



Legislative Report

Comprising the 11th Legislative District:

Port Washington and The Villages of Baxter Estates, Flower Hill, Manorhaven, Port Washington North, Sands Point • Glen Cove • Glenwood Landing • Roslyn • Roslyn Harbor • Sea Cliff

www.NassauCountyNY.gov

dderiggiwhitton@nassaucountyny.gov

Winter 2021

A Message From **Nassau County Legislator Delia DeRiggi-Whitton**



Dear Neighbors:

I hope this message is reaching you and your family at the start of what we all hope will be a healthy and happy new year.

We created this newsletter at a time when COVID-19 vaccines - a turning point in our lengthy battle to overcome the pandemic - were first being administered. With this medical breakthrough, I am hopeful that Nassau County and all of our communities will soon fully emerge from this crisis at long last.

We would not have been able to reach this milestone without the dedication of our courageous first responders, medical professionals, Nassau County Department of Health employees, frontline workers and so many others that selflessly worked to preserve the pillars of our society. Without their efforts, I simply do not know how we would have made it through this past year, and I will be forever thankful.

The tremendous generosity shown by Nassau County residents was another beacon of light that illuminated the goodness of the human spirit. According to a recent Newsday report, Island Harvest, Long Island's largest food bank, assisted more than 550,000 families in 2020, a year-to-year increase of 83 percent. They were able to meet this unprecedented demand because of contributions from Long Islanders and Nassau County residents.

I believe this inspiring philanthropic spirit was the driving force behind the record-breaking response to Joe LaPadula and Jon Holzer's 10th annual Toys for Tots drive, an event that garnered more than 100,000 donations and brightened a difficult holiday season for thousands of families.

However, the work continues in 2021 to assist neighbors that are struggling during the pandemic. Recently, the Legislature voted unanimously to waive this year's renewal application requirements for residents that received the Senior Citizen tax exemption and Exemption for Persons with Disabilities so long as they were still eligible to receive these income-based exemptions.

With an eye toward long-term reforms that eliminate red tape for seniors, my Minority Caucus colleagues and I introduced and passed legislation that allows homeowners over age 65 to renew exemptions they have received for at least five consecutive years by filing an sworn affidavit affirming their eligibility with their tax payments rather than completing new paperwork year after year.

And, as local restaurant owners continue to rely heavily upon takeout and delivery orders to sustain their businesses, I'm a supporting co-sponsor of Legislator Lafazan's proposal to cap fees that third-party food delivery services, such as GrubHub and Uber Eats, can charge restaurants during a state of emergency that results in restrictions on indoor dining. I certainly believe that these multibillion-dollar corporations, some of which currently charge struggling restaurants more than a 30-percent fee, can afford to reduce this financial burden during a time of crisis.

As we continue to navigate this new year, I want to leave you with a note of gratitude and thank everyone who stepped up to assist Tony Jimenez, Michael Strong and Rachel Bialer. I am thrilled to report that each has found a match and undergone successful kidney transplants! It truly goes to show you how organ donation saves lives, and I hope you will consider becoming a registered organ donor - especially when renewing your driver's license.

Until we meet again, please stay safe and healthy!

Delia DeRiggi-Whitton

Manorhaven Nature Preserve & Garden Grant

Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton secured Community Block Grant funding for upcoming improvements to the Manorhaven Village Nature Preserve. This \$335,000 grant will be used to create ADA-compliant shoreline recreational trails, connect them to the existing Baywalk Trail, and equip common areas throughout the Preserve with surveillance cameras that have an Internet connection to Village Hall. Work is scheduled to begin later this year.



New Façade for Historical Museum

The circa-1907 Glen Cove Justices Courthouse on Glen Street, which today serves as the home of the North Shore Historical Museum, was built when “neighbor” Theodore Roosevelt was President and Glen Cove was still part of Oyster Bay. When Glen Cove became a city, the Justices Courthouse served as its first city hall.

However, this historic landmark has been in need of a “facelift” for quite some time. To aid in this effort, Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton and her colleagues allocated \$75,000 in County funding that will be used to restore the building’s façade. Improvements to this beautiful Dutch colonial building are scheduled for completion by spring 2021. Visit northshorehistoricalmuseum.org for information.

Bridging Generations of Boy Scouts



This fall, Boy Scout Joseph Sullivan and karate student Kuga Rex Weber presented a beautiful knot board to Glen Cove native and World War II veteran Robert Praver during a ceremony held in his honor at the Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance

Center of Nassau County’s Memorial Garden.

The presentation was the outgrowth of a program, organized by U.S. Army Major Fred Nielsen, which pairs current Scouts and youth volunteers with Scouts from earlier generations. They meet in the Garden for discussion, camaraderie and mutual learning. Nielsen introduced Praver to this program, and Praver, a 95-year-old Glen Cove native, jumped in enthusiastically.

The knot board Sullivan and Weber presented to Praver, a U.S. Navy veteran, encapsulated many of the stories he told them during their meetings in the Memorial Garden. It was the perfect setting to honor a man who fought the Nazis to liberate Europe from tyranny.

Visit hmtcli.org to learn more about the Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center of Nassau County.

Thermal Imaging Cameras for Sea Cliff FD

Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton and the Legislature approved an inter-municipal agreement that provides nearly \$30,000 in County funding to the Sea Cliff Fire Department for thermal imaging cameras – cutting-edge devices that experts call a “game changer” in how departments respond to hazardous situations.

Thermal imaging cameras enable firefighters to “see” in dark, smoke-filled areas as they rush to navigate treacherous conditions and locate and rescue trapped fire victims. The cameras are also sensitive to heat in all areas surrounding firefighters, including areas above a volunteer’s head and through walls, providing even greater awareness of nearby hazards.

Roslyn Grist Mill Refurbishment

For more than 150 years after being built in the early 1700s, the historic Roslyn Grist Mill operated as a water mill and was a destination for farmers who brought grain from miles away to grind it into grist (flour). Before the advent of steam power, dozens of mills dotted the coastal towns of Long Island so that they could harness the energy of water currents.

Today, the Roslyn Grist Mill, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the region’s last surviving tidal mills and is undergoing some long-awaited TLC after Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton worked with the Roslyn Landmark Society and the Village of Roslyn, Town of North Hempstead and former Town Historian Howard Kroplick to secure County funding in support of the endeavor.

During work that began last year, the structure was raised and the timber frame, rafters, roof, concrete floor and more were removed, restored and/or replaced. Portions of the timber frame were brought to Vermont for restoration. The current restoration project is scheduled for completion by 2023, after which exhibits and tours will be organized.

The Grist Mill continues to generate headlines while work is ongoing. The discovery of a milk bottle containing letters and coins encased in a concrete slab was recently featured on CBS New York and in Newsday. It appears the builders were proud of their work and decided to leave their own “time capsule” while they were completing a reconstruction project more than 100 years ago.

It’s just one of the many reasons why Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton is so delighted to support this effort to preserve an irreplaceable local historic gem for future generations to enjoy and cherish. Visit roslynlandmarks.org to learn more.



Sea Cliff Sewer Expansion



Since the turn of the 20th century, Sea Cliff residents and business owners have relied upon cesspools – but the time has come for a modern approach to waste management that improves our quality of life and stimulates economic development while protecting Hempstead Harbor and safeguarding our drinking water.

For the past several years, Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton has worked closely with Nassau County, Sea Cliff Village and New York State officials to secure funding that will be used to provide sewers for the entire Village over time. This effort was aided when village officials secured favorable prices when bidding out the first 5,850 linear feet of work for portions of Prospect, 12th, and Summit Avenues as well as Fairview Place. This allowed officials to expand the scope – but not the cost – of the initial \$8-million phase of work by 2,460 linear feet and bring sewer service to properties on portions of Maple, Central, 7th and Summit Avenues.

Between pipes that have been installed during the past few years and the latest additions, nearly a mile and a half of sanitary sewer pipes have already been added to Sea Cliff's infrastructure. The current schedule projects that the existing and new sewer lines will be connected to Glen Cove's sewage treatment plant by spring 2021.

A Natural Solution for Crescent Beach

For more than 10 years, Glen Cove's Crescent Beach has been closed to the public. Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton has secured County funding for studies and worked closely with the New York State Department of Environmental Protection, Sarah Meyland, NYIT Associate Professor and Director of the University's Center for Water Resources Management, H2M architects + Engineers, and Glen Cove Mayor Tim Tenke to devise a solution that allows the beach to safely reopen.

Because it was eventually determined that animal feces was the source of contamination, experts advised that a natural solution utilizing sea-grass plantings would be feasible. Since sea grass roots can efficiently soak up harmful bacteria without harming the plants themselves, the plans call for enhancing plantings and re-routing some water flow to promote natural filtration.

Not only will the success of this effort clean the wetlands so that Crescent Beach can finally reopen, Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton hopes this effort will serve as an example for how nature can be harnessed to address environmental concerns.

Cedarmere Pond & Millhouse Restoration

Roslyn Harbor's Cedarmere is a historic gem on the National Register of Historic Places that has been lovingly cared for and restored by Friends of Cedarmere. The former home of longtime New York Evening Post editor William Cullen Bryant boasts a spectacular view of Hempstead Harbor, particularly from the lovely reflecting pond and nearby mill.

Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton is committed to investing in the preservation of historic treasures like Cedarmere for today and future generations. To aid in that effort, she advocated for a \$95,000 Hotel-Motel grant that will be used to restore the mansion and \$135,000 in County capital plan funding that will be applied to restoring the mill and dredging the pond to improve water quality and protect Hempstead Harbor from contamination.

Visit friendsofcedarmere.org to learn more.

Hunger-Fighting Program Blossoms

For more than a decade, supporters of Plant a Row for the Hungry have grown more than 35,000 pounds of produce to address food insecurity in our community. Since establishing its roots by encouraging businesses and families to "adopt" and care for painted pots filled with vegetable seedlings, the program has since blossomed to become a network of gardens throughout Port Washington and beyond.



Early last year, Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton facilitated discussions between members of the board of County-owned Science Museum of Long Island (SMLI), Plant-a-Row founder Marvin Makofsky, and Cornell Extension Master Gardener Laurie Murdock, founder of the Mosaic Foundation for Autism, to launch the Summer Program to Fight Hunger and Climate Change. Teens and young adult volunteers converted a large swath of the grounds at SMLI into a fertile garden that contributed heavily to a harvest that yielded 5,000 pounds of fresh produce for local food pantries.

Plant-a-Row for the Hungry partnered with ReWild Long Island, Growing Love Community Garden and the Spectrum Group Nicholas Center Navigators on this effort – one that they hope that will develop even stronger roots in our community in future years. Visit rewildlongisland.org/activities to learn more.

"Today is a real day of hope. It is very reassuring to see young people work so passionately to help others, support wildlife, sustainability and our planet's future."
- Legis. DeRiggi-Whitton during an end-of-season ceremony at SMLI

Community Toy Drives Set A New Standard for Generosity



Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton, right, with County Executive Curran, NCPD Commissioner Ryder and U.S. Marines during a Toys for Tots drive outside Nassau Coliseum.

Through all of 2020's struggles, one wonderful thing Delia experienced over and over again during the COVID-19 pandemic is

the overwhelming generosity of everyday people in our community. Two beloved and important toy drives adapted to the challenges of the pandemic so that their philanthropic efforts could continue.

With Governor Cuomo's approval and the assistance of the Nassau County Police Department and County Executive Curran and her administration, Joe LaPadula and Jon Holzer hosted their 10th annual U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots toy drive, a drive-through donation event held at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum on Dec. 6. Businesses, individual donors and community partners joined forces to donate more than 100,000 new, unwrapped toys which were used to make a challenging holiday season brighter for thousands of deserving children in our region.

In Port Washington, Police Detective Tony Guzzello and the Chamber of Commerce conducted their annual Make a Child Smile Toy & Food Drive. Toys collection boxes made it easy for residents to drop off donations. Due to social distancing measures, instead of holding holiday parties to give out toys, families coordinated pickups with outreach centers.

Delia is grateful for the help of everyone who made these beloved events possible and is thankful for the exceptional generosity of people who donated toys and food to local families in need.

Addressing Mental Health, Substance Abuse During The Pandemic

As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted so many aspects of daily life, reports indicate that mental health and substance abuse issues have increased throughout our region. If you or a loved one is struggling, Nassau County offers resources that may be helpful.

In her role as ranking member of the County's Health & Social Services Committee and a proud sponsor of life-saving Narcan training and education sessions, Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton is

devoted to helping all residents in any way possible.

Please visit www.nassaucountyny.gov/3590/human-services for information about the wide variety of services offered. Although in-person Narcan training has not been possible for many months, it is being conducted virtually with the kits available for pickup. Please visit www.nassaucountyNY.gov/overdosetraining for details.

An Update on New York American Water

When New York State established tough new standards governing acceptable levels of PFAS and 1, 4-dioxane in drinking water, many utilities were faced with addressing this new mandate. Port Washington's public water district was able to secure \$18 million in State funding in support of this effort. The City of Glen Cove is in the fortunate position of not facing this challenge.

However, the Sea Cliff Water District, which is operated by New York American Water, has experienced a different outcome. American Water, which is not eligible to receive state grants because it is a private company, came to Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton's office about a year ago to seek support for a planned \$3.4-million water treatment plant. Soon after, American Water received approval from the Town of Oyster Bay for this treatment center – but for a \$4.3-million plan

with a million-dollar shed added under cover of the pandemic. After Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton publicly and privately expressed her displeasure with the 11th-hour addition, her office received a call from Governor Cuomo's office, and Newsday reported on his new proposal to cap the assets a private company can acquire using ratepayer expenses. In late December 2020, American Water reverted the project to its original \$3.4-million cost (while retaining the non-essential shed).

Efforts to bring public water to Sea Cliff are continuing. Village Administrator Bruce Kennedy recently advised Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton that a feasibility study – which will be used to execute the overhaul she and residents have long demanded – has been completed and confirms the potential benefits of creating a public water district.