



# *Town of Huntington*

... News Release From The Town of Huntington ...

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Public Information Office ♦ Supervisor's Office ♦ 100 Main Street ♦ Huntington, NY 11743-6991

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Contact: Lauren Lembo  
(631) 351-3349  
[llembo@huntingtonny.gov](mailto:llembo@huntingtonny.gov)

## **Lupinacci Outlines State of the Town of Huntington and Plans for 2020**

Huntington – Supervisor Chad A. Lupinacci released a statement on the state of the Town of Huntington, his administration's accomplishments thus far and plans for the new year:

"We are entering the third year of my administration as Supervisor and the new Town Board, which took effect with its current membership in January 2018. We are continuing to move the Town in the new direction we promised, underway for the past 24 months.

"We've enacted term limits for all Town elected officials and implemented ethics reforms to ensure an honest Town government that answers to the people it serves. We increased the independence of the Ethics Board from Town leadership by requiring the Ethics Board to elect a Chairperson, rather have the Town Board appoint one. We've also strengthened the Town's Ethics Code and financial disclosure requirements for Town officials.

"We have a more open, accessible, transparent government. We added evening meetings to the Town Board schedule, doing both day and evening meetings, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate. We go above and beyond notification requirements, publishing every proposed Town Board public hearing to all media outlets, the Town website, and our TV and social media channels. Our goal is to have an active, participatory form of local government, where the people who we serve have an active voice in what happens in their Town, and I think that is something we achieved early on. We increased transparency by requiring applicants seeking zone changes to notify affected residents of a public hearing in an envelope clearly marked "Required Notification Regarding Proposed Zone Change" on the front of the envelope.

“We also publicize information beyond what is required when there is a project with significant community interest that may not be in front of the Town Board. While the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) operate independently of the Town Board, their decisions sometimes have as much impact as Town Board decisions.

“All Town Board, Planning Board and ZBA meeting agendas are published online, accessible to the public prior to the meeting, and all of these meetings can be watched live or replayed in full on our government access TV channels (Optimum 18, FIOS 38) and at [HuntingtonNY.gov](http://HuntingtonNY.gov). You can also see recaps of each Town Board meeting in article format online as well as view the adopted meeting agenda, which shows how each board member voted on every resolution on the agenda. I record a video recap of Town Board meeting highlights, which airs on TV, our website and the Town’s social media channels. We are also out there listening and using digital media to respond to community concerns and we have received positive feedback from residents who are engaged with the process.

“We’ve focused on improving the quality of life for all residents and making it easier to do business in the Town of Huntington. We’ve cut red tape to streamline services, reduced the burden on the taxpayer, and taken advantage of shared services so that taxpayers aren’t shouldering the ever-increasing cost of providing services due to unfunded mandates and rising costs of doing business.

“Improvements to operational efficiency include adding a same-day permit process for swimming pools and demolitions, removing the public hearing process for installing egress windows to improve fire safety, and automatically rescheduling hearings from a cancelled ZBA meeting to the next regularly scheduled meeting to avoid duplicating the costs of advertising.

“A major accomplishment streamlined the research process for land-use professionals by integrating our Geographic Information System (GIS) with the County Clerk’s office to provide access to both the Town’s land data and Suffolk County deeds, easements, and other land filings all in one place online. We’re also in the process of implementing technology that will improve operational productivity, efficiency and transparency, integrating data across the Town’s GIS, Building Department, Code Enforcement, Assessor, and other departments.

“In order to keep generations of families together on Long Island, the availability of affordable housing and the ability to live affordably are key. The Town’s greatest role in the creation of affordable housing is one of a facilitator. As we assess our options to increase the availability of affordable housing, we need to consider alternatives to the options that would add to an unsustainable burden on our infrastructure and find creative ways to tap into our existing housing supply to fulfill the housing needs for those who feel they can no longer afford to live on Long Island.

“In 2019, we made sweeping changes to the Town’s accessory apartment code designed to make living in the Town of Huntington more affordable without having to build new housing.

“The most significant accessory apartment code change we made gives a property owner the choice of living in the accessory apartment unit of their primary residence and renting out the main living space of their home; this will help offset the cost of living for many residents. We also made changes helping more homeowners qualify for an accessory apartment on their property. These measures are good for property rights, families just starting out and those on fixed incomes; it opens up the affordable apartment rental supply, as accessory apartments tend to be offered at lower prices than the apartments created as part of new construction.

“In 2019, our Harbormaster’s office gained an additional part-time Bay Constable on duty during day shifts, which allows the Town to have an additional patrol boat out on the water, we saw the deployment of LED buoys for navigational safety, and invested heavily in the Town’s deteriorating facilities at Mill Dam Marina. Improvements include a new larger head float for safe maneuvering around the gangway, new configurations for docking for those who struggle physically, the re-decking of all docks at Mill Dam Marina is complete as of January 2020 and the bulkhead is currently being repaired. There are many more Maritime improvements and upgrades on the way. A new emergency response vessel, procured with the help of a \$330,000 grant from FEMA, was delivered in December. A new pump-out boat, which will help keep our waterways clean, is in production thanks in part to grant funding from the New York State Clean Vessel Assistance Program.

“In the past, taxpayers were on the hook for cleanup costs of wrecked and abandoned boats in our waterways, a cost now covered by the increased insurance requirements and the boat owners themselves, who were difficult to track down prior to implementing the mooring permit database, which aided in the removal of 12 boats from the harbor this season; in the past, these boats would have posed a threat to our waterways and taxpayers shouldered the cleanup costs for wreckages resulting from these hazards.

“I believe our biggest achievement is continuing to maintain our AAA credit rating and providing existing levels of service to all residents, especially for our seniors and our youth, considering a mandated contractual collective bargaining salary increase for all union employees, while also meeting New York State Tax Cap requirements. I’m also particularly proud that the Town is finally realizing the revitalization of Huntington Station, making significant long-overdue improvements to the infrastructure at our waterfront facilities, and we are in the process of achieving Certified AGZA Green Zone status at Heckscher Park and Huntington Town Hall, a giant leap forward in the realm of environmental protection.

“Building upon that, I’m enthusiastic about what we have on the horizon for 2020.

“We will continue taking steps to alleviate the long-time parking congestion issue in downtown Huntington Village, building upon the improvements made over the past year, including the acquisition of property to build a new parking lot, adding 71 new parking spaces this summer when the temperatures are appropriate for paving, improved policing of parking violations and enforcement of handicap parking, increasing parking space turnover, and simplifying and streamlining the parking experience, including the launch of the Passport Parking app in late

2019. We will also determine whether the long-proposed parking structure is still feasible in terms of the impact on parking and the cost to taxpayers.

“Another major initiative that will significantly impact parking and quality of life is reforming the C6 zoning code, based on the feedback we have received, to ensure appropriate future development and maintaining the suburban charm of our historic downtown.

“We will continue to revitalize Huntington Station, including progress on building a sewer infrastructure south of the train station to promote economic development, and we are looking at all levels of government to help source funding, including County, State, and Federal (EPA) branches. We expect to move forward on the Town’s second spray park at Manor Field Park and break ground on the James D. Conte Community Center to offer services for young people, senior citizens and veterans.

“We are also moving forward with the new Town Court, the first of its kind on Long Island and only the third in New York State, which will help us streamline enforcement of the Town code to improve quality of life for residents while addressing code violations more quickly and proactively.

“The establishment of this Town Court, officially named the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication by the enabling state law, is one of the most significant changes to the Town Code in decades. My involvement in its creation is unique in that not only did I sponsor the enabling legislation during my time in the New York State Assembly but I also sponsored the resolution establishing this court as Town Supervisor.

“There are many benefits for our residents and taxpayers with the establishment of this new Town Court, which we expect to be operational by the spring. The Bureau provides for more local control over the enforcement of code violations, cuts red tape and costs in adjudicating violations, and maintains the privacy of residents and individuals who report violations, which is not the case under current state law.”

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