

Supervisor Romaine's Vacant House Registry Unanimously Approved by Town Board

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Legislation Targeting Foreclosed, Abandoned Eyesores in Residential Communities

Farmingville, NY - The Brookhaven Town Board voted unanimously to adopt Supervisor Ed Romaine's "Vacant House Registry" legislation following a December 3 public hearing. The new law was created to combat abandoned houses and buildings that have been a blight on our neighborhoods.

In September, the Supervisor held a press conference in front of a burned out and boarded house located at 26 Gabon Lane in Coram to announce the details of the new legislation, which creates a vacant building registry. The new law requires the owners of vacant property to register with the Town of Brookhaven, and provide a local point of contact for the party responsible for maintaining the property. 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.

"Nearly every community in Brookhaven Town is plagued by foreclosed and abandoned houses," said Supervisor Romaine, who spearheaded the effort to create the Vacant House Registry. "These dangerous eyesores threaten the quality of life of the people who live nearby and seriously affect the property values of the other homes in the neighborhood. All of them are owned by someone - a bank, a corporation or some other entity. Now we have a law that gives us the power to crack down on negligent property owners who do not safely maintain abandoned homes."

The new law 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 registration fee is \$250. The failure or refusal for any reason of any property owner to register a vacant building within 30 days after they become due will result in a fine of \$1,000 to \$15,000 for each failure or refusal to register.

The Town boarded and secured 307 vacant homes in 2012 and to date, more than 360 have been boarded in 2013.

About the Town's New Mobile App for Reporting Housing and Property Violations

In September, Supervisor Romaine announced the launch of a mobile phone app to be used by residents as the newest weapon against illegal multi-family housing and other housing violations. Brookhaven Town's new mobile phone app, which is the first of its kind on Long Island, will allow residents to immediately report housing and property violations as they see them, helping to increase enforcement of housing codes within our communities. The app is available now for both Apple iPhones and Android mobile phones. 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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