

SUPERVISOR JUDI BOSWORTH'S

2018 NORTH HEMPSTEAD

STATE OF THE



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TOWN



JANUARY 25, 2019

THE CLUBHOUSE AT HARBOR LINKS

## STATE OF THE TOWN 2019

January 25, 2019

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to one of Money Magazine's top places to retire in the United States... that would be **North Hempstead**. I just couldn't resist mentioning that right off the bat. That's right. *Number 8 in the nation!*

It's a privilege to be here with all of you once again, now for my *sixth* State of the Town address. This address gives me an opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments over the past year and to also share my visions for 2019.

First a few thank you's...I would like to thank the League of Women Voters, once again for their work and dedication, particularly President of the League Julie Harnick; Luncheon Chair Amy Bass and her team of event coordinators: Michele Lamberti, Francine Furtado, Judy Jacobson and Marie Bellon.

The League serves such an important role in bringing local, state and national issues to our community and we are all better informed citizens because of their

efforts. A special thank you to the Harbor Links staff and to my staff for working with The League to coordinate this event.

I'd like to now recognize our Town of North Hempstead elected officials and my partners in Town government who are here with us today.

Receiver of Taxes Charles Berman

Town Clerk Wayne Wink

Council Member Viviana Russell

Council Member Peter Zuckerman

Council Member Lee Seeman

Council Member Angelo Ferrara

Council Member Dina De Giorgio

Our Town Board is successful because of the spirit of collaboration, consensus building and bi-partisanship. In the words of Helen Keller: "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." And I think that our Town Board is a shining example of that.

We are also proud of the work we do with our colleagues in other branches of government. I would especially like to welcome and recognize our other distinguished elected officials who are here with us today:

I am pleased to welcome our other colleagues in government, special district commissioners, school board members and union leaders, including our own CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte and CSEA Unit 7555 President Kevin Williams.

Also, a special thank you to my North Hempstead government team – my senior staff, finance team, town attorneys, comptroller's office, communications office, administrative services, commissioners, deputy commissioners, directors, managers and, of course, our entire work force.

I'm very proud to say that in 2018 the Town once again received a Triple A bond rating by Moody's Investor Service, the highest rating that a municipality can attain. And I have to tell you that this news never gets old for me! This top rating results in lower borrowing costs and passes on savings to you, our taxpayers.

We've also reduced our debt by \$31.4 million since 2014. All of our budgets have stayed within the New York State cap, without cutting services to our residents. In fact, we continue to enhance programming, to expand our services and to provide excellent constituent outreach.

We accomplished many of the things we set out to do last year. None gave me more pleasure than cutting the ribbon on the Clinton G. Martin pool renovation project. The newly-renovated facility is the state-of-art and I know the first season was thoroughly enjoyed by the residents of the Special Park District. It also fulfilled our promise of having the pool closed for just *one season*.

Last year I spoke about bringing veterans healthcare to North Hempstead. I am pleased to say that the Northport VA Medical Center mobile unit now comes to Clinton G. Martin Park three days a week. This was truly a team effort. Our Veterans Advisory Committee worked hard to turn this dream into a reality – collecting petitions and letters showing community support. This could not have happened without their help and advocacy.

I would also like to thank U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer, Congresswoman Kathleen Rice and Congressman Tom Suozzi who all helped to make this possible. Now, instead of having to travel for hours to the Northport VA hospital, our veterans are served right here in their own backyard. This mobile unit is a temporary measure until we get a permanent Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

Other completed projects and accomplishments in 2018 include:

- the construction of a new dock at the north end of North Hempstead Beach Park, for non-motorized boaters and local crew teams;
- a partnership with C.L.I.M.B., the Concerned Long Island Mountain Bicyclists, to begin construction of approximately five miles of mountain bicycle and hiking trails at no cost to taxpayers.
- the installation of 25 sunscreen dispensers at our various parks, at no cost to our taxpayers through a partnership with NYU-Winthrop Hospital;
- the addition of ADA compliant beach mats at North Hempstead Beach Park and Manorhaven Park to ease mobility and access to the beach;
- some historic preservation projects that we can be proud of, with thanks to our Town Historian Howard Kroplick, including a gravestone restoration

workshop, and historical markers added to the Monfort Cemetery in Port Washington and two locations in New Cassel.

- And in 2018 we instituted the Supervisor's Chamber of Commerce Roundtable to see how we can work together with our chambers to address some of the challenges that our downtowns are facing. It's so important to shop local!

This past summer our cultural master plan initiative got underway. This New York State Council on the Arts grant will help us find new ways to draw people to our Town. The project is being led by the Town's Planning Department and an experienced cultural planning team called CivicMoxie. The Plan is an opportunity to weave together the cultural, historical, and business assets that exist within the Town, and to identify the best ways to use them. CivicMoxie has been distributing surveys throughout the Town to gather the opinions of residents. You can pick up a survey in the lobby on your way out and use the link provided on the survey to submit them.

In 2018 our Building Department saw an increase in requests for building permits, which shows that North Hempstead IS a great place for building and

development, so long as it is environmentally responsible and a good fit with the community. Since 2014 when I first took office we have increased staffing levels in the Building Department to improve customer service and enhance efficiency. In addition we provide community outreach with mobile evening hours, senior mobile office hours and extended early hours of operation by opening at 7 a.m. five days a week. New software in 2019 will help enhance the building department processes making it quicker by decreasing waiting times, creating the ability to apply for permits online and will also allow for the scheduling of appointments online.

We are also looking at ways to simplify and institute some common sense changes to our building code.

Community Services continues to knock it out of the park with events like our yearly Spring Festival, Asian American Festival, National Night Out, KidStock and BeachFeast.

Of course our Town's seniors are always a priority. Community Services runs our Funday Mondays with over 1,000 seniors attending **"a day at the beach"** each



Monday in the summer offering activities such as, dancing, exercise classes, a reading club and more, not to mention the opportunity to just get together. Our Project Independence program is a nationally recognized senior program that offers dozens of weekly programs, free health screenings, as well as access to nursing staff, social workers and handyman services. Project Independence also continues to provide hundreds of free taxi rides for our seniors for food shopping and discounted taxi rides to medical appointments. These services are key in enabling our older residents to age comfortably in place and stay in their homes.

Our seniors will also be excited to know that our North Hempstead Housing Authority has broken ground on 77 units of affordable senior housing in New Cassel, at the former site of the Grand Street School.

Our Parks and Recreation department's programming expands each year by providing more and more opportunities for residents of all ages, with our annual Memorial Day Fireworks, a summer concert series, Winter Wonderland at Clark Garden... which just gets bigger and better each year... a drop-in summer recreation program at Caemmerer, Fuschillo and Broadway parks; a Summer Recreation Program at the "Yes We Can" Community Center, and Vacation

Recreation programs. It is our continuing goal to increase opportunities for the Town's families and their children.

The Long Island Nets G league continues to call our 'Yes We Can' Community Center their home. They have been practicing there since 2017. Having a NBA-affiliated basketball team in our community center is not only exciting, but the team is committed to working with our youngsters through a variety of activities, including summer basketball clinics at parks throughout the Town, as well as educational programs and tickets for Town youth to attend games.

The Town's Code Enforcement Department was the recipient of the "Code Department of the Year" by the American Association of Code Enforcement, awarded to the Town partly based on the Department's work to enforce North Hempstead's pioneering Tobacco 21 law, which went into effect in 2017.

We introduced and enacted several significant new laws in 2018 and in this first part of the New Year.

In December 2018 we approved a code change that will help keep our newly-paved roads from being opened up by local utility companies to do their repairs

and improvements, (unless it's an emergency). We have worked to synchronize our road paving with the utility companies to minimize the "patching" that can turn a road into a patchwork quilt.

We understand and strongly support the need for medical marijuana dispensaries in our town. Medical marijuana plays such an important role in helping patients deal with the after effects of cancer treatment and other illnesses. However, we did question why North Hempstead was the only place in Nassau County to be home to these dispensaries. In response to community concern, the Board passed three pieces of legislation. We unanimously approved an amendment to the Town's zoning code that prohibits a medical marijuana dispensary from being used as a marijuana retail store and we implemented zoning regulations for medical marijuana facilities. This month, we passed a law prohibiting recreational marijuana from being sold in the Town. These laws reflect the grave concerns expressed by parents and civic associations.

We've also been considering legislation to regulate gas leaf blowers and landscaping in general. We formed an Advisory Committee consisting of environmentally conscious residents, members of the landscaping community and

Town staff to help us craft the law. I believe that in the end we have succeeded in writing a law that benefits our environment and our residents without overburdening the landscapers who depend on this business for their livelihood. We will be considering this proposed legislation at our Town Board meeting next week.

Protecting our environment continues to be an important priority and in 2018 we worked hard to do that.

The Town received recognition from the National Municipal Stormwater Green Infrastructure Awards Program...surely the longest award name in history...as a Silver Level awardee in Project Management and Innovation for its stormwater management and outreach programs. This basically means that we are doing a good job of explaining to the public why it's critical to keep our stormwater clean and free of toxins, trash, pesticides and anything else that doesn't belong in the storm drains. Remember, "Only Rain in the Drain."

The Town's Bob White Quail program continued in 2018 as the Town raised and released more than 75 quail last summer on to the Hempstead Harbor Trail and

the surrounding 200 acres to help reduce the tick population. This natural way of controlling ticks is much preferred to using toxic chemicals and polluting our ground water. And they are so cute!

I have also continued to work on protecting and managing our groundwater supply and critical aquifers by participating in the Water for Long Island-The Groundwater Protection Project, which offers an opportunity for state, county and Town officials to work together for this common goal. I continue to advocate against New York City's quest to reopen the Jamaica wells, a move that would withdraw an average of about 68 million gallons of water a day. By comparison, the 15 water suppliers that serve the entire Town of North Hempstead pump an average of 42 million gallons per day. At my urging, several of the Town supervisors throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties have written letters expressing their opposition to reopen the wells.

In order to protect our waterways, we at the Town plan on closely monitoring the US Army Corps of Engineers and their New York and New Jersey Harbor tributaries study. In response to historical storms, they are looking for ways to manage flood risks which could lead to the creation of flood gates at the Throgs

Neck Bridge. As a result this could possibly increase the flood levels for our waterfront communities. Up until now the focus has primarily been on New York and New Jersey Harbors and not on Long Island shorelines. As the study is still in the preliminary stages it's important for us to be vigilant about the potential impact to our communities.

The Town was awarded federal, state and local grants for a variety of projects, including a one million dollar transportation grant for our Department of Services for the Aging; funding to assess the water quality of Manhasset Bay; a grant to plant trees along the Manhasset Valley Park's tributary. This would help filter harmful elements from the water before it reaches the bay; we also received several grants from the EPA to provide assistance to help assess, safely clean up and reuse contaminated "brownfield" properties in New Cassel, enabling properties to be revitalized and put back into use.

The board unanimously approved a five-year Capital Plan, which addresses maintaining and improving the Town's roads, parks and facilities and maximizing grant funding. The Plan includes \$1 million for sidewalk repair, \$4.2 million for asphalt road resurfacing and an additional \$1 million for concrete road work

throughout the Town and a \$450K state grant to fund a nearly one mile extension of the Hempstead Harbor Trail.

With the helpful advice of the Disability Advisory Committee, last year we successfully restructured our CARE program, for individuals with developmental disabilities. The program is now coordinated by Viscardi's Abilities! Inc., which has assisted us with professionalizing the program and improving services. In addition, the Town is working with the committee to reach out to state and local officials on issues such as property tax relief for families with adult children with disabilities who are living independently.

The Town also continues its "Not In Our Town" initiative, building on the message that prejudice, bullying, and acts of bias have no place here. Last year this included replacing the "Not In Our Town" lawn sign in front of Town Hall with an added "We Stand With Pittsburgh" following the tragic shooting at the temple in that city. We also held a student photo contest, asking students to use the Not In Our Town theme in their work. The students did an extraordinary job at using the medium of photography to illustrate Not In Our Town's anti-hate mission.

And onward to some initiatives for 2019...

One of the projects included in our Capital Plan has the potential to save millions of gallons of water.

The project involves a plan to capture storm water runoff from the Harbor Links Golf Course and from the capped landfills located behind our Solid Waste Management Authority. The water would be funneled to retention ponds to irrigate the Golf Course.

This has the potential to save up to 35 to 75 million gallons of water for irrigation! Re-using storm water runoff for annual irrigation purposes is a project that just makes good environmental and economic sense.

Together with our Solid Waste Management Authority we are updating our public education for recycling. The market for many recyclables has changed drastically in recent years. We should be recycling only what makes environmental and economic sense. Within the next few weeks you should receive a comprehensive brochure from the Town explaining these new rules and how to recycle properly.



Next Thursday we will premiere a Town-produced historic documentary called *Defining Moments*, about the Civil Rights Movement in North Hempstead. The film was funded by a \$50,000 grant from the National Park Service and provides a wonderful opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of how the soldiers of the Civil Rights Movement changed the world for the better, many of them living right here in North Hempstead.

Clark Botanic Garden will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To mark the milestone, the Town and the Fanny Dwight Memorial Garden, Inc., the non-profit arm of the garden, have scheduled many special events.

The Stepping Stones Lighthouse, with the help of a \$100,000 grant from State Assemblyman Tony D'Urso, will see the construction of a permanent dock get underway this summer. We are very excited about that important step so that renovation of the historic structure can begin.

And there's more happening at the beach in North Hempstead as we unveil the design for the future of North Hempstead Beach Park.

We are very excited to move the visioning of the North Hempstead Beach Park to the next phase. Following a series of public meetings where we received literally hundreds of comments and suggestions, our consultant Quennell Rothschild has put together the conceptual plan you see here. This was done with the help of our Visioning Committee, consisting of representatives from every area of the Town. We thank the Committee for their guidance during this whole process.

The plan for the park will be truly transformative, with features including a year-round restaurant and outdoor cafe, a performance stage, seasonal ice skating rink, sledding hill, volleyball, horse shoes, bocce court, ping pong, a soccer and baseball field, climbing wall, BMX bike track, game tables, swings, pickle ball courts and a multitude of places to sit, relax and look out at the water. To move this project forward we will retain an engineering firm to undertake the detailed design work, as well as create a resiliency plan that addresses future climate change and sea level rise. If you go to our Town website, you can see this plan online, and you will also receive a copy of the design when you leave.

And among the features of the new park, will be a space we are considering reserving for the memorial to honor those North Hempstead residents who

perished on 9-11. We are very pleased that we have found a respectful location that can be accessed by all.

You have placed your trust and confidence in me as your supervisor and I do not take that lightly. It is truly an honor to serve you. The residents of North Hempstead are among the most educated, enthusiastic and civic minded citizens I know. I am proud to work together with all of you as my partners in government and you can be assured that you will always have a seat at the North Hempstead table.

**In the words of President Barack Obama..."It took a lot of blood, sweat, and tears to get to where we are today, but we have just begun. Today we begin in earnest the work of making sure that the world we leave our children is just a little bit better than the one we inhabit today."**

Thank you. And now it's time for questions!