

**BROOKHAVEN**

**OLD TREES PROTECTED BY NEW CODE**

BY DEON J. HAMPTON  
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Historically significant trees in Brookhaven will be preserved under a new policy adopted by town officials.

The Landmark Tree Code was added to an existing town code and prohibits trees with environmental and historical value on town property from being demolished.

Brookhaven Town Councilwoman Jane Bonner voted last week in favor of the legislation and said a group of aspen trees in her district would be the perfect addition to the code.

“The new codes allows us to designate the trees that have been part of the fabric of our community for generations,” Bonner said Thursday. “They provide a living thread through history.”

Trees must meet specific criteria, such as having existed during key events, bringing community value or having a state or federal government historical designation in order to be kept safe. Brookhaven would need permission to landmark trees not on town property.

The aspen groves, believed to be the only trees of their kind on Long Island, are at Cedar Beach, behind the former Hagerman house turned Marine and Environmental Stewardship Nature Center.

Bonner said the Hagerman family built the house and planted aspen seeds there from Colorado in the 1970s.

Lake Ronkonkoma historian Ellyn Okvist on Thursday said she’s already sent Brookhaven information on 19 trees that should be considered for preservation.

“I’m very happy the trees are going to be protected,” she said.

An evergreen outside the Terryville Union Hall could also be considered for landmarking since it is rooted in a Brookhaven designated historical district. The tree was planted in 1932 in honor of the bicentennial of George Washington’s birthday.

**HUNTINGTON STATION**

**Using a trestle as canvas**

Kids beautify LIRR underpass

BY SOPHIA CHANG  
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A blank train trestle has become the canvas for Huntington’s latest public art project, thanks to a group of middle schoolers.

Last spring, a group of students and educators from Birchwood Intermediate School in South Huntington proposed beautifying the trestle under the LIRR overpass on New York Avenue and Railroad Street in Huntington Station.

The art project started with a civics lesson first. “We first had to go to the town. We met with the supervisor and several others” in April, said Annie Michaelian, who was assistant principal at Birchwood when the project was conceived. “They were immediately like, ‘This is great. It’s going to look awesome.’”

The group then got approval from the MTA, which owns the walls of the overpass. Aboff’s of Huntington donated the supplies and paint. And work began in earnest over week-



Supervisor Chad Lupinacci with Annie Michaelian and Barbara Wright, who helped the Birchwood students.

ends this summer, with a dedicated group of third-, fourth- and fifth-graders and their parents helping out.

“The mural is leaving an impression on all those visiting and traveling through Huntington Station,” said town supervisor Chad Lupinacci in a news release.

To create the mural, the students were inspired by the town’s landmarks. “They chose the lighthouse, the Heckscher

Park entrance,” Michaelian said.

The sketches were compiled and transferred onto the overpass to be traced and painted. Nicole Franz, a Birchwood parent and professional artist, helped with the technical aspects. “They had an amazing vision but never had anyone who could put it on the wall,” said Franz, who works in mixed-media collages. “The kids were fully involved. We really stuck to exactly what they drew.”

Barbara Wright, a Birchwood teacher who suggested the mural idea, said the students feel real ownership. “I think it’s very satisfying for them to see when we pass by.”

“The impact it has on the kids, the gift of the community — we were there every weekend in August and we could hear people beeping and saying ‘thank you so much.’” Michaelian said. “It was just beautiful.”

**Roosevelt man arraigned in Freeport rape**

BY CHAU LAM  
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The woman who authorities said was raped by a Roosevelt man in September came to Nassau County Court in Mineola Monday to witness the public reading of the charges against her alleged attacker.

The 36-year-old woman, whom authorities did not name, sat in a small courtroom, a few feet behind Ever Martinez-Reyes, 24, the man accused of assaulting her and knocking her unconscious on Sept. 28 in Freeport.

Martinez-Reyes, a Salvadoran immigrant who officials said is in the United States illegally, was arrested on Oct. 5 and indicted by the grand jury on Oct. 19 on two counts of first-degree rape, two counts of first-degree sexual abuse and four counts of second-



Ever Martinez-Reyes

gree assault.

He was arraigned on these charges Monday before State Supreme Court Justice Robert McDonald.

“How do you plead?” the court clerk asked Martinez-Reyes. “Guilty or not guilty?”

“Not guilty,” Martinez-Reyes replied through an interpreter.

The woman, who wore large sunglasses and a beige, knit scarf over her head, left McDonald’s second-floor courtroom, without speaking to reporters. Her friends and family also declined to comment.

It’s not known whether Martinez-Reyes was aware that the alleged victim was in the courtroom. His court-appointed attorney, Joseph Lo Piccolo of Garden City, said he didn’t ask, and his client didn’t say.

On the day of the attack, police said Martinez-Reyes followed the woman and knocked her unconscious before he sexually assaulted her on the front lawn of a Parsons Avenue home. The woman woke up during the attack and the attacker ran off.

The attack — which occurred near Northeast Park

about 1:45 a.m. — was captured in video surveillance footage, authorities said. They said they received numerous tips pointing to Martinez-Reyes, who authorities said had no prior convictions.

Police said Martinez-Reyes came to the United States in 2010 after crossing the border in Texas. Martinez-Reyes, 16 at the time, was sent back and crossed the border again illegally in 2014. He had been living in Roosevelt for the last four years and worked as a day laborer, police said.

On Monday, McDonald ordered Martinez-Reyes held without bail. The judge also issued a new order of protection, barring Martinez-Reyes from having any contact with the woman.

The judge ordered Martinez-Reyes to return to court on Nov. 19 for a status conference.

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON

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