

Supervisor Romaine and Councilman Mazzei Meet with Fire Island Homeowners to Establish Working Group for Debris Clean-up on Fire Island

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Councilman Tim Mazzei (left) and Supervisor Ed Romaine (right) with members of the Fire Island debris cleanup working group during their December 17 meeting at Town Hall.

Farmingville, NY - On Monday, December 17, Supervisor Ed Romaine and Councilman Tim Mazzei held a meeting at Town Hall with members of the Fire Island Association and other Fire Island organizations, residents and homeowner's associations to establish a working group and discuss the guidelines and project description of the upcoming U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' clean-up of Sandy related debris from Fire Island. Also at the meeting were Town officials from the Waste Management, Highway, Environmental Protection, Public Safety and Building departments.

In addition to the Army Corps' plan, the group shared their thoughts about the replenishment and restoration project for the beach and dunes, debris clean up, boardwalk and sidewalk repair. They all agreed that the key element to completing the clean-up in a reasonable amount of time is securing signed and notarized Right Of Entry (ROE) forms from at least 75% of Fire Island homeowners. The forms will allow contractors hired by the Army Corps to enter private property with personnel and equipment to remove debris. Without a completed form, homeowners will be responsible for debris removal from the island and they will have to bear the expense.

"This is a massive undertaking and we have to make sure that we get it right from start to finish," said Supervisor Romaine. "We must keep the homeowners involved every step of the way since we are relying on their input and cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers to do the job in a timely manner before the summer season begins. I thank all those who attended the meeting and look forward to working with them as we clean-up and dig out from this terrible disaster."

Councilman Tim Mazzei, whose district includes all portions of Fire Island located in Brookhaven Town said, "Sandy's impact on Fire Island was devastating from east to west, and no community was left un-touched by wind damage, destruction, erosion and flooding. The clean-up effort will take many months and the clock is ticking, so we have to get started right away. This meeting was very productive, so I think we're on the right track to get the job done."

This is the first time that FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers have taken over a disaster clean-up operation of this magnitude. The project, which is planned to begin in January 2013, is reimbursable by FEMA and the Army

Corps up to 75% of approved expenses, with the State and Brookhaven Town funding 12.5% each. At a special Town Board Meeting held on December 13, a resolution was adopted that allows the Town of Brookhaven to remove debris from private property and for Supervisor Romaine to request assistance from FEMA to pay for the clean-up.

On December 12, Supervisor Ed Romaine led a tour of the Fire Island communities of Davis Park and Ocean Bay Park with officials from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Town's Waste Management, Environmental Protection, Highway and Public Safety departments. The reason for the tour was to survey damage and identify debris collection points in each community so homeowners can bring debris to a central location for later pick-up by the contractors who will be hired by FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers to clean-up and remove debris off the island.

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