lee Koppelman, whose legacy of environmental protection far exceeds the 46-acre parcel that we dedicate here today. He has guided planners for more than 50 years to preserve open space and protect our precious ground water. His vision for the future will benefit the residents of Long Island for generations to come."

Councilwoman Cartright said, "From a planning and land use perspective, Lee Koppelman has served as a defining force for positive change on Long Island. During his tenure, he guided municipalities towards more comprehensive, strategic, and thoughtful approaches to planning for future generations. His contributions to open space preservation are invaluable. Additionally, through his work in the University, Dr. Koppelman's knowledge and experience has been used to shape and train students who will continue this critical work. We thank Dr. Koppelman for his vast contributions and service to our community and Long Island."

Dr. Lee Koppelman was the first Suffolk County Planner, hired by the first County Executive, H. Lee Dennison. Dr. Koppelman served for twenty-eight years as county planner and forty-one years as regional planner for Nassau and Suffolk. Today, Dr. Koppelman heads the Center for Regional Policy Studies at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He is regarded as the father of sustainability on Long Island, for he was the first of the power players to conceptualize the idea of preserving space in the interest of health and future generations.

Dr. Koppelman has played a leading role in preserving open space, particularly in the parklands purchased by Suffolk County in the early 1970s. He was an early supporter for the preservation of open space and protecting farmland in Suffolk County, leading to Suffolk County being the first local government in the nation to establish a formal program to preserve farmland through the purchase of development rights. His concern for the natural environment was reflected by a strong interest regarding Long Island's fragile and vulnerable sole source aquifer, which comprises Long Island's drinking water supply. Dr. Koppelman served with distinction as Chair of the Town of Brookhaven's Open Space Committee from 1999 to 2016, during which time hundreds of farmland and open space properties were identified and approved for public acquisition. Today, Dr. Koppelman continues to head the Center for Regional Policy Studies at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

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