

# County Executive Levy and Supervisor Lesko Announce Closing on Joint Purchase of Development Rights of Cuomo Farm in East Moriches

posted on 7/2/2010 9:51:23 AM



**Farmingville, NY** - Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy and Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko have announced the closing on a joint purchase of development rights of the Cuomo Family Farm in East Moriches. The announcement was made during a press conference held at the farm which was also attended by Councilman Dan Panico and other town officials, as well as members of local civic and environmental organizations. The purchase which will help preserve over 27 acres of farmland has been a high priority acquisition by Brookhaven Town for many years and ranked in the top five of parcels targeted by the Town for open space preservation. The development rights were acquired for \$5.02 million with the County funding 70 percent of the preservation cost of the farm - approximately \$3.5 million - through its quarter-cent Drinking Water Protection Program. Brookhaven Town will pay approximately \$1.5 million for the remaining 30 percent.

"This is another clear example of the Town's strong commitment to protecting open space," said Supervisor Lesko. "Open space preservation will guarantee that farms like this one are not replaced by over-development, which could adversely affect the environment and threaten our drinking water supply. The Terrell River is only about 1200 feet from the property, so this acquisition will certainly have a positive impact on the ecology of the river." He concluded, "It is vital that we continue to make every effort to preserve the environment for future generations."

"This is a significant acquisition that will help prevent over-development in the Terrell River watershed and preserve the rural character of East Moriches," said Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy. "By partnering with the Town of Brookhaven, we leveraged our buying power to make this preservation at a critical time in the ecology of eastern Brookhaven."

"Preserving the Cuomo Farm from the threat of development is a realization of our goal to maintain the agricultural and rural characteristics of this community for generations to come," commented Councilman Dan Panico. "We are in a battle against time, and although we face a tough economy, by working together with the County I am hopeful that we will have the opportunity to acquire more land in the future."

Legislator Jay Schneiderman, Chairman of the Suffolk County Legislature's Environment, Planning and Agriculture Committee and a co-sponsor of the acquisition resolution said the purchase means that "a key component of our rural character has been saved from residential development. This is a critical time for East Moriches. If we don't act now to save the last open spaces and farmland, East Moriches could lose its rural identity. That's why it is essential to preserve parcels like the Cuomo Family Farm." He concluded, "Cuomo Farm has been yet another opportunity to strengthen a county-town partnership based on a common commitment. The farm is now a field, and as it returns to a natural state, it will enhance its value as a wildlife habitat."

The area in East Moriches where the Cuomo Farm is located has a long agricultural history for family farms, where vegetables and flowers have been grown for generations. Since the 1990s, when the Havens Estate was preserved on the west bank of the Terrell River to become Terrell River County Park, Brookhaven has aggressively pursued acquisitions in the area to the east of the river. Together with the County, Brookhaven has preserved a 16-acre parcel on the river across the street from the Cuomo Farm. Brookhaven Town also recently purchased the nine-acre Osip property on the Terrell River at Montauk Highway for preservation.

**Division of Public Information \* Office of the Supervisor**

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258