

## BROOKHAVEN TOWN

# Term limits, length on Nov. ballot

## Proposition binds elected officials to 12-year maximum

BY CARL MACGOWAN

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Brookhaven residents will vote in November on a proposal to double the length of terms for town board members and impose 12-year term limits on elected officials.

The town board voted 7-0 on Thursday to place the proposition on the Nov. 6 ballot, but some town residents at a public hearing questioned the need for the measure.

Town officials said longer terms would allow them to

spend more time working and less time campaigning. They said term limits would ensure elected officials cannot hold what amount to lifetime jobs.

Terms for supervisor, town council members and the highway superintendent, currently two years, would be extended to four years if the proposition passes. The town clerk and receiver of taxes currently hold four-year terms, which will remain unchanged.

All town elected officials would be limited to three terms, or a maximum of 12 years. The new terms and term limits would take effect Jan. 1, 2020, after town elections next year.

Councilwoman Valerie Cartwright, a Democrat, said longer terms would help town board members complete complex

projects such as code and zoning changes before their terms expire. "It is difficult to work for six months and then go to campaigning," she said. "Two years is almost impossible to get something done."

Most of Long Island's 13 town supervisors serve two-year terms. Brookhaven is the only Long Island town where council members serve two-year terms. Most towns do not have term limits.

In 2016, Riverhead voters rejected a proposition to extend the supervisor's term from two years to four years.

Most of the 13 speakers at the sparsely attended hearing said they opposed longer terms, saying two-year terms help hold officials accountable to voters.

"In my opinion, this is an at-

tempt by entrenched politicians to avoid elections for an additional two years," said David Bligh, a Holbrook resident.

Anthony Portesy of Centereach, a Democrat who ran unsuccessfully for highway superintendent in 2017, said two years should be enough time for officials to do their jobs.

"We don't want to create electoral feudalism through the coercive powers of incumbency," he said. "Two years is good enough for the New York State Assembly and the United States Congress. It should be good enough for the Town of Brookhaven."

Some speakers said they were conflicted because they oppose longer terms but favor term limits, or vice versa.

"How do I express that in my vote?" said Ashley Hunt-

Martorano of Medford.

Jim Gleason, vice president of the East Moriches Property Owners Association, said he agreed that two-year terms were too short, but added, "four years seems kind of long. Maybe the right number is three."

Some civic association leaders said the November vote should have been postponed to give the public more time to discuss the proposal. "It's a very complicated issue, and to roll it into one [proposition] is not good for the public," said Don Seubert of the Medford Taxpayers and Civic Association.

But Councilman Kevin LaValle, a Republican, said there was ample time to debate the issue before Election Day. "Three months," he said, "is an eternity for this to be discussed."

## Biker dies, hit by car after crash

A motorcyclist was killed early Monday morning when he crashed into the center dividing wall on the Cross Island Parkway and was struck by a Bentley operated by an unlicensed driver from Hempstead, the NYPD said.

Jevaughn Hodge, 33, of Highland Avenue, was charged with aggravated unlicensed operator of a motor vehicle. The name of the driver of the Honda motorcycle, a 36-year-old man, was not released, pending family notification.

The NYPD's Highway District Collision Investigation Squad said the motorcyclist was traveling north on the parkway near Northern Boulevard in Queens at an apparently high rate of speed when he struck the wall and was ejected.

The motorcyclist landed in the southbound lanes, where he was run over by a 2013 Bentley driven by Hodge, police said.

Officers said the motorcyclist was found unconscious, lying on the road with severe trauma to the body, police said. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Hodge remained at the scene and was taken into custody by the NYPD. — ROBERT BRODSKY



HOWARD SCHINAPP

## Hero cops honored for saving life

**MINEOLA.** Nassau Police Officers Robert Dertinger, left, and Kevin Chernoff were honored by the Nassau County Legislature during a Monday ceremony. They were among three officers recognized for pulling a suicidal man off the ledge of a roof in June.

## Police say mom left son, 2, in steamy car

Nassau County police have charged a Maryland woman who allegedly left her 2-year-old son unattended in a hot car on Sunday, even as temperatures hovered around the 90-degree mark in the region.

Police said they responded to a call from a witness at 11:45 a.m. and found the toddler in a vehicle, the car engine off and the win-

dows closed, in the parking lot on Grand Avenue in Baldwin.

Police officials said they worked for about 15 minutes to gain entry into the vehicle, all the while making sure the child was not in distress. Once inside, they found the boy sweating profusely, police said. They placed the boy in an air-conditioned car as an ambulance was called.

Shortly thereafter, the child's mother, Digna Argueta Gutierrez, 31, of Beltsville, Maryland, returned to the vehicle and was placed under arrest, police said. She was charged with endangering the welfare of a child.

The boy was taken to an area hospital with Gutierrez's father, who came to the scene, police said. — CRAIG SCHNEIDER



Digna Argueta Gutierrez was charged.

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