

BROOKHAVEN TOWN

Town focuses on coastline preservation

BY RANDALL WASZYNSKI

Brookhaven Town supervisor Ed Romaine stressed the priority of maintaining Long Island coastlines and discussed plans and current pursuits to preserve such during his State of the Town Address on April 3.

“With the largest coastline of any town in New York State, the Town of Brookhaven knows full well that global climate change and sea level rise are real and pose significant challenges in the decades ahead,” Romaine said.

Romaine referenced continued efforts in restoring wetlands by demol-

ishing homes deemed uninhabitable — most by the hand of Superstorm Sandy.

“We plan to have more properties scheduled for demolition soon with the vacant land restored to marshland,” he said. “Preserving wetlands is a critical part of our plan to address sea rise.”

Over 150 abandoned and foreclosed homes have been demolished by the town and over 1,750 have been boarded and secured.

The town’s collaboration with the Long Island Housing Partnership and the Long Island Builders Institute has created opportunities to sell some of these secured parcels that have capability to be rehabilitated, an initiative that awaits approval at the state and federal levels, Romaine said.

“Money obtained from the sale of these homes would be placed in a revolving fund to purchase, rehab and sell other former zombie homes as affordable housing,” he said.

Romaine also referenced Brookhaven’s stance on removing wooded areas to construct solar farms, an issue that has caused friction between the town and the state. The town passed legisla-

tion in 2016 that deemed cutting down trees for this purpose unlawful.

“Deforestation is the leading cause of increased carbon dioxide in our planet’s atmosphere. Our coastlines are paying a high price,” Romaine said. “We will not trade ‘green for green.’”

Instead, Brookhaven Town intends to pursue opportunities in solar energy like the community solar project in the proposed energy park at the town landfill in Yaphank that includes 40 acres of solar-ready land. Although it is a long-term project, as the landfill is not scheduled to close until 2024, Romaine said an additional 30 acres would be available for this purpose in 2025. The completed project — which also consists of the use of fuel cell energy, landfill gas energy and biogas energy — would generate enough power capable to supply around 30,000 homes with electricity.

The town also continues to pursue solar panel installments on the roofs of buildings and atop parking lots — avenues that bypass cutting down trees.

“The town will protect its trees and forested areas,” Romaine said. ■



Supervisor Ed Romaine talks preservation during his State of the Town Address.

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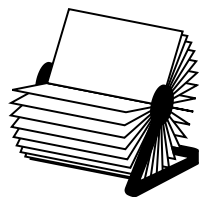
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