

Supervisor Romaine Launches New Mobile App and Web Page For Residents to Report Vacant Buildings for Inclusion on Town Registry

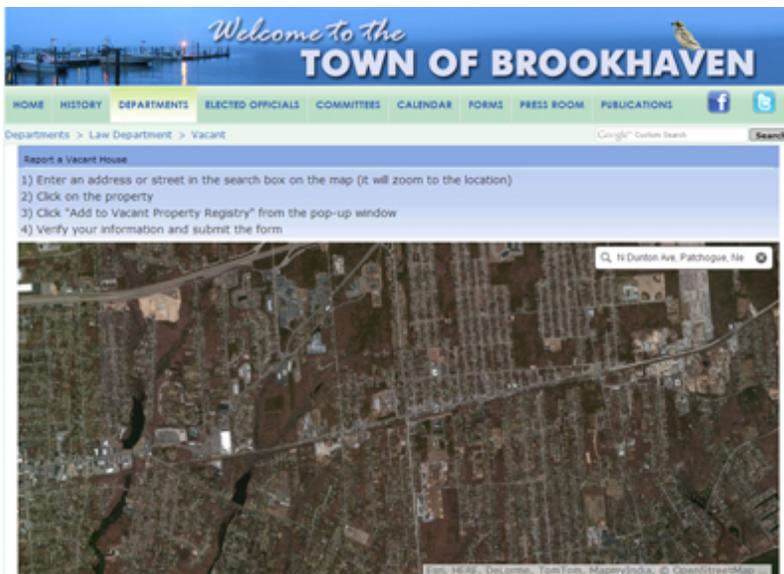
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Initiative aimed to help clean up foreclosed, abandoned buildings throughout the Town **Farmingville, NY** - At a press conference this morning, Brookhaven Town Supervisor Ed Romaine announced the launch of a new Town web page and mobile app for residents to report vacant homes and commercial properties throughout the community. Residents can go to www.brookhaven.org/vacanthouse and follow the easy steps to submit their report. The information will be immediately entered into a centralized database which the Law Department will use to investigate. Pictured on left at the press conference are Councilman Dan Panico, Councilwoman Jane Bonner, Supervisor Romaine, Councilwoman Connie Kepert and Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright.

"Brookhaven is blighted with thousands of vacant houses and other buildings that are required by Town law to be included in the Vacant House Registry," said Supervisor Romaine. "While some of these homes have been reported to our offices, many still lie abandoned in our neighborhoods, blighting these communities. This mobile app and website will allow the people who are directly affected by these vacant buildings to quickly and easily report their location to our investigators, so that we can go after the owners and force them to comply with our registry law - or pay the consequences. I encourage those who see something to say something. It's confidential and only takes a minute to go online and submit a report."



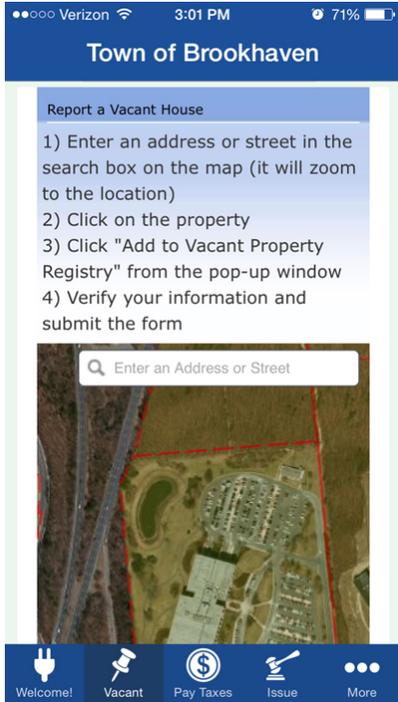
"Vacant houses are a growing problem in my district and I am happy that we are being more proactive in our enforcement of the Vacant House Registry," said Councilwoman Jane Bonner. "Just last week, the Supervisor and I toured the community, identified a number of vacant houses and reported them to our Law Department who will take action to make sure that the owners comply with our laws." Pictured above right are Supervisor Romaine and Councilwoman Bonner at a vacant house located in Rocky Point.

Councilman Dan Panico said, "This is another step in addressing and combating quality of life issues that are important to our residents. I commend the Supervisor for addressing this issue with far greater emphasis and effort than any of his predecessors."

Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright said, "Vacant homes are of great concern to our communities. This new system

will allow every resident the opportunity to promptly and efficiently report this important quality of life issue to the Town. As community residents, it is important that we play an active role in reporting issues that affect our neighborhoods." Councilwoman Connie Keper said, "This newly launched mobile web app that can be used by any Town resident to report a vacant building will be an important tool to crack down on negligent owners who allow their buildings to become eyesores and dangerous blights on entire communities."

Councilman Kevin LaValle said, "Every community is faced with vacant houses that are not maintained and fall into disrepair. These can become attractive nuisances and a threat to the quality of life in a neighborhood. I thank the Supervisor for giving residents this new weapon to combat an every growing problem in our town."



Councilman Tim Mazzei said, "No one knows better that a house is vacant than the person who lives next door and this makes it easy for residents to submit a report. It's important that these houses are registered with the Town so the owners can be held responsible for keeping them maintained so they don't become eyesores."

In December of 2013, the Town enacted a new law that requires the registration of all vacant buildings, providing the Town with a local individual or organization responsible for maintaining the property, and up-to-date contact information where they can be reached by Town officials. The new law was created to combat abandoned houses and buildings that have been a blight on our neighborhoods. The registration fee is \$250. The failure or refusal for any reason of the property owner to register a vacant building within 30 days after they become due will result in a fine of \$1,000 or more for each failure or refusal to register.

The new legislation is modeled after similar vacant home registries that have been adopted by municipalities across the nation in response to the foreclosure crisis. The cities of Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Minneapolis and Jacksonville have adopted similar legislation, as has the Town of Babylon here on Long Island.

The new vacant house reporting web page and mobile app are not the first of their kind initiated by the Town. In September 2013, Supervisor Romaine launched a mobile phone app to be used by residents as a weapon against illegal multi-family housing and other housing violations. It allows residents to immediately report housing and property violations as they see them, helping to increase enforcement of housing codes within our communities. With simple to fill-in fields, drop down menus of violations and automated e-mail, this software application is a powerful weapon in the Town's arsenal for addressing code violations, and improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods. To download the free mobile app, please visit the Town's website at www.brookhaven.org from a mobile device. Residents can also call 451-TOWN between the hours of 9:00 am to 4:30 pm to report housing violations. For more information or to access the Town's Code Book, go to www.brookhaven.org.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

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