

**STATE OF THE TOWN 2014
SUPERVISOR JUDI BOSWORTH
TOWN OF NORTH HEMPSTEAD**

Welcome! What a privilege it is for me to continue a long-standing North Hempstead tradition here today. I thank the League of Women Voters, and particularly Amy Bass, Luncheon Chair, Marie Bellon, Co-Chair, Judy Jacobson and the President of the League, Jane Thomas, for this opportunity to present my first State of the Town address. I want to thank as well Gina Sillitti and the staff here at Harbor Links.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate our newest Town Councilman, Peter Zuckerman, of East Hills. Peter was appointed by the Town Board this past Tuesday to fill the vacancy in the Council District 2 seat due to the resignation of former Councilman Tom Dwyer, who had served with distinction for over a decade.

I thought it would be really special for Peter to take his oath of office here with all of us this afternoon. So, at this time, I am pleased to call Peter up to the podium, along with his beautiful family, and to invite the distinguished Mayor of the Village of East Hills, Michael Koblenz, to administer the official oath of office to Councilman Zuckerman.

(OATH OF OFFICE)

Councilman Zuckerman would like to say a few words.

Good afternoon, again. I am proud and privileged to be your new Town Supervisor.

Of course, I am particularly honored to succeed Jon Kaiman and May Newburger, two exceptional leaders who dedicated their public lives to the betterment of our community. On New Year's Day, Jon Kaiman and I met at May Newburger Cove in Port Washington, where he administered the oath of office to me, so that I could officially assume my duties on "Day One". I'm sure those of you who are familiar with the recent history of our Town can appreciate how fitting and poignant that moment was.

Just four days later, my friend and mentor, State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, performed my public swearing-in, at a wonderful inaugural ceremony that many of you here today attended.

Our Town begins the New Year, not only with a new Supervisor and a new Town Council member, but with a new Town Clerk, our good friend Wayne Wink. I had the pleasure of serving with Wayne the past six years in the Nassau County Legislature and I look forward to continuing our excellent relationship here in North Hempstead.

Welcome Wayne!

I would like to recognize our other Town officials, each of whom is dedicated to making Town of North Hempstead government work efficiently, effectively and responsibly for the benefit of our residents:

Receiver of Taxes Charles Berman

1st District Councilwoman Viviana Russell

3rd District Councilman Angelo Ferrara

4th District Councilwoman Anna Kaplan

5th District Councilwoman Lee Seeman

6th District Councilwoman Dina DeGiorgio

I would also like to recognize all the other distinguished elected officials who are here with us today.

I am also pleased to welcome the mayors, village trustees, special district commissioners, school board members and superintendents, union leaders and Town employees who are present. I have worked with many of you over the years. I look forward to building on those relationships and forging new ones, as all of us work together – truly together – for our families, our seniors, our children, our local organizations and our entire community.

Today, as we end the first month of the New Year, I would like to outline for you where we are as a Town government, and talk about some of my priorities for my first term.

Within a few days of my election on November 5th, I formed a transition team headed by an outstanding leader from our Town, Arthur Gianelli. The transition team was tasked with reviewing the established management structure of Town government.

As part of the transition, I visited just about every Town facility, met with commissioners and staff, and evaluated each department based on the “SWOT” model – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. I put in place a highly professional senior staff, with deep experience in local government, to work with me and with the Town Board in moving North Hempstead forward and identifying our priorities and goals.

Well, here we are on “Day 31” – with four snow storms, one ice storm and four Town Board meetings in my first month, the most recent lasting until 2:00 in the morning!

So I can report to you with confidence, after just one month, that the state of the Town of North Hempstead is busy, active, energetic, strong, responsible, and dedicated to serving our residents whenever and wherever we can!

So let me now outline some of our plans for 2014.

My administration will focus on maintaining the Town’s stable and strong finances, environmental awareness, departmental and programmatic initiatives, customer service and government transparency.

I am pleased to report that the fiscal condition of Town government remains solid and secure, and I am committed to building upon that strong foundation. The bond rating assigned to the Town by Moody’s Investors Services is Aa1, the highest in our history.

North Hempstead has fiscal concerns similar to many other municipalities. The cost of health care coverage and pension contributions for our employees continues to rise, infrastructure ages and needs repair, and the next Superstorm Sandy – and the costs of storm recovery – can never be far from our consciousness.

However, working with the Town Board and our professional finance team, we will put in place a multi-year capital plan and a multi-year debt management plan, which will aid us in the budget and planning process – and help ensure the stability and strength of our finances going forward.

Environmental protection was a signature issue for both of my predecessors, as it was for me, as a school board member and county legislator.

We will continue this proud North Hempstead tradition by working to strengthen laws, regulations and awareness to protect our aquifers and our drinking water, building on recent efforts towards establishing a Long Island Water Compact.

The concerns regarding water quality and availability voiced at this week’s Town Board meeting by numerous residents of the Roslyn Water District, underscore just how important our water supply is in so many aspects of our lives.

Protecting and preserving the integrity of our underground aquifers – our sole source water supply – will be a priority of this administration.

We will build on existing partnerships with our local school districts, establishing a new program to educate our young people regarding the importance of water conservation. Local students will be taking part in a video contest this year, with the theme of water conservation. Our environmental initiatives should start with our children, and this is just one example of how to make this critical goal a reality.

I am also excited about our partnership with SmartTap, which is a filtered water system already installed in three of our Town parks. Eventually, it will be installed in a total of 30 Town facilities and 30 schools here in North Hempstead. This program encourages our residents to drink from refillable water bottles instead of plastic bottles. Our goal is to reduce the need to dispose of tens of thousands of plastic beverage bottles annually in our parks, schools and other public buildings.

This initiative is right in line with our School Recycling Partnership Program, through which about 40,000 students annually are taught to be knowledgeable and caring stewards of the environment, for today and the future.

I also want to report on a new project, in which approximately 80 garbage cans and recycling bins will be installed up and down main streets in Great Neck, increasing opportunities for residents to recycle. This has been made possible by a \$75,000 New York State grant, obtained through the office of our State Senator, Jack Martins, for which we are most appreciative, as well as the efforts of our Town's Grants Coordinator, Tom Devaney, who works so diligently to identify sources of revenue for the Town.

I would like to acknowledge our Chief Sustainability Officer, Fran Reid, for her work on many of these initiatives and our outstanding environmental programs.

Our beautiful waterfront and shoreline are among our Town's most valued – and valuable – environmental resources. We will continue our efforts to protect Manhasset Bay and the magnificent destination and recreational area it has become. We will also bring renewed attention and focus to Hempstead Harbor, which is the waterfront in Glenwood Landing, Roslyn Harbor, Roslyn and Port Washington.

It is time for a comprehensive, inclusive community visioning of the Hempstead Harbor and West Shore Road area, to protect the natural environment for future generations and expand recreational opportunities for our families. Working with villages, civic and environmental groups, and interested citizens, the Town of North Hempstead will take the lead in this vital task.

Former Supervisor Jon Kaiman and his Administration established a number of ground-breaking, innovative programs that we will build upon.

The 311 Call Center is the heartbeat of North Hempstead government, day in and day out. During “Superstorm Sandy”, 311 was truly a “lifeline” for numerous North Hempstead residents, when it answered 37,000 calls at the height of the storm. It continues to be an invaluable resource for residents to report concerns, and have their issues recorded, tracked and responded to. Special thanks to Vinny Malizia and all the hard-working 311 staff members for going “above and beyond” during the recent snow events.

We will enhance the 311 system by making service requests possible directly through the Town's website and via a new "app" for mobile devices. The app, called "My North Hempstead", is seamlessly integrated with the Town's 311 Call Center. These improvements will give residents additional ways to submit service requests to the Town.

As with the present 311 system, residents can use "My North Hempstead" to notify the Town about potholes, broken sidewalks, and a host of other issues, which will then be addressed in a timely and professional manner. This new app also allows residents to look up garbage and recycling collection schedules, add the schedules to their own personal smart phone calendars, and even research proper recycling and solid waste disposal methods and information.

At present, the app is available for i-phones, but we expect it to become available for other smart phones shortly.

Thanks to Frank Prisciandaro, Commissioner of Information Technology, for his efforts in developing this innovative application.

Another major innovation has been Project Independence, through which seniors receive support and services that allow them to remain in their own homes and surroundings as they age. This is one of the Town's truly unique and special programs, which was started with the strong support of Councilwoman Lee Seeman and Councilman Angelo Ferrara. Among the resources provided by Project Independence are transportation to medical appointments and shopping, health care support, social work, and home maintenance and repair.

A new feature of Project Independence this year will enable seniors or their caregivers to sign up for services through the Town's website, as well as by calling 311.

Three Project Independence committees were recently formed. The Pedestrian Safety Sub-committee is working with Councilwoman Kaplan to address concerns such as walking and being seen at night, safer crossings, crosswalk paint and visibility, and better street lighting. The Circle of Support Sub-committee addresses emergency planning for seniors who live alone. And the Lawn Maintenance Sub-committee addresses the needs of the frail elderly who lack the ability to maintain their properties. These much-needed working groups continue to expand the reach and effectiveness of Project Independence.

North Hempstead has a truly extraordinary parks system. We will continue long-term investment in our parks, while at the same time enhancing programs, particularly for younger families.

As a part of this effort, we will take the “Yes We Can” Community Center to the next level, in terms of its programming, utilization and community involvement. The 60,000 square foot, Platinum LEED-certified center fulfilled a life-long dream for many residents in New Cassel and Westbury. Now it is our responsibility to make the best use of the top-of-the-line features this facility boasts.

I am committed to building the Alvan Petrus recreational facility in Port Washington. The “land swap” contract that is at the center of the park plan was signed last month and the closing is scheduled to take place later this year, after which time we will move forward with this important project. We will also look to further engage the community in programs at our great state-of-the-art pool facilities at Manorhaven Beach Park and Tully Park.

Under former Supervisor Jon Kaiman, North Hempstead stepped up its commitment to arts and culture, right here in our local community. Central to this commitment has been our partnership with the Great Neck Arts Center, which as of this week is now officially the Gold Coast Arts Center, reflecting our community’s shared vision of a town-wide cultural arts network. That developing synergy was further in evidence this week, as the Town reaffirmed its strong support of the arts in the New Cassel community, through the exciting “ArtsBuild New Cassel Revitalization Program”, which has been championed by Councilwoman Viviana Russell.

One of the key tenets of this Administration will be a focus on customer service for Town residents, with an initial emphasis on the Building Department.

One of the commitments I made during my campaign for Town Supervisor has already been fulfilled – the appointment of an Applicant Advocate in the Building Department who reports directly to my office. Lauren Summa, a highly capable veteran of our town government, is now in the Building Department assisting our residents in navigating the permit process and cutting through red tape. She is also scheduling evening forums at various locations throughout the Town, to make it

easier for residents to meet with her and for her to explain the permit process and respond to individual problems and concerns.

We will explore ways we can use technology to make the Building Department more user-friendly. The Town website is being redesigned to make forms more easily accessible. We will make it possible to fill out and submit some Building Department forms on-line and work towards accepting electronic payments, so that applicants do not have to wait at the Building Department to submit their paperwork. And we will establish a system so that applicants can check the status of their matters on line.

We will invest the resources necessary to foster these and other improvements, to reduce the time and stress involved in obtaining permits and certificates, while never compromising our commitment to compliance with the Town Code and to building safety.

I remain committed to long-term improvements to our Building Department, in order to ensure that it truly evolves into an agency of Town government that functions as an ally of our residents.

And speaking of customer service, there is no service more essential to the Town's "customers" – our residents and businesses – than having the roads plowed quickly and efficiently during and after a snowstorm.

On my first day in the office, I called all Town commissioners together to plan for "Hercules", the first snowstorm of the season. I am pleased to report that the Highway Department, along with the staffs of the Parks, Public Safety, Building, Community Services, Administrative Services and other departments, pulled together and made sure that every road was plowed more than once, all Town facilities were cleared and safe, and there were warming centers in place in three central locations.

And during that storm, I personally visited each and every warming center to ensure they were ready to receive anyone in need, in addition to visiting 311, our emergency management center, and our highway yards.

And thanks to our award-winning TownStat Office, I can look at a GPS map and see exactly where our trucks are in any given snow storm. Along with our knowledgeable and dedicated Highway Superintendent, Tom Tiernan, I am able to

access charts like this one from January 3rd, to see that there is proper coverage of snow plows on Town roads.

By the way, our TownStat Office keeps statistics and information as a performance measurement tool on just about every service the Town provides.

So, as you can see, North Hempstead has been on the job this winter!

A primary goal of this Administration will be to make North Hempstead town government more accessible to the public.

I am pleased to announce that we have already taken an initial step in this direction. At our very first regular Town Board meeting of the year on January 7th, the Board approved my proposal to establish a 30-minute comment period at the beginning of every regularly scheduled Town Board meeting. Under the new rule, residents having individual questions and concerns that are not on the agenda, will no longer have to wait until the end of the meeting to bring their matters to the attention of the Board. I believe this will encourage and enhance public participation in our meetings.

Today I can announce that the second action we are taking, which was approved by the Town Board at our January 28th meeting, is to “live stream” on the Town’s website all Town Board meetings, starting with our next meeting on February 25th. Anyone who is interested in hearing about a topic on the agenda but is unable to make it to Town Hall, now will be able to watch and listen to the proceedings on their computer, tablet or smart phone. An icon for this purpose will be available on the home page of the Town website.

Making government more accessible to the public is important – and so is making government more open and transparent. Those with whom I have worked in my two-plus decades of public service will tell you that I have always emphasized process, procedure and transparency as the best vehicles to ensure openness and integrity in government.

Part of this challenge is ensuring that residents are made aware of proposals and actions that may have an impact on their lives and neighborhoods. This is not merely “government speak” or “political speak”, it is what each and every member of our Town Board believes in and is committed to.

During the first few days I was in office, it came to my attention that a project had been in the works for some time to install more than 12,000 individual solar panels on two landfills in Port Washington, known as L4 and L5. While I believe strongly that developing and expanding alternative sources of energy is essential, I was concerned when I learned that area residents who could be impacted by activity at the landfills had not been brought into the conversation about this proposal.

Working as a team with Councilwoman Dina De Giorgio and Commissioner of Solid Waste Igor Sikiric, we emailed, called and visited residents in the area, held a special community information session, and delayed the Town Board hearing on this issue until local residents were better informed.

At the Town Board hearing, many local residents raised valid concerns about the project and, as it turned out, the Town Board voted unanimously not to proceed with it, based in part on the concerns raised by the community.

I share this very recent story with you because I want to assure all Town residents that your concerns will always be listened to by your Town Board and your participation in the process has a significant impact upon the decisions we make.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication of our commissioners and other department heads. The Town of North Hempstead benefits greatly from the professionalism and commitment of our management team. Their work makes it possible for our Town government to function in the outstanding manner that it does and helps us serve you better. I would like all the commissioners and department heads who are here to please stand and be acknowledged.

I also would like to recognize our exceptional unionized work force. When I spoke earlier about the amazing collaborative effort during the recent winter storm events, our CSEA members in the Highway Department were the backbone of those operations. That goes for all 400 plus workers in the Town! I have met with Kevin Williams, President of the CSEA unit in North Hempstead, and I look forward to an excellent working relationship with Kevin, his team, and the CSEA Long Island Region 1 President, Nick LaMorte, who is with us today.

Let's acknowledge and thank all the dedicated employees of our Town!

I also want to thank those who serve on our Town government boards and commissions, including the Board of Zoning Appeals, Community Development Agency Board of Directors, Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, and many others. Your dedication to our Town is much appreciated.

Please thank all the members of our boards and commissions!

Finally, among those new to our Town government this year, I would like to acknowledge Director of Operations Robert Troiano, Town Attorney Liz Botwin, Chief of Staff Cindy Cardinal, Finance Director Aline Khatchadourian, Director of Administrative Affairs Rachel Brinn, Director of Legislative Affairs Nick Guariglia and Director of Constituent Affairs Denise Thompson.

Please welcome them to North Hempstead Town government!

Recently, there was a house fire in Albertson, in a multi-unit complex. Although there was significant damage to the structure, fortunately there were no injuries and everyone got out safe. However, a number of residents were displaced and their lives were greatly disrupted. As we all know, the weather has been bitter cold and conditions were rough that night and into the next day.

In this time of need, I saw first-hand and up close the very best of North Hempstead. Our fire departments and fire companies responded magnificently and saved most of the complex, in zero-degree weather. Injuries – and perhaps worse – were prevented. Your Town officials were on the scene immediately to ensure safety and security. The Albertson Fire Department opened their facility to house and feed those who were displaced and our Public Safety Commissioner, Andy DeMartin, made sure that the Town's Clark Botanic Garden was made available to the residents, as well. Neighbors helped neighbors.

I said in my inaugural speech earlier this month that, as an elected official in our Town for over 20 years, I have come to appreciate the simple fact that when we work together as a community to solve a problem, rise to a challenge, heal a hurt -- we are always more effective when we do it together. Just like that long night in Albertson last week, that is what really makes North Hempstead a special place.

I have often said over the past year that, in my Administration, all our residents and community groups would have a “seat at the table” in Town Hall.

As we work together to make our Town an even more special, more extraordinary place to live, work and raise a family, please always know that you have a seat at our table.

Thank you.

I would now like to open the floor up to questions from our residents.