

Around LI

Huntington OKs parcel donation

Town of Huntington officials have accepted the donation of a parcel of land in Greenlawn that will extend an existing road as part of the conditional approval for a subdivision.

The 6,840.5 square feet of land is on Crown Avenue in Greenlawn.

Town Supervisor Chad Lupinacci said it will be used as part of a subdivision approved in March 2015 by the town planning board.

The extension will allow access or public roadway for the development, Lupinacci said. The condition stated that Smithtown-based DiCanio Management Corp. would dedicate the parcel to the town for use as a public thoroughfare and extension of Crown Avenue just south of Depew Street.

"It will be used as a public road maintained by the town highway department, whether it's paving or cleaning," Lupinacci said.

The board approved the measure in a 5-0 vote at its Feb. 21 town board meeting.

— DEBORAH S. MORRIS

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YVONNE ALBINOVSKI

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BROOKHAVEN TOWN



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Alison Karppi, commissioner of Housing and Human Services, with Brookhaven Town Supervisor Edward P. Romaine.

Up to the TASK

Disability task force redirects its focus to more community outreach

BY DEON J. HAMPTON
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Brookhaven's Disability Task Force has helped make public spaces accessible and pushed for closed captioning on town broadcasts, but now it is shifting its focus to more community outreach and awareness.

While the outreach is for all disabled town residents and includes newsletters, brochures and emails about local programs, as well as a database of disabled residents' parents, many task force's initiatives are geared to adolescents. Those efforts range from participating in high school transition fairs to developing a

sensory flower bed initiative.

The task force started three years ago as an advisory committee pushing for closed captioning of televised council meetings and installing wheelchair-accessible swings in parks. Accessibility at parks and beaches has improved, and the closed captioning effort is a work in progress, efforts that are a source of pride for the group, officials said.

"I think we've come a really long way. I'm always looking to improve," said Clifford Hymowitz, mobility and disability specialist and town board liaison to the task force. "From where we started until now, we've made leaps and bounds."

A resourceful effort

The Brookhaven Town Disability Task Force:

- Was created by the town board in 2014.
- Meets the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.
- Hosts the first Youth Abilities Resource Fair, on April 21 at the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach.

The task force has about a dozen members and meets to discuss ways to improve the lives for town residents who are disabled. Hymowitz said the committee concentrates on three phases of community engagement: coordination, collaboration and communication.

One engagement point is the flower bed initiative at the Holtsville Ecology Center in conjunction with the town highway department to help disabled children strengthen their senses.

"Every child has a different experience at the garden," Hymowitz said. "Some like to touch things. Some like to water the plants and experience the sensory."

Nearly 8.6 percent of Brookhaven residents had some disability in 2012, according to an American Community Survey of the U.S. Census.

"We have to be able to accommodate everyone," said Alison

Karppi, Brookhaven's commissioner of Housing and Human Services, which oversees the task force.

Task force members include town residents with psychiatric, physical or learning disabilities, those who use wheelchairs and others who have developmental challenges.

The committee also participates in high school transition fairs, where disabled students — who are either graduating or transitioning out of school — and their parents can learn about alternatives for the next phase of their lives.

The task force developed a database of parents in the town who have children with disabilities, sending them a monthly newsletter. To help raise awareness about town, county and federal resources available for parents whose children have disabilities, the task force along with Stony Brook University occupational therapy students are hosting the inaugural "Youth Abilities Resource Fair" on April 21 at the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach.

"The task force goes out and listens to the community," Karppi said. "It's to educate parents and to let them know there's resources for the child. It's for us to partner up with them and make them aware of the opportunities."

Anyone is allowed to join the task force.