

**NORTH HEMPSTEAD  
STATE OF THE TOWN  
2005**

**Supervisor Jon Kaiman**

As I embark upon the second year of my journey as North Hempstead Town Supervisor, I am keenly aware that I am in a very special place. The State of New York is comprised of over 1500 towns, cities and villages, and I sit as the chief executive of the seventh largest in the state. I preside over a board of committed public servants from both sides of the political aisle. I oversee a management team of talented, hardworking individuals, each of whom has made and continues to make his or her mark on our vast and vibrant Town. I work with almost 400 men and women of all races, creeds, and backgrounds who serve the residents of our Town with dedication and skill. I am honored to work among them all.

Each day brings new issues, concerns, problems, solutions, questions and answers. Each day brings me into contact with our residents, our neighbors, our business owners and our community activists. Over time I've come to know our elected leaders throughout the Town, County, Villages and special districts. I am continually immersed in the resolution of labor issues, environmental concerns, fire and police issues, housing concerns and the world of municipal law and finance. I work with our state and federal officials, as well as a myriad of people, personalities and organizations that make up our Town. On behalf of the Town of North Hempstead I welcome the help we receive throughout the year from Tom Suozzi, Howard Weitzman, Harvey Levinson and Denis Dillon and our County officials as well as our county legislators Lisanne Altmann, Craig Johnson, Roger Corbin and Richard Nicoletto. I thank our state representatives, specifically Assemblyman Tom DiNapoli and State Senator Michael Balboni. I thank our US Senators Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton and our Congressional representatives Gary Ackerman and Carolyn McCarthy who have all come through for us in such a big way in 2004. And I acknowledge all the Mayors and Trustees of the villages throughout the Town for all that they do.

I welcome the privilege of serving with our six council members Tom Dwyer, Tony D'Urso, Angelo Ferrara, Fred Pollack, Robert Troiano, and Wayne Wink as well as our Town Clerk Michelle Schimel and Receiver of Taxes Rocco Iannarelli.

I would like to acknowledge my department heads and my staff as well: Commissioner of Public Works, Gil Anderson; Commissioner of Finance, Helene Beckerman; Town Attorney, Richard Finkel; Commissioner of Community Services, Madge Kaplan; Commissioner of Administrative Services, Ray Levan; Commissioner of Public Safety, Ed Neidich, Commissioner of Parks, Jerry Olsen; Town Comptroller, Paul Pathe; Highway Superintendent, Tom Tiernan; Commissioner of Buildings and Planning as well as our Chair of our Community Development Agency, David Wasserman; and Commissioner of Information Technologies, Sharon Cates Williams. I also acknowledge Director of Code Enforcement John Macedo and Director of Emergency Management Janet Wohlers. In terms of my staff, I acknowledge our Deputy Supervisor, Chris Senior; Chief of Staff, Jo-Anne Taormina; Director of Community Based Planning, April Brown Lake; Director of Communications, David Chauvin; Director of Intermunicipal Affairs, Deena Lesser; and Director of Legislative Affairs, Rafael Lieber; Director of Budget

Review, Dan Nachbar; and my support staff JoAnn Porrello, Helen McCann and Sean Coads.

I also acknowledge the board members and employees of our outside agencies such as our Community Development Agency, Board of Zoning Appeals and Housing Authority as well as all of the members of the various commissions and advisory boards that serve our residents.

I am honored to be here now and I thank the League of Woman Voters for hosting this annual event.

Turning first to Town finances, the outlook is bright. In fact, the Town is in excellent financial shape with continued surpluses, a stable fund balance, increased revenues and a falling debt burden. Moody's has recognized these successes by awarding the Town a positive fiscal outlook, a step which often leads to future bond rating upgrades.

As a result of conservative fiscal budgeting over many years in conjunction with additional sales and mortgage tax revenue, we were able to meet the needs of our residents without raising taxes.<sup>[1]</sup> Our debt management plan has also brought fiscal success, most notably in the Town's Highway fund, where \$1 million in savings in 2005 has allowed for equipment upgrades and replacement without incurring new debt.

We've capitalized on low interest rates through aggressive refinancing, which led to North Hempstead's recognition by New York State Comptroller Alan Hevesi as the township with the largest savings in the State – more than \$1.6 million. Our strong fiscal position saw our most recent public offering being bid down to a less than 2% interest rate – which means further savings for our taxpayers. These results are a further endorsement from the financial community that North Hempstead's finances are in excellent condition.

The Town's financial picture is brightened even further by the aggressive pursuit of outside resources. In 2004, through aggressive lobbying efforts, we obtained more than 5 million dollars in federal and state assistance. Some of the projects these monies will fund include Prospect Avenue in New Cassel, the purchase of new buses to transport our youth and senior citizens, and funding for our efforts to create a new constituent service system – 311.

Our daily operations are also generating more revenue. Our Buildings Department, for example, brought in over \$2 million in permit revenue in 2004, while our Code and Building inspectors, with the help of aggressive prosecution from our Town Attorney's office, has increased fine revenue some 500% over 2003 numbers.

We can also look to our Town Clerk Michelle Schimel and our Receiver of Taxes Rocco Iannarelli, whose offices together brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional, unanticipated revenue in 2004. Both Michelle and Rocco are creative and dynamic in their respective roles and the Town residents are well served by their efforts.

Looking back on 2004 and looking ahead to 2005 I am proud to say that the Town of North Hempstead is in great financial shape, with a strong team in place, and a tried and true financial plan that continues to produce results for our residents.

The question, then, is what priorities shall we set with the resources that we have. The approach of this administration is to focus our resources on constituent and community services as well as parks and roads improvements. This focus will include the following priorities for 2005: Our 311 constituent response system; an internal auditing and control

program; our community based planning efforts; improved programming; parks and roads improvements; equipment upgrades; and infrastructure upgrades.

Improving our ability to respond to constituent calls, code enforcement complaints, tax questions, and road maintenance issues, among numerous other things, will be central to our efforts. We are already working to fill potholes more quickly, sweep streets more often, plow roads more thoroughly, and strive constantly to make our Town cleaner and safer.

### **311/Town Stat**

In 2003, I campaigned on a platform that called for installing a 311 non-emergency phone number as a way to reorganize the way the Town responds to constituent calls. In 2004, I announced our plan to do just that by funding the technological and management assessments needed to implement this 311 concept. We hired the consultants, reviewed our options, educated ourselves on 311, and initiated the process necessary to put this system into place in 2005.

In pursuit of the options available to us, I traveled to Baltimore to take a first-hand look at what Mayor Martin O'Malley is doing with his 311 and City Stat programs, which have won national recognition. I went to Washington DC to ask our federal legislators for money to fund an emergency management/homeland security component of 311, and thanks to Senator Chuck Schumer, as well as Senator Clinton and our Congressmembers Gary Ackerman and Carolyn McCarthy, the Town of North Hempstead will receive \$500,000 this year for this project. I reached out to Senator Michael Balboni and Assemblyman Tom DiNapoli for this same program, and have just learned from Senator Balboni that we will be receiving an additional \$75,000 from the State of New York for this project.

For months our staff has been meeting with various software vendors, technology companies and telecommunications providers to find the best systems for our needs, while reaching out to other governments and regulatory agencies to address the technical and operational issues which have to be overcome to make 311 a reality. We've been pouring through the research and reports provided by our consultants and by Town staff so that we can understand all of the implications and opportunities that this new technology has to offer. And I can tell you today that the Town of North Hempstead is on target to have a 311 system up and running in the spring of this year.

The 311 constituent response system, however, will not merely be a way to receive calls and questions from our residents. It will also be the center of a new management system that will allow for better oversight of how we respond to those calls and questions each and every day. We will be able to track when a call comes in, how it is processed, who is handling it, and how issues raised are resolved. Using this information we will be better able to manage our records, our personnel resources, and our finances.

North Hempstead will be following the Mayor of Baltimore's example even further by incorporating our 311 constituent response system into a statistical analysis and management program. Simply put, the information generated by 311 will help us generate statistics, analysis and reports that will help us evaluate how a particular project, office or department is performing. This information will help us manage more efficiently, and respond to our residents more completely. Baltimore's system is known as "City-Stat," and was itself modeled on New York City's police-oriented "Com-Stat" system. North Hempstead's version of this award-winning model will be known as

“Town-Stat,” and as a town wide program will be one of the first of its kind in the nation.

There will be other components to this system such as an emergency management response and alert system, and a tracking system utilizing GPS satellite technology that will allow us to literally watch on our computer screens as our snow plows and street sweepers move across a map, while monitoring their speed and productivity. These systems will enable the Town to provide vital, up-to-date information or assistance to any resident from any location throughout the Town.

We are striving toward a day when such up-to-the-minute information may be accessible to our residents with the click of a mouse – watching our plows and sweepers approach their homes on their computer screens.

We are striving toward a day when a resident can notify the Town about the existence of a pothole, and 48 hours later see a picture of the completed repair on the Town’s website. And yes, we will fill any pothole in the Town of North Hempstead during the week within 48 hours of receiving the complaint.

### **Parks and Roads**

With the Town’s financial position as strong as it is, we have the opportunity to dedicate resources for parks and roads in a way that we have been unable to for some time. To begin with, the North Hempstead Town Board has set aside \$3 million for parks and roads, money allocated without raising taxes or cutting other services. Millions more will be dedicated for the same purposes through our capital plan, which is capped annually by the Town’s visionary debt management plan, established by my predecessor May Newburger and which this administration is committed to follow.

Let it be clear that our Town parks are in wonderful shape right now. Tens of thousands of people visit our parks, our pools, our beaches, our golf courses, our botanic garden and our bays annually. Thousands of children and adults play ball on our fields, participate in our summer programs and attend our summer concerts. More than 250 youth soccer teams and their families participated in the wildly successful North Hempstead Cup tournament last fall, and more than six thousand people took part in Spooky Walk during Spooky Week at Clark Gardens during the Halloween season.

In 2005 we will do even more. We will be improving, rebuilding and maintaining our baseball, soccer and athletic fields throughout the Town. We will be adding services, programs, and other improvements to enhance your experience in our parks and in our Town. We are putting in irrigation where necessary and building new fields where we can. We will be improving the facilities in our parks and continuing to resurface our basketball and tennis courts, improve walkways, and to install modern, safe children’s playgrounds throughout our Town parks. In Tully Park alone, we will be dedicating over \$1 million dollars toward the installation of a new filtration system for our indoor pool.

On our roadways, we are continuing our “Clean Sweep” program where we spend two intense weeks doing a Spring-cleaning of our streets throughout the entire Town. For two weeks every sweeper we have and can get a hold of will be sweeping and re-sweeping each Town street until it is clean of the winter’s dirt, salt and sand. This is followed up by regular maintenance runs throughout the year.

We are upgrading our equipment, including a dozen new trucks and new salt-brine equipment that will melt snow and ice quicker, better and longer than we've been able to do in the past. We've purchased a quarter million dollars of these machines from companies which do significant business in Canada, where we figure they know how to get rid of snow and ice a little heavier than we usually face. And as I noted earlier, we will be purchasing GPS technology that will help us track and locate our sweepers and plows as they travel through the Town. We will monitor their productivity and deploy them to achieve maximum results.

In addition, we will continue our aggressive repaving policy and we welcome Senator Balboni's continued financial support through the State's Multi-Modal program.

Finally, in relation to parks and roads, I do anticipate that North Hempstead will come to an agreement with County Executive Tom Suozzi and Nassau County involving the transfer of parkland and roads to the Town. This transfer saves money for our mutual constituents while enabling the town to utilize large tracts of public land for our residents' benefit. People throughout the Town and County are calling for governmental consolidation. I believe that this parks and road transfer is a large step in that direction.

### **Community Outreach**

The Town of North Hempstead is also stepping up our organized outreach through our Community Services Department. We will continue our popular Funday-Monday and Earth Day programs, and will be adding new services such as youth programs, anti-gang programs, cultural and intercultural events, educational activities and programs that are simply all out fun.

Community Services will be partnering with our Parks Department to develop new and improved programming, while also reaching out to those in all of our communities with particular needs. We are negotiating with agencies to provide social worker services to senior and other populations with special needs, and we will continue to support our senior centers throughout the Town while providing bus services for those who need assistance getting around.

This administration is determined to make accessible, open government and community participation a core focus of all that we do. We have dedicated a great deal of time and effort to our community-based planning initiative in 2004, and will continue to do so in 2005. Public community meetings are an important component of this effort.

As part of this outreach, the Town has had as many as 700 residents attend one of our community based planning meetings, and as few as twenty. We've held meetings in Carle Place, Roslyn Heights, Great Neck, New Hyde Park, Port Washington, New Cassel, Albertson and Manhasset. We are planning additional meetings to address issues such as the pending reconstruction of the Roslyn Viaduct and the proposed changes to the Great Neck Library.

In Port Washington we are pursuing a community-wide visioning process, where we will be conducting a series of meetings large and small, focused on such subjects as water quality, recreational needs, traffic and density issues, and code enforcement concerns. We've partnered with the Mayors of the six villages on the Port Washington peninsula, as well as some of the major local organizations such as Residents for a More Beautiful Port

Washington, The General Council of Homeowners Associations, and the Port Washington Business Improvement District. We've taken a page from Supervisor May Newburger's playbook on visioning such as was done in New Cassel and we've taken it on the road throughout the Town so that all residents can be part of the decision making process.

### **What else should people look for in 2005 from the Town of North Hempstead?**

While community-based planning, roads and parks improvements, and our 311 constituent response system will be my priorities for 2005, there are many other projects which will also receive plenty of attention.

A major priority will be to continue our aggressive approach to code enforcement and illegal housing. In 2004 we pursued over 100 illegal housing cases; joined forces with the District Attorney's office to go after absentee landlords who may be committing crimes against the town and against their tenants; opened discussions with Assessor Harvey Levinson regarding his creative approach to fighting illegal housing; and increased our annual code enforcement fine revenue by 500 percent.

We will continue these efforts, but I would like to clarify our approach to combating illegal housing. I am aware that we must not forget that the people we are displacing are moms and dads, sons and daughters, old and young, people like you and me. We have an obligation to treat such residents humanely, and with respect, but this does not relieve us of our obligation to enforce our codes. We are not the Immigration and Naturalization Service and we don't intend to use our resources to do their job. Our focus is on the code violations that we observe because they are illegal and unsafe. Our goal is to obtain compliance with our codes through our enforcement and prosecution efforts.

We are not targeting any particular group, nor are we eagerly looking to displace tenants who have nowhere to go. We are looking for alternative housing options; we are facilitating the building of additional affordable housing, primarily through our New Cassel revitalization project; and we will be retaining social workers to help those who are in need of assistance and don't know how to get it. The reason we enforce these codes, however, is not only because it is unfair for our taxpaying residents to foot the bill for those who utilize municipal services and education systems without paying the corresponding taxes; and not only because crowded housing generally becomes a blight on communities; but also because it is inherently unsafe to crowd people into cramped and unsafe living quarters such as basements, attics, and sub-par structures built within a residence. What needs to be clear at the end of the day is that we have an obligation to enforce our codes and we will meet that obligation to the best of our abilities.

On another note, the Town is planning on creating a Sidewalk Enforcement Unit that will focus on the maintenance of our commercial corridors. Business owners have an obligation to maintain the façade of their stores and the sidewalks in front of them. This is a beautification effort with an enforcement component that we hope will make a difference.

I would also like to announce that next week the Town expects to receive seven new hybrid fuel vehicles, beginning our "Clean Cars" campaign. These hybrid vehicles, which have dual gas and electric engines, will not only begin to reduce our use of gasoline, but will also create significantly less pollution. Expect to hear more on hybrid vehicles as the year goes on.

The Town has recently created a business and tourism development corporation to promote local business and tourism, which is important to our tax base. Through this entity we will seek money to sustain and promote the Town's heritage as well. For example, we've already given money to save the Roslyn Grist Mill in conjunction with Nassau County and the Village of Roslyn and we will find resources for other such local treasures as well. As this organization grows, it has the potential to make a positive difference for our local businesses across North Hempstead.

Another boost to Town recreational opportunities will be the new clubhouse now under construction at our Harbor Links Golf Course, which we hope to have completed later this year. Our new Town cat shelter should also be completed this year as well. Plans are also under discussion for a Town-sponsored community center in the New Cassel/Westbury area. We are presently working on acquiring the land for this community center, which will be another component part of our New Cassel revitalization effort.

In regard to the New Cassel revitalization, a number of the redevelopment projects will be beginning construction very soon. This revitalization effort began years ago under the auspices of Supervisor May Newburger. She initiated the visioning process that resulted in a community vision calling for a traditional main street in the heart of New Cassel, complete with a supermarket, pharmacy, restaurants and a bank. We've taken the baton passed to us by Supervisor Newburger and by year's end that vision will turn into bricks and mortar and soon after that a supermarket, pharmacy, restaurants and a bank. The success of this project is made possible by the partnership of all involved including Unified New Cassel under the leadership of Reverend Lionel Harvey, Sustainable Long Island, Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi and his staff, Senator Clinton, Congresswoman McCarthy, New York State (both Senator Balboni and Assemblyman DiNapoli), the North Hempstead Community Development Agency and, of course, the Town of North Hempstead.

Of some note, Senator Clinton recently appeared with Congresswoman McCarthy, the Town, the County, and the local community to present a check for 1.2 million dollars from the federal government for this effort. The value of the combined project, by the way, is upwards of 100 million dollars.

Another initiative begun in 2004 was the establishment of the Town of North Hempstead Labor Advisory Board. The Board includes representation from many of the major unions based in Long Island, and has already conducted several productive meetings focusing on a variety of issues. The new year should bring new initiatives from this dynamic group.

We are also pursuing a major overhaul of the Town's cable studio where we now have new programming and more on the way. In fact, many of you might be interested to know that Verizon has approached the Town for a franchise agreement for the purpose of competing with Cablevision for cable services in the Town. We welcome the competition between both these companies with the hope that it will result in reduced costs for our residents.

There are many more projects in the works throughout the Town, they are simply too numerous to list. Some small, some large, but all are meant to improve the quality of life of our Town residents. Some are as simple as reaching out to our elected officials at the county, state and federal level who do so much for us and are there when we need them

such as when we recently reached out to Congressman Ackerman who was able to help an 84 year old woman from Westbury retrieve her entire life savings lost to her through some type of fraud.

Through these efforts, we strive to meet the needs of individuals and varied communities within our Town. We are focusing on the basics: parks, roads and constituent response. We are being proactive and creative in our use of modern management tools and new technologies. We are watching our dollars, but spending them when we need to. The Town operates with 200 fewer employees than it did 14 years ago. We do more with less, and we do the best that we can. On the foundation of past achievements and new ideas, we are building a better future.

I am honored to serve the North Hempstead community. I am awed by the challenges and the pitfalls that we in government face every day. I am struck by the diversity and dimensions of the decisions that must be made day in and day out. I am impressed with the number of people who step up to help make their community a better, safer place from firefighters who volunteer their time, to kids who clean up a patch of land on Earth Day. I am impressed with the public servants in local government, local schools, local police and so many other venues who work so hard and I see the difference that they make just a little bit at a time.

The State of the Town of North Hempstead is good. In fact it is great and it is getting better all the time. Thank you for the opportunity to present this message to you. And to the residents of the Town of North Hempstead, thank you for allowing me the honor of serving as your North Hempstead Town Supervisor.

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[1] In regard to taxes, I would like to set forth the actual numbers so that our residents are aware of the number with which we are operating. Our general fund property tax levy for 2005 is \$15,249,621. In 2004, the number was \$15,251,387. In 2005, the Part-Town tax levy is \$1,626,823, as compared with 2004's number of \$1,626,545. In 2005, our highway fund tax levy is, \$16,960,948 as compared with 2004's levy of \$16,960,975. As you can see, we maintained the same tax levy – the actual amount raised by property taxes - in our three major funds between 2004 and 2005. You should be aware, however, that changes in property values, as well as New York State's readjustment of property tax percentages between single-family residential, co-ops and condos, utilities and commercial properties impacts the amount of tax any particular property is assessed, which can result in some fluctuation in actual tax bills up or down.