



## **11th Annual Smart Growth Awards showcase Long Island's leadership and progress**

July 30, 2012 - Spotlights

The 11th Annual Smart Growth Awards took place on Friday, June 15th from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Huntington Hilton. The event featured over 600 attendees from diverse sectors, eleven Award presentations, special guest speakers and Long Island Business News publisher John Kominicki as emcee. This year's luncheon demonstrated the progress that the region has made over the last year for the Smart Growth movement.

The event began with the singing of the National Anthem by Shardae Hale of the Cornerstone Church of God in Christ and an opening prayer by Reverend Jeffrey Saunders of Feed My Sheep Missionary Baptist Church. John Kominicki of Long Island Business News introduced each of the honorees, each of whom had a video clip played and were given the opportunity to come on stage for a short acceptance speech. This year's honorees were: Lieutenant governor Robert Duffy for the NYS Regional Economic Development Councils; NYS senator Charles Fuschillo and Sandi Vega for the NYS Complete Streets Law; Dolores Thompson of the Huntington Station Enrichment Center; mayor Jean Celender of the Village of Great Neck Plaza, for a transit-oriented development zoning code; David Schieren of EmPower Solar; Metro 303 in Hempstead by Mill Creek Residential Trust; The Riverwalk in Patchogue by GRB Development Corp.; Water Mill Station by Koral Bros.; The Paramount in Huntington; Bartone Hotel and Mixed-Use in Farmingdale by Bartone Properties and BWC Realty Partners; and the Elmont Mixed-Use Zoning District in the town of Hempstead.

The Smart Growth Awards honor individuals and organizations taking leadership in advancing Smart Growth projects, policies, regulations and initiatives. The event highlights the efforts of leaders in government, private sector, and the community that exemplify Smart Growth principles in such areas as transportation, mix of land uses, housing options, open space preservation, clean energy, compact design, revitalization, sense of place, and planning.

Smart Growth favors mixed-use, mixed-income development that is attractive and strategically designed to enhance the greater area. Smart Growth reduces traffic by making transit, walking, and biking realistic and pleasant options, thereby contributing to community health, safety, and vitality. It embraces clean energy and sustainability by design. It focuses on infill, redevelopment, and open space preservation in order to create more livable places conducive to a variety of transit options.

The award for Housing Choices went to The Riverwalk in the Village of Patchogue, by GRB Development Inc. The Riverwalk is a housing development built on a former industrial facility. It features 163 townhouses and condominiums in 18 buildings located along West Avenue adjacent to the riverfront. It features a public walkway and open space. The Riverwalk is located about half a block away from the Patchogue Long Island Railroad station and conveniently located near shops, restaurants, and the performing arts theater on Main Street. The project will provide an economic

boost for the business in the Village and encourage pedestrian traffic. The Riverwalk is a great example of the kind of walkable, transit-oriented development which is needed in Long Island.

Town of Brookhaven Councilwoman Connie Kepert introduced the award, which was accepted by GRB Development's Mike Kelly with Sean Rose, as well as Village of Patchogue Mayor Paul Pontieri. Kepert noted that this is an important development because it transformed a warehouse into a residential community, connects residents to its history, and creates a walkable community.

Mayor Jean Celender of the Village of Great Neck Plaza was honored in the Transportation Choices category for the Village's new Transit-Oriented Development Zoning for the 'B' Business District. This new zoning code aims to revitalize the Great Neck downtown area through new affordable housing, parking, and infill development. The plan encourages mixed-use development, while building upon a walkable, transit-centered community, in order to reduce sprawl and spark revival. Mayor Celender accepted the award along with the Village Trustees.

The Paramount was honored for Creating Great Places. The brand new theater, located in the heart of Huntington Village, opened in September 2011, and already attracts major national acts such as Elvis Costello, B.B. King, Willie Nelson, The Pixies, Goo Goo Dolls, and many more, bringing upwards of 5,000 visitors to the Village each week. The venue is conveniently located near the LIRR Station in Huntington along with a free shuttle which takes you right to the theater. The Paramount has played an important economic role for local businesses and has provided the town with a cultural and artistic space which will give new life to the downtown area. Accepting the award were the 4 theater owners, Dom Catoggio, Jim Condron, Brian Doyle and Stephen Ubertini, along with Neal Hoffman of Hoffman Grayson Architects.

The Farmingdale Hotel and Mixed Use development by Bartone Properties and BWC Realty Partners was awarded in the Revitalizing Communities category for the Bartone Plaza project, which incorporates various uses on derelict properties adjacent to the Farmingdale Long Island Rail Road station. The hotel will not include a bar or restaurant in order to encourage guests to explore downtown, and the mixed-use component will include 115 apartments, retail space, and underground parking to promote community growth. Anthony Bartone accepted the award along with Village of Farmingdale Mayor Ralph Ekstrand, who noted that this is the first of several developments that are slated to come to the Village under the new zoning code, and the cornerstone to bringing youth back to the community.

The Elmont Corridor Plan in the Town of Hempstead was recognized in the Certainty and Predictability category for the Hempstead Turnpike-Elmont Mixed-Use Zoning District. The zoning code has been a collaborative effort between residents, business owners, and the Town of Hempstead and Nassau County. The plan recognizes the need for downtown revitalization and will lead the way for progress in the Elmont community while ensuring more sustainable land use decisions town-wide. Notably, the Neighborhood Center section of the plan will enable mixed-use development with residences built above stores. The plan also includes design guidelines along with an architectural review board.

The Neighborhood Center sub-district will focus around "Community Corners," the area near the intersection of Hempstead Turnpike and Elmont Road. This area allows for ample mixed-use development, and the goal is to create a pedestrian-friendly, downtown area for Elmont. In addition to existing business uses, Community Corners will allow for larger and smaller shops, offices, restaurants, and additional housing choices for a range of household types, family sizes and incomes. Building height limits will be increased from two to four stories and up to 60 feet tall,

allowing for additional density. A new grocery store is also planned for the area. Town of Hempstead Supervisor Kate Murray accepted the award with Councilman Ed Ambrosino. Murray noted that Hempstead Turnpike needs to be friendly and hospitable to residents, and this rezoning will go a long way to making that a reality.

Mill Creek Residential Trust was awarded in the Housing Choices category for their work on the Metro 303 development, a 166-unit luxury apartment in the Village of Hempstead. The new housing provides an opportunity to attract young professionals to the area, and stays true to Mill Creek's vision of creating apartment homes that enhance and compliment local communities. Metro 303 offers an immediate benefit to the community within the broader efforts to revitalize the Hempstead downtown. Accepting the award was Mill Creek Residential Trust's Maria Rigopoulos.

Water Mill Station by Koral Bros, Inc. was honored in the Compact Design category for their efforts to transform vacant land in downtown Water Mill into upscale office condominiums. The project is located on a long, narrow strip of land which is an infill site within easy walking distance to the historic Water Mill business district and next to the train tracks. It represents the ideal balance between preserving natural East End beauty and boosting up a small downtown business district. Bill Koral of Koral Bros. and Alex Latham of ADL III Architecture accepted the award.

EmPower Solar was recognized in the Clean Energy category for the company's work building solar on homes, businesses, municipal properties, industrial sites, parking lots, and more. CEO and green entrepreneur David Schieren has a true vision for a clean energy future on Long Island. The company promotes the idea that solar energy improves the public health by reducing dependence on fossil fuels. EmPower solar is paving the way to a realistic future of clean, renewable energy on Long Island. David Schieren along with the whole EmPower team accepted the award.

Dolores 'Dee' Thompson of the Huntington Station Enrichment Center was awarded for Community Participation. For decades, Thompson has been working towards revitalizing the Huntington Station community while building leadership programs. After witnessing the decline of the Huntington Station community, Thompson founded the Huntington Station Enrichment Center in 1997 which provides training in computer skills, entrepreneurship, English as a second language, job placement, senior services, and youth programs and activities. Thompson is responsible for many beneficial community programs over the years and continues to fight tirelessly for Huntington Station's revitalization.

Huntington Station was once a thriving downtown center, but when a 1962 urban renewal project failed to move beyond demolishing buildings, the neighborhood began to decline and soon become a sea of parking lots. Today, the community is known as a crime-laden area in desperate need of revitalization. Thompson remembers the days when Huntington Station was in better shape and has a vision for revitalization that will bring the community back to where it once was. The primary root of the community's problems, she has said, is the lack of new stores and housing. New construction would replace previously lost jobs and provide homes for a new generation.

Thompson was introduced by Town of Huntington Supervisor Frank Petrone.

This year's walkability award went to New York State Senator Charles Fuschillo and Sandi Vega for their work in passing the Complete Streets law. The bill, which amends the state highway law, requires that all roads receiving state and federal funding recognize all users of the road—including cyclists, pedestrians, of all ages and abilities, and public transportation

vehicles in the design and construction process. Senator Fuschillo introduced the Complete Streets legislation in the Senate and served as one of its strongest elected supporters. The legislation moved forward due to the tireless efforts of Vega, a strong advocate for safer streets and roads who garnered local support and commitment. Sandi Vega's 14 year old daughter, Brittany, lost her life to a driver while walking to school one morning in 2010. This tragedy led Sandi to take action and fight for safer streets. Vega's interest in safe streets is driven by her hope that no one else will have to suffer a similar loss; that the streets and roads across Long Island communities will be safe for all potential road users.

Vega was introduced by Lavena Sipes, who shares the tragedy of having lost her daughter, Courtney Sipes, in a hit and run accident in November 2009 on Main Street in Smithtown. Sipes' comments were chilling, and when Ms. Vega finally took to the podium, the audience erupted in applause, a standing ovation and many in tears.

Senator Fuschillo was also in attendance to receive the award. Following the award presentations, the Senator was brought up to give a quick promotion for the Commuter Transit Benefits bill that is currently moving through the NYS Legislature. This bill, which passed the Senate with Senator Fuschillo's sponsorship, will ensure that transit commuters in New York receive an existing tax benefit that the federal government cut this year.

This year's Regional Leadership award went to New York State Lieutenant Governor Robert Duffy, who was recognized for his work as chair of the NYS Regional Economic Development Councils. The Councils have resulted in \$785.5 million worth of new funding for many important downtown revitalization projects, including Wyandanch Rising, the Ronkonkoma Hub, sewers for the Village of Hempstead, infrastructure for Heartland Town Square and many others.

Accepting the award on behalf of Duffy was Scott Martella, Suffolk representative for the Office of Governor Andrew Cuomo. Martella presented Vision's Eric Alexander with a letter penned by Duffy, explaining his gratitude for receiving the award. Martella spoke to the audience and really drove the importance of the Councils' work toward rebuilding Long Island and making it a better place to live and work

Shown (from left) are: Ron Stein - Vision Long Island, Lavena Sipes - Courtney Sipes Memorial Foundation, Sandi Vega, NYS Senator Chuck Fuschillo, Eric Alexander - Vision Long Island

Shown (from left) are: Amanda Rush - National Society of Collegiate Scholars - Dowling Chapter President, Danielle Cirimello - Dowling Student Government Association President, Dr. Nathalia Rogers - American Communities Institute at Dowling College, Kimberley Thorne - American Communities Institute at Dowling College, Dr. Donald DiMarzio, Northrop Grumman, Dr. Elana Zolfo - Interim Provost of Dowling

Shown (from left) are: Brookhaven Town Councilwoman Connie Kepert, Tom Talbot - Middle Island Civic Association, Adrienne Esposito, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, David Berg - American Planning Association LI Chapter, Elizabeth Krolik - Office of Councilwoman Connie Kepert,

Neal Lewis - Sustainability Institute at Molloy College

Shown (from left) are: Ron Stein - Vision Long Island, Huntington Town Councilwoman Susan Berland, Huntington Town Supervisor Frank Petrone, Dolores Thompson - Huntington Station Enrichment Center, Eric Alexander - Vision Long Island

Shown (from left) are: Keith Robertson - Bridgehampton National Bank, John Pitschi - Koral Bros, Ashley Koral - Koral Bros, Bill Koral - Koral Bros, Alex Latham - ADL III Architecture, Rich Hale - Koral Bros, Kyle Collins - KPC Planning, Seamus Doyle - Bridgehampton National Bank

Shown (from left) are: Patchogue Mayor Paul Pontieri, Mike Kelly - GRB Development, Mark Rose - GRB Development, Ron Stein - Vision Long Island, Sean Rose - GRB Development, Patchogue Village Trustee Tom Ferb, Eric Alexander - Vision Long Island

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540