

Town and County Close On Open Space Purchase of 12.5 Acres in Brookhaven Hamlet within the Carmans River Watershed

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Pictured left to right are Supervisor Ed Romaine, County Legislator Kate Browning and Councilwoman Connie Kepert.

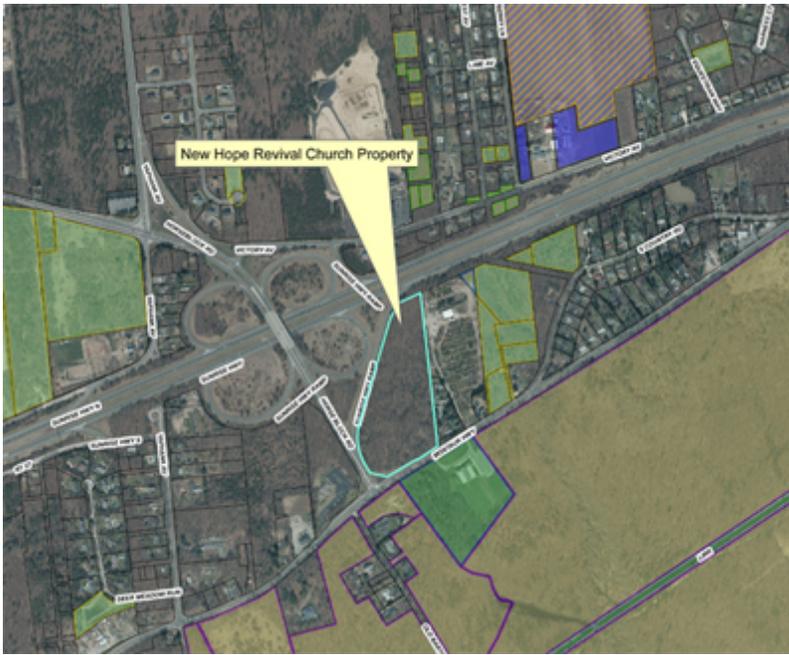
Farmingville, NY - On July 11, Brookhaven Town and Suffolk County closed on the purchase of 12.5 acres of undeveloped land north of Montauk Highway and immediately east of Horseblock Road in Brookhaven Hamlet to be preserved as open space. It is located in the headwaters to Yaphank Creek, a very high quality tributary to the Carmans River that flows through the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. The property is within the 0-2 year groundwater time-of-travel zone, the zone closest to the river and the highest priority zone for public acquisition. The 0-2 year area was identified by the Carmans River Study Group as the area around the River where it takes 0-2 years for groundwater, or anything that seeps into groundwater, such as nitrogen, to reach the Carmans River.

The land, formerly owned by the New Hope Revival Church, Inc., has been acquired in a 75% (County) - 25% (Town) partnership. The total acquisition cost is \$630,000 (Town's share \$157,500 / County share \$472,500).

"Preserving this open space is critical to preserving the quality of the Carmans River," County Executive Bellone said. "When it comes to protecting the water quality of the Carmans River, I am glad that we have a strong partnership between Suffolk County and the Town of Brookhaven."

"This purchase is another win for the Carmans River," said Supervisor Ed Romaine. "Its close proximity to other lands that the town has purchased for open space will help to maintain water quality in this environmentally sensitive area. I thank the County for their participation and for their continued support of open space preservation in the Town of Brookhaven."

"This undeveloped parcel has been a priority for preservation since it was first proposed for development in the 1990s," stated Legislator Browning. "Its close proximity to the Wertheim National Refuge and potential impacts on Yaphank Creek and the Carmans River make it a critical purchase for open space. When New Hope Revival Church agreed to sell the land to Suffolk County in 2011, and Brookhaven Town agreed to partner on the purchase, I knew our pristine waterways would be positively impacted for decades to come. I am thrilled to see this important purchase come to fruition and want to thank Councilwoman Kepert for working closely with me throughout the process. I will continue to make the Carmans River and our drinking water a top priority."



"Since my days as a civic leader I have been a proud advocate for the protection of the Carmans River and have made preservation of the surrounding watershed area a priority," stated Councilwoman Connie Kepert. "It is always a great thing when the Town and the County come together on a purchase as important as this. Not only is this land in the Carmans River Watershed, but it is in close proximity to the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, so this is a truly historic purchase that adds another pearl to the strand. I want to personally extend my thanks to Legislator Kate Browning for partnering with me since 2011 on the purchase of this property."

The parcel is heavily wooded, consisting of a mixture of pitch pine and oak trees. The undergrowth is dominated by heath species including blueberries and huckleberries. It provides habitat for a variety of

woodland-dependent wildlife species including songbirds, woodpeckers, birds-of-prey, red fox, small mammals, reptiles, and a wide variety of invertebrate species. As it is undeveloped, the property recharges approximately 7,125,000 gallons of pure water to the groundwater contributing area of Yaphank Creek on an annual basis.

Recently, the Town Board adopted a resolution to add \$2 million to the "Joseph Macchia Fund" for land preservation. The additional \$2 million in funding will be provided by existing funds in several accounts that had been budgeted in previous years for land preservation, but were not expended. No new tax dollars or new bond issues will be used for this funding. The Joseph Macchia Environmental Preservation Capital Reserve Fund is named after former Brookhaven Councilman Joseph Macchia, a Mount Sinai resident who served on the Town Board from 1979 until his death while in office in 1998. Macchia was the Chairman of Brookhaven's 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and was a proponent of open space preservation. The Macchia Fund was Brookhaven's first program for land preservation; using \$1.25 million to provide matching funds for county and state land purchases.

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