

Kings Park Civic Association asks New York State Parks Commissioner Carol Ash to *“Keep the Park in Kings Park”*

Kings Park Civic Association President, Frank Mercuri, and Environmental Chairman Mike Rosato, met with newly appointed New York State Parks Commissioner, Carol Ash, on Thursday May 3rd 2007. Their meeting focused on the importance of upholding the decision to dedicate the remaining 368 acres of the former King Park Psychiatric Center property as state parkland. All agreed that the creation of parkland on this site dramatically increases the amount of contiguous open space in the area to approximately 1,800 acres. It also protects the fragile Long Island Sound and Nissequogue River corridor from over development and pollution, provides an abundance of recreational opportunities for the public, protects and improves wildlife habitat and secures additional tax revenue for our schools. Commissioner Ash stated that she currently has a team investigating the entire site to help determine the total remediation costs. After this study is completed, Ms. Ash would like to hold a community meeting to discuss all available options for the property and to decide on the best path forward.



*Photo of New York State
Parks Commissioner Carol Ash*

Frank and Mike also spoke with the Commissioner about the possibility of the state acquiring the 50 acre St. Johnland woodlands site. This property is adjacent to the new park on the south side of Sunken Meadow Road. St. Johnland wants to build a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) on the site. This development would consist of more than 200 units of housing and other supporting facilities. Many of the local civic groups and State Senator Flanagan have repeatedly asked St. Johnland to consider selling this pristine property to the state. The state would then give a portion of the former KPPC site, which is in need of remediation, to St. Johnland for development of their CCRC pending town approval. So far St Johnland has been unwilling to negotiate with the community or the state. Commissioner Ash is so enthusiastic about the state acquiring this property, she promised to call St. Johnland personally to help make this concept come to fruition. It was also made known to the Commissioner that there are concerns about this proposed development impacting town and community services regardless of location.

Frank and Mike both believe Commissioner Ash is sincerely committed to implementing the very best strategy for expanding and improving our state parkland in Kings Park. They look forward to working with the Commissioner and hope to put the \$25 million in cleanup funds, secured by Senator Flanagan, to good use immediately. The Kings Park Civic Association will continue to work hard with all of our elected officials and the community to secure the additional funds needed to help create an active and picturesque park which all New Yorkers will value and be proud of today and for future generations to come.