

Brookhaven Councilman Dan Panico Announces NYS DOT Hearing on May 17 for Rail Road Grade Crossings In Tri-Hamlet Community

posted on 5/14/2018 4:46:00 PM

Farmingville, NY – Brookhaven Councilman Dan Panico announced that the NYS Department of Transportation has granted an administrative public hearing in response to the Town's request for the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) to install additional at-grade railroad crossings at either Hawthorne or Madison Avenues in Mastic. The hearing is scheduled for Thursday, May 17 at 9:30 a.m. in the 2nd Floor Auditorium at Brookhaven Town Hall located at 1 Independence Hill in Farmingville. It will be presided over by the Honorable Alicia McNally, NYS DOT Administrative Law Judge. These proceedings are mandated by Section 90 of New York State Rail Road Law.

This administrative hearing follows a community forum Councilman Panico hosted in August 2017 at William Floyd High School, to solicit public input on the need for additional at-grade railroad crossings in the Tri-hamlet community. The Town has long argued that the installation of such crossings would help to alleviate the high volume of traffic that plagues these neighborhoods, which in turn, has had a significant impact on area businesses, emergency service responders and the overall quality of life for residents. The August forum was attended by several hundred constituents, who voiced overwhelming support for additional crossings.

The May 17 hearing will provide the Town the opportunity to make its case before the judge for additional at-grade rail road crossings. Arguments will include traffic data collected by traffic engineers from Nelson and Pope over the last several months, as well as testimony from key witnesses from the community as to the importance of additional crossings. It is expected that the public will also be given the opportunity to provide testimony.

"The lack of access over the railroad tracks is an impediment to the safety of the residents in the densely populated hamlets of Mastic, Mastic Beach and Shirley," said Councilman Panico. "For literally decades, residents have been asking for relief in the form of additional at-grade crossings between William Floyd Parkway and Mastic Road. Residents are acutely aware of the inherent risks of crossing railroad tracks, much like the residents of the rest of the country whom cross over 200,000 at-grade crossings per day. The potential dangers faced by the lack of access are far greater than those familiar, inherent risks. Moreover, the exorbitant cost of potential alternative solutions in times of exceedingly limited budgets, make this relatively simple request well-reasoned, justified and achievable. I encourage residents to come out and speak up for their interests."

Supervisor Ed Romaine said, "Tri-Hamlet residents have been dealing with this issue for too long and a shutdown of William Floyd Parkway in February proved that another crossing is desperately needed. The LIRR must take action and construct more grade crossings to solve the problem. Just imagine the chaos if ever there was a need to evacuate the peninsula in the event of a natural disaster. I support Councilman Panico and his efforts to keep the pressure on the MTA and LIRR until they do the right thing."

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone 631-451-6595