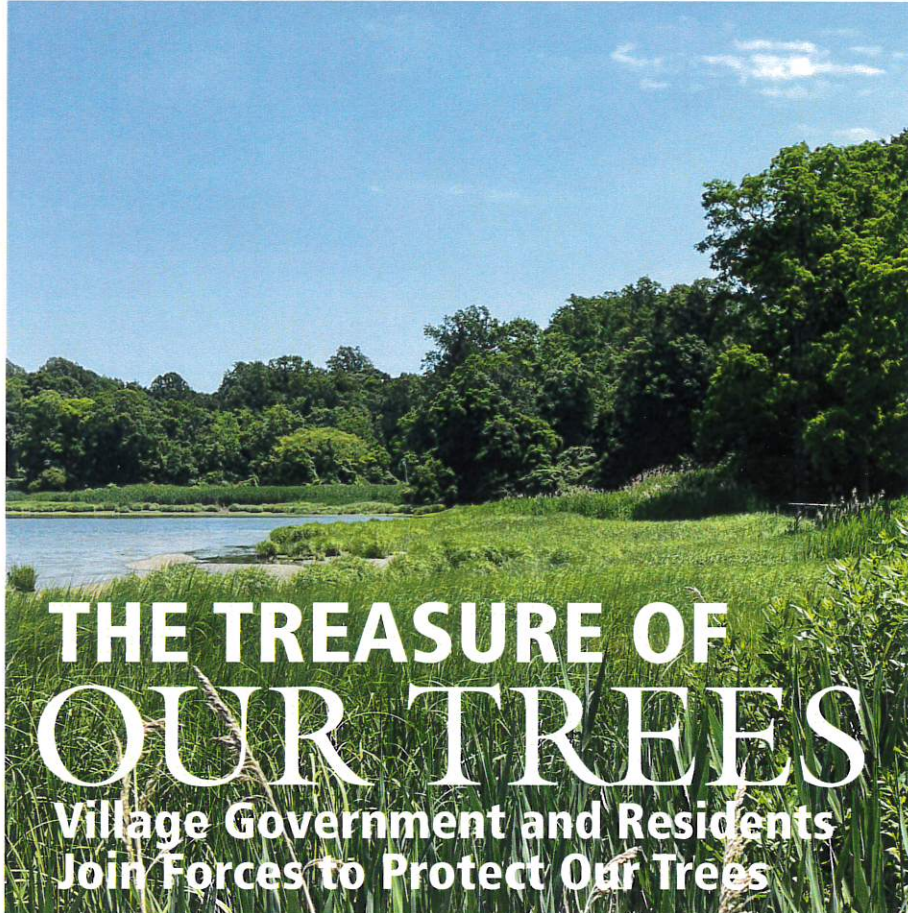


SUMMER | 2024

HARBOR VIEWS

VILLAGE OF HEAD OF THE HARBOR, ST. JAMES, NEW YORK



Looking out across our harbor the green skyline really stands out. All those trees! Most residents would not suspect that the Village is facing a real crisis of tree loss.

The culprit is not a deadly insect or disease. Property owners are clearing healthy trees, as well as underbrush, at such an alarming rate that Head of the Harbor Village governance is taking steps to ensure this unfortunate trend subsides.

There has long been a Tree Code in the village with permits required for major tree removal. Unfortunately, the complexity of the code made it hard for residents to understand and as a result, comply. Enforcement also lagged. The new administration is making tree preservation and code enforcement a priority.

In May, Mayor Utevsy confirmed the appointment of a Tree Board, a commission of residents tasked with safeguarding our trees. They have been busy. While they recently hosted a well-attended Arbor Day event at Avalon most of

(continues on page 2)

FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Neighbors

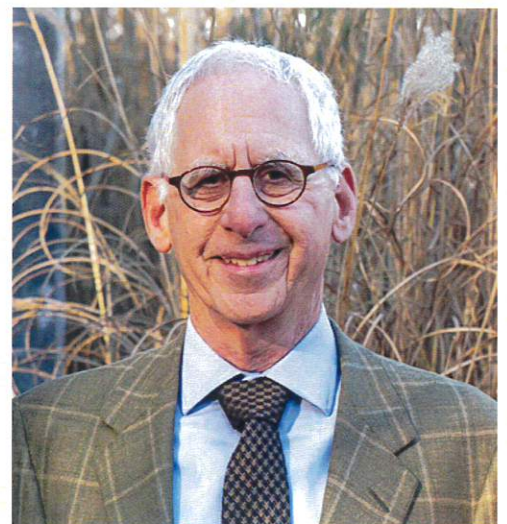
It has been almost three months since I was sworn in as Village Mayor. In that time, I have tried to meet many of the residents whom Lisa Davidson and I did not meet during our election campaign, and to hear about issues of concern to all of you.

We have a wonderful Village, full of beautiful landscapes and historic homes, and I hope to make it even better for you. Here are some of my priorities:

■ We have begun to restore access to Stony Brook Harbor by clearing the Shep Jones Lane extension of undergrowth and fallen trees. We are exploring re-opening access along the other Village roads. There are engineering issues that need to be resolved, as well as consultations with adjoining property owners.

■ We have agreed to participate, as a Village, with Nissequogue Village in the annual Harbor Day celebration. It is scheduled for September 7, 2024.

(Continues on page 3)





CALCULATING Your Protected Buffer Zone

Per Village code the protected zone or buffer on every property is to remain natural **AND UNCLEARED.**

Every property in Head of the Harbor is subject to a protected area or buffer zone. Along the street it is 40' in depth. Around the sides and back of the property it is 25' in depth. To calculate your Protected Area start at the street. From the street, factor 15 feet in (towards your property) as the Village's right of way. This should give you your approximate property line. From the property line, inward to a depth of another 25' (40' total) is the protected area. The protected area extends around the entire property, front, back and sides and is to remain natural and uncleared.

UPCOMING WORKSHOP:

September is "restore the buffer zone" month. This Fall Trustee Ogden and the Tree Board will host a free workshop for Village residents with tips and guidance on buffer restoration, native plants and those that are deer resistant. Details to be announced. ■

ARBOR DAY *continued from page 1*

their work has focused on policy. The Tree Board is responsible for the Village's new Tree Code. And they are crafting a new, simplified application for removing a small number of trees from a property.

"The Tree Code was rewritten to make it much easier to understand," says Trustee Judith Ogden, who has been instrumental in establishing and guiding the new Tree Board. "We really wanted to make it easy for residents to follow the code so that our Village can continue to protect our trees and the buffer zone (protected area)."

Trees are instrumental in protecting Stony Brook Harbor from pollutants from storm water runoff and by reducing erosion. They are also an integral part of the wildlife ecosystem. Trees provide shelter and habitat for birds. The undergrowth is home to the smaller animals that provide sustenance for the raptors. It is imperative for people to understand that when they clear trees or underbrush, they are triggering a domino effect of bad outcomes. Everything is interdependent.

Some Village residents have noticed the inordinate number of trees being cleared and are taking their own steps to help. Olga Navia, has made a pact with her husband about the trees on their Hitherbrook property, "If we have to remove one tree, for whatever reason, I insist that we replant two," she says. "The thought is that we are not just replacing what we have taken but are contributing to improve our collective space."

The community spirit of Ms. Navia is a great example for us all. While our Tree Code is Village policy, ensuring that we have a thriving tree cover for years to come is every resident's responsibility. ■

Trees are instrumental in protecting Stony Brook Harbor from pollutants from storm water runoff and by reducing erosion.

UPDATE!

ACCESS TO PUBLIC ACCESS

FROM THE MAYOR

Continued from page 1

■ Drainage and runoff issues are of major concern to many of us. I have worked closely with Highway Commissioner Judy Ogden and Highway Superintendent Frank Prinzevalli to insure that existing drains are cleared, and new drains are installed where needed. We have already seen noticeable improvement in many areas, and more work is underway.

■ The newly formed Village Tree Board has just begun to work on its mission, which includes educating residents about the need for tree maintenance and for green (natural) buffer zones in front of properties. These plantings absorb much more rainfall than a grass lawn, and they are essential elements of our runoff prevention program.

■ I have heard complaints that the Building Department is overwhelmed with applications and other requests. I am hoping to beef up this Department so that all requests can be handled in a timely manner.

I hope that many of you will attend our regular Trustee meetings, to learn about our progress and provide us with your thoughts. The Public Meetings are generally held on the third Wednesday of each month, and Public comments are welcome. There are also Trustee work sessions that are open to the public, generally on the first Wednesday of each month. If you cannot attend meetings, you can check our website for important information.

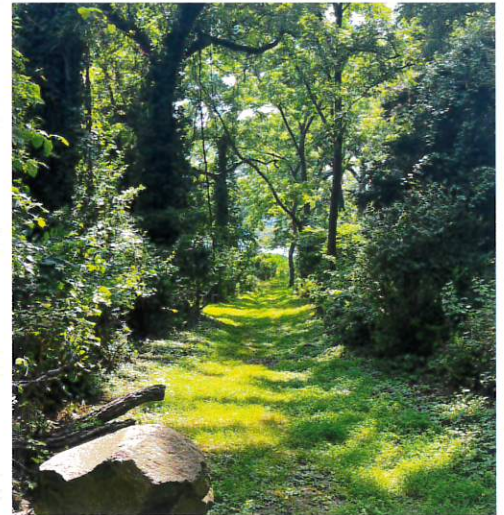
Yours,

MICHAEL UTEVSKY, MAYOR

GOOD NEWS for walkers, kayakers and friends who like to fish! The new administration is happy to report that Shep Jones Extension is being cleared of overgrown vegetation and the boulders at Hitherbrook Extension are being reduced in number and relocated. Residents will soon be able to walk along the paths to the shore. But wear your mud shoes. The trails get very muddy at the water's edge.

Officially, the Village of Head of the Harbor has three dedicated public access points to the harbor; Thompson Lane, Hitherbrook Extension, and Shep Jones Lane Extension. Over the years each has fallen into disrepair. Then, three years ago, boulders were placed at the entrance to Hitherbrook giving the false impression that the road was closed. To remediate the situation, Mayor Utevsky and Deputy Mayor Davidson

explored all three access points with Village Engineer Dan Falasco. As both Thompson Lane and Hitherbrook require some repairs, the DEC, our Police Chief and neighboring residents will be consulted before next steps are taken. ■



UPDATE! The excitement builds! After months of watching the progress of the much-anticipated Avalon Underpass on Harbor Road, the nature preserve is happy to report construction is in its final phase. "We are slightly behind schedule due to weather through the winter, but we hope to be close to completion by the Fall," says Katharine Griffiths, Avalon's Executive Director. The underpass was designed to allow visitors safe access between the existing preserve and Shore Farm which was more recently acquired. Upon completion, "visitors will see the same architectural elements that are used throughout the preserve which includes granite stonework and bluestone steps. It will be planted with all native plants and trees." The last detail of the project is that Harbor Road will be repaved from Bacon Road to the Grist Mill. Residents interested in learning more about Avalon or their weekend farmstand at Birdfoot Farm can go to:

FACEBOOK: [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BIRDSFOOTFARM/](https://www.facebook.com/birdsfootfarm/)

INSTAGRAM: [HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/BIRDSFOOTFARM/](https://www.instagram.com/birdsfootfarm/)

CALENDAR

PRSRT STD
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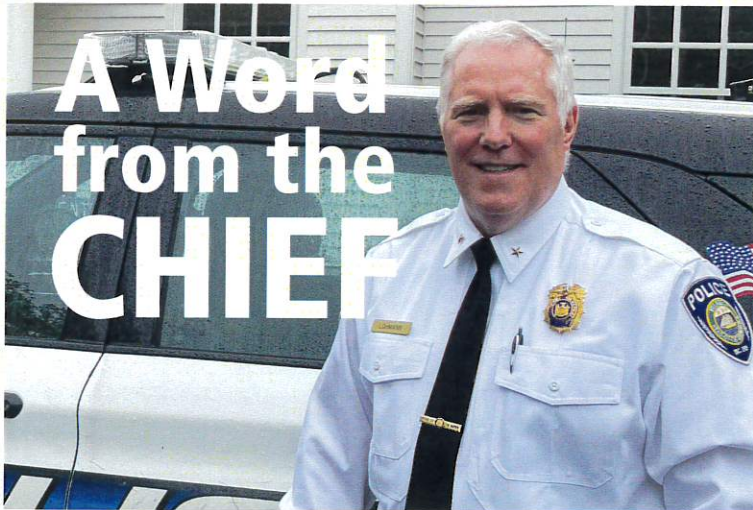
**VILLAGE OF
HEAD OF HARBOR**
500 North Country Road
Saint James, NY 11780
631.584.5550
headoftheharborny.gov

PUBLIC ADVISORY:

SATURDAY, JULY 14TH
Huntington Bicycle Club Race
runs through the Village

SEPTEMBER 7
Harbor Day

OCTOBER IS
“Leave the Leaves” month:
Leaves create a natural mulch
that helps to
suppress weeds while
fertilizing the soil
as it breaks down.



Feel free to brag. Our Village Police Department has a new, top of the line Ford “Police Interceptor” Explorer SUV. It boasts a fuel efficient Turbocharged 300 horsepower engine, is equipped with a “Mobil Data Terminal” (a fancy name for a fancy computer) with direct links to NYS DMV and other unique data bases, and all the multi-band communication systems you’d expect. Residents will be happy to know it also carries a cardiac defibrillator and medical grade oxygen tank. While there’s no denying the new patrol vehicle is super-cool, we can also be proud of our exceptional police force. These officers help keep our village crime-free and that is definitely something about which we can brag. ■

