

Kings Park Civic Association Seeks Commitment From State Parks Commissioner Ash

The Kings Park Civic Association would like to thank State Parks Commissioner Ash and her staff for their visit to Kings Park to discuss the status of the Nissequogue River State Park property with local community leaders. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is planning a detailed engineering study of the buildings and grounds on what used to be the 365 acre core campus of the Kings Park Psychiatric Center. The study will determine the clean-up costs associated with the demolition of the buildings and tunnels on the property and will help determine what structures can be adaptively reused. State Parks has also identified 14 structures, that are currently in a state of disrepair and are a hazard to the community, for demolition while the engineering study is being conducted. We applaud Commissioner Ash and her staff for their decision to demolish these fourteen structures. They are a danger to the public and should be removed before someone is seriously injured on the property.

We are, however, disappointed that State Parks will not commit to maintaining these 365 acres as parkland. The community has patiently waited for over 12 years for the State to make a definitive decision about the fate of the property. We question why the State of New York continues to leave us waiting and uncertain about the property's future. This is discouraging and unfair to our residents. The Kings Park community is united in keeping the whole 520 acre campus a state park. When responding to a question on our membership drive letter which asks our residents to list the 3 most important issues facing our community today, they overwhelmingly tell us to "Keep the Park in Kings Park".

Through our membership in the Nissequogue River State Park Foundation, the KPCA will continue to fight to keep the entire site parkland. We will continue our work with the foundation to help enhance and beautify the park as well as advocate for a park that emphasizes cultural, recreational, educational and passive uses for the property. Encouraging these uses through the formation of private-public partnerships could help stimulate our local economy and enhance the overall quality of life in our community.

We look forward to working with our state and local representatives as well as the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to create a park that will provide an inspirational, enjoyable and safe park experience for all of our residents.

Mike Rosato
Kings Park Civic Association