

Nassau County *Office of Economic Development* Newsletter



County Executive
Thomas R. Suozzi



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Investing In Our Infrastructure

Nassau County Opens Home Ownership Center in Hempstead

Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi and Deputy County Executive Patrick Duggan joined Director Connie Lassandro as they dedicated the new Nassau County Home Ownership Center (NCHOC) on January 17, 2008. The dedication featured families that have gone from rental assistance to homeownership under the Housing Choice Voucher Program First-time Homeownership, made possible through working partnerships with community based organizations, banking and financial institutions, and government and private funders.

County Executive Suozzi described the new Home Ownership Center as "offering a chance for hard working, first time homebuyers to realize the American Dream and for homeowners threatened with foreclosure to save their homes." Nassau County received a \$20,000 grant, establishing itself as the first and only municipality in New York State to be designated a U.S. HUD Certified Counseling Comprehensive Housing Agency, and the only Long Island recipient of a HUD 2007 Housing Counseling grant.

"The County's mission," Connie Lassandro said, "is to provide Nassau residents with vital home ownership training and grant information to help them stay focused on their objective and minimize their frustration." Assistance and guidance continue to be offered after a person becomes a homeowner. A hotline, 571-HOME (4663) has been instituted to help homeowners experiencing difficulties with their mortgages. Certified counselors are available to meet with homeowners to review alternatives to foreclosure.

Mr. and Mrs. James, who just closed on their first home, said, "Our family can't believe that we finally have a home we can truly call our own. We can't begin to express our gratitude to Nassau County and to all the organizations and people who helped make our dream come true."



County Executive Tom Suozzi, along with Director Connie Lassandro and members of the Hempstead Trust cutting the ribbon on the new Home Ownership Center.



County Executive Suozzi shows how the Home Ownership Center finances their projects. The James Family, (background, right,) is the first family to receive a new home through the Home Ownership Center.



Patrick G. Duggan
Deputy County Executive
for Economic Development

From the desk of : Deputy County Executive Patrick G. Duggan

The past several months have been extraordinarily productive. We have opened the Nassau County Home Ownership Center at our 40 Main Street location in the heart of the Village of Hempstead. The goal of the Center is to take people from “homeless to homeowners”. We have released an RFP for the sale of bulk tax liens on Brownfields properties. Our staff attended the final session given by the National Development Counsel aimed at sharpening our skills to better leverage and manage our limited resources as we strive to provide more affordable housing for our residents. The training sessions have been invaluable in helping us attract new businesses as well as keeping existing busi-

nesses in Nassau County. We closed on two of the New Cassel transactions, bringing more units of affordable and market rate housing units, and commercial and retail businesses to Nassau County.

On Friday, February 15 we held a Public Hearing to identify housing and community development needs in the county and to discuss the allocations of this year’s HUD funds for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Program, and the HOME Investments Partnerships Program. Participants included consortium members, nonprofit organizations, and the public.

Rosemary Olsen, Director of OHIA, and Kevin Crean, Technical Director of OHIA, held the meetings at the Nassau County Legislative Chambers. During the public hearing Rosemary and Kevin answered questions from the attendees about how the new allocations could affect their respective communities. Also, they offered new ways to better track allocations and record the progress the communities have made. As always, we here in the Office of Economic Development are looking forward to continuing to serve the residents of Nassau County better and more effectively.

Committee to End Homelessness Meets to Discuss Results

In March 2007, Nassau County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi introduced the members of the Nassau Committee to End Homelessness, who he appointed and charged with developing a 10-year plan to address chronic homelessness. The 30 member committee is made up of not-for-profit and faith based service providers, government officials, and three formerly homeless people.

The County has already made great strides on this front. Since 2003, 617 homeless families formerly placed in shelters and motels have moved into permanent housing, most with the assistance of federal housing vouchers, at no cost to the county. 1,605 individuals who called 1-866-WARMBED, the County’s Homeless Hotline, were placed in shelters – 30% of those now receive services needed to lead healthy and productive lives.

The Federal Housing and Urban Development agency presented the County with two checks, totaling more than \$7 million, to fund many vital homeless services. The Nassau Continuum of Care Group, an umbrella group of homeless service providers, re-



County Executive Tom Suozzi with Sean Moss, HUD Regional Director, two formerly homeless residents, Leg. Robert Corbin, Committee Chair Marge Rogatz and Connie Lassandro, NC Director of Housing and Homeless Services.

ceived \$6.5 million, and the county received more than \$600,000 to fund emergency shelters. “HUD is delighted that Nassau County, under the able leadership of Tom Suozzi, has joined with other communities across this country to address their homeless population,” said Sean Moss, HUD Regional Director for New York and New Jersey.

“The committee represents a model of how the public and private sectors can work together to seek solutions to

serious community and regional problems,” said Committee Chair Marge Rogatz, of Community Advocates.

This past September the committee, featuring members from HUD and the offices of OHIA and Housing and Homeless Services of Nassau County, met and presented its plan. The committee further discussed the plan and said they would be meeting again in the near future to complete the plan and begin its implementation.

Combating chronic homelessness

“We are committed to ensuring they get the help and the services they need—in the most cost-efficient manner possible.”

- County Executive Tom Suozzi

County Executive Suozzi Keynotes Brownfields Forum



County Executive Suozzi and DCE Duggan highlight Brownfields areas.

Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi announced a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Bulk Sale of Brownfield Tax Liens at a Brownfields Forum hosted by Nassau County's Office of Economic Development. It has been estimated that Long Island has over 6,000 Brownfield sites scattered throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties, most located in economically depressed neighborhoods.

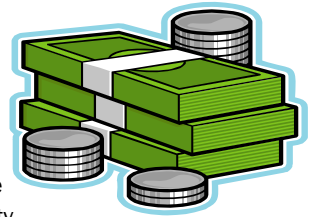
The RFP released on the same day includes 19 parcels with perceived or real contamination located throughout the County. The RFP, available on the Nassau County website, is one of several active Brownfield initiatives in Nassau County.

"This is a win-win-win situation for the environment, the County, and the residents of the towns in which these sites are located," said Suozzi.

The forum, organized by Deputy County Executive Patrick G. Duggan, with co-sponsors New Partners for Community Revitalization and Sustainable Long Island, had nearly 200 attendees including civic officials, developers, law makers, business leaders and elected officials, who came to discuss resources for Brownfields redevelopment as well as current and future legislative initiatives affecting Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

Included in the discussion was the availability of the \$1 Million New York Metro Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund, the New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program, and the proposal in the Governor's budget calling for targeted investment of Brownfield redevelopment tax credits to areas that need the most resources. This is consistent with County Executive Suozzi's *Economic Development Plan* and downtown revitalization initiatives which provide for business development, job creation, and next generation housing. The Nassau County Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs is assisting in Brownfields redevelopment throughout the County with a combination of more than \$10 million in grants, loans and technical assistance. Projects include the Circulo de La Hispanidad in Hempstead Village which is the first "green" community center in New York State, Memorial Economic Development in Roosevelt, Coes Neck in Baldwin, Prospect Avenue in New Cassel, Glen Cove Waterfront Development, and Long Beach Bayfront Projects.

New Cassel Entering the Financial Mainstream



On February 27, 2008, the New York State Banking Department designated a portion of New Cassel, Town of North Hempstead as a Banking Development District (BDD). City National Bank of New Jersey and co-applicant, Nassau County Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs jointly applied to the New York State Banking Department to bring banking services to New Cassel, an under-banked neighborhood in Nassau County.

City National Bank of New Jersey, a BDD branch, will work closely with the small businesses in the area and collaborate with not-for-profits and local churches to provide technical assistance and small business assistance to support and expand the economic growth of New Cassel. Bringing a bank into New Cassel was part of a shared vision plan that was sponsored by various political, residential and not-for-profit support including Supervisor Jon Kaiman, Town of North Hempstead, Nassau County Legislator Roger Corbin, NYS Assemblyman Charles D. Lavine, Sustainable Long Island, and Unified New Cassel Community Revitalization Corporation. "This is the first BDD for Nassau County, and the impact of having a BDD in New Cassel is part of an overall shared vision from the residents in the area and is vital to the economic development in the community," said County Executive Thomas Suozzi. "BDD incentives spur economic development and provide those in communities with much-needed banking services such as savings and checking accounts, mortgages, and small business loans, thereby fostering job creation, promoting community stability, revitalization, and long-term economic development."

"New Cassel is a vibrant, energized community that deserves a 'Main Street' like that in any other community. Facilitating the establishment of a local bank in New Cassel through this effort is a proud moment in our town and in the New Cassel Hamlet," said Supervisor Jon Kaiman. The BDD program provides financial institutions with incentives to locate in traditionally under-served communities. While an institution may see the long-term potential of branching into an unbanked or under-banked area, it may take a number of years before the branch can attract enough deposits to become viable. The BDD program is designed to ameliorate those concerns by providing incentives that can include municipal deposits at below market rates, property tax exemptions, and Community Reinvestment Act credit.

To receive a BDD designation, the locality, acting jointly with interested financial institutions, must demonstrate to the Banking Department a need for banking services in a given area. A local government must first vote to approve the submission of a BDD application, which is then forwarded to the Banking Department for approval. The local government must apply in conjunction with a commercial bank, trust company or savings bank, or a state or federally chartered savings bank or savings and loan association.

Celebrating 35 Years of Community Development!

Old Mill Court Rehabilitation



In December 2007, Rockville Centre - Omni Housing Development, LLC began a \$33 million makeover of nine buildings in the 35-year-old low-income housing complex, the Rockville Centre Apartments.

State and local officials who took part in the symbolic "sledge hammering", included New York State Senator Dean G. Skelos, NYS Assemblyman Robert Barra, Nassau County Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs Director, Rosemary A. Olsen, Housing Authority Chairman Gary Kondor, Village Mayor Mary W. Bossart, and Duncan Barrett, COO, Omni Housing Development, LLC.

Funding for the project is provided by a Nassau County IDA Bond, the Nassau County HOME Grant, the Rockville Centre Housing Authority, Low Income Housing Tax Credit equity through WNC Associates, a New York State Modernization Grant, and construction and permanent loans from M & T Bank. "The first one takes the longest," Barrett said, "and as the project gains momentum, we fully expect all 154 units to be completed by September 2009." Residents of the current 120 apartments have been relocated within the complex and will be moved to the renovated apartments as they become available. For the remaining apartments, there is already a waiting list of 1,000 people. The Rockville Centre Housing Authority will act as management agent during rehabilitation and will continue to add prospective tenants to the existing list. The Rockville Centre Apartments complex is a unique, affordable housing resource in a high cost market. The major qualification for residency is that household income must be at or below 60% of the Nassau County Area Median Income.

Nassau County Planning Federation

Training Program Sessions: The Nassau County Planning Federation and the **North Shore Land Alliance** co-sponsored their first session on March 13th. Held at Old Westbury Gardens, the speaker was **George S. Hawkins**, Director of the Washington D.C.'s District Department of the Environment. He addressed how important decisions on zoning and planning activities at the local level can include principles of sustainability.

The second training program session was held on April 17 and featured a panel of experts on planning and zoning issues. The moderator was **Martha Krisel, Esq.**, who works in the Nassau County Attorney's Office as Director of Special Projects and has an impressive background working with local boards. In 2007 she ran one of the best received workshops the NCPF had ever offered. This recent session addressed how Planning Boards and ZBAs can operate successfully and provided helpful ideas for tackling difficult issues.

The training programs provide valuable educational information for members of local Planning Boards, Zoning Boards of Appeals, Architectural Appeals Boards, and others involved with local land use, zoning and planning activities. Continuing Educational Credits are provided.

Brown Bag Lunches: The Planning Federation will host 6 brown bag lunch programs in 2008. Each lunch will focus on a timely topic in an informal setting. Participants sign up in advance at the Planning Federation Conferences and include ZBA members, planners and other professionals. The lunches will be held in the Planning Department Conference Room at their new location, 100 County Seat Drive, Mineola. The first lunch, held on March 18, addressed zoning and building codes to accommodate solar energy panels.

For future program information please contact the NCPF at

516-571-0347

The Vision for New Suburbia

Investing In Our Future



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Deputy County Executive Patrick G. Duggan

We're on the Web!

www.nassaucountyny.gov