

August 30, 2007

Suffolk County Legislator Lynne C. Nowick
13th Legislative District
59 Landing Avenue
Smithtown, NY 11787

Dear Legislator Nowick,

Thank you for your response to my letter. Issues concerning the Kings Park industrial area have been on the KPCA agenda for over three decades. Some of the controversies pertaining to this area have recently taken a back seat to the problems involving the Kings Park Psychiatric Center. Today, with an unrelenting tax burden on our residents, we must fully focus our efforts on the remediation, redevelopment and reassessment of our industrial properties along Old Northport Road. Although the county does not wish to foreclose on the Steck and Izzo properties on Old Northport Road due to the liability associated with their remediation costs, the status quo is simply unacceptable. These properties must be restored to an environmentally safe condition and returned to the tax rolls. Our past president, the late Greg Szumicki, consistently fought for the cleanup and redevelopment of these properties and we are determined not to let his efforts die in vain.

Properties that require remediation and are essentially abandoned by their owners can only be returned to the tax rolls if they become usable for purposes other than what they represent today. In other words, who would care to invest in the cost (i.e. bid on a tax lien or purchase unusable and environmentally unsafe land) unless, of course, there were funds available to them or the county to recover remediation expenses? Also, a winning bid at the Suffolk County Tax Lien Auction would most likely have resulted in a long and costly legal battle with the current land owner in an attempt to foreclose on and obtain title to the property. It may have been wishful thinking by the county in assuming someone would be willing to acquire these parcels by spending much more than they are worth, even after they are cleaned up. This is why the Suffolk County Brownfield Tax Lien Auction was flawed and must be revised to achieve the proper outcome.

Brownfield properties may be candidates for federal or state funds to cover the costs associated with their cleanup. The county should help to secure these funds before attempting to discard of these parcels at an auction. The county must also be willing to foreclose on these properties after a winning bid is received, and after the winner signs a contract agreeing to use the brownfield funds, under the supervision of the county or state, to remediate and redevelop the site properly within a specified time period and according to local zoning. We cannot allow environmentally unsound properties, such as the Steck and Izzo parcels in Kings Park, to remain a hazard to our community due to illegally buried tires and other debris. We also must be willing to take the necessary steps to prohibit "business as usual" on these properties after the owners illegally used and contaminated the land and then defaulted on their taxes. It is unjust for our residents to be forced to pick up the tax burden on these parcels while the owners continue to use their property without legal ramifications.

The Kings Park Civic Association will remain committed to the prompt remediation and redevelopment of the Steck and Izzo properties in the Kings Park industrial area. We are determined to make these parcels a productive part of our community for the benefit of our environment, our schools and our quality of life. I look forward to further discussions with you regarding this matter and I am optimistic that our joint efforts will help us achieve the results that our residents expect and respect.

Sincerely,

Mike Rosato
Kings Park Civic Association

cc: Tom Isles, AICP Director
Smithtown Town Supervisor Patrick Vecchio
State Senator Flanagan
State Assemblymen Fitzpatrick