

# Islip Town Environmental Council 2021 Annual Report

for the Town of Islip Supervisor and Board Members

Presented at the April 20, 2021 Town Board Meeting:

## Introduction:

ITEC was created nearly 50 years ago to advise the Town Board on all matters affecting the preservation, development and use of the natural and man-made environment within the Town of Islip. We are committed to this role, which has never been more important than it is today as we are faced with a climate crisis that threatens the very existence of our communities and our way of life.

In our work for the Town, we meet monthly to review research, investigate environmental issues and interview experts. We report our findings annually and provide sound advice to the Board. We also engage with local youth groups and environmental organizations. We are developing an environmental public relations campaign for the TOI e-newsletter that will help residents save money while saving the earth. We also host community outreach events throughout the year.

## Commendations:

First, we would like to applaud the Supervisor and Town Board for recent actions they have taken to make our town sustainable, prosperous and resilient. This is evident through the support the town has shown for the newly renovated Great South Bay Shellfish Hatchery as well as participation in Oyster Shell Recovery and Bay Bottom Leasing Programs.

We commend The Town Planning Department for recently (6/2020) creating a detailed town plant list that clearly identifies those native to the area and we encourage the use of native plants whenever possible to increase biodiversity and create a resilient natural community.

We also want to express our enthusiastic support for the work the Department of Environmental Control undertook to join NYSERDA's Clean Energy Community program. Their efforts have already garnered one \$5000 grant and as they continue to take on more High Impact Actions, they will be able to unlock more generous grants of up to \$60,000 to increase our Town's efficiency, resiliency and sustainability.

## Recommendations:

- 1) ITEC alerts the TOI that the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) will change the way we do business in the near future. The CLCPA mandates that 70% of our electricity must come from renewable resources by 2030. And by 2050 the greenhouse gas emissions of our state must be reduced by 85%, and the economy must be carbon neutral. There will be major investments in public transportation and charging stations for electric vehicles. In addition, 35% of the benefits of clean en-

ergy and efficiency funding must go to disadvantaged communities. ITEC encourages the town to take advantage of these and all opportunities that the CLCPA will bring to our community.

- 2) To help the TOI prepare for the climate threats facing its residents (which include sea level rise, fair-weather flooding, worsening health conditions, increasing water temperatures in the Great South Bay, and extreme weather events), ITEC recommends that the Town Board pass a Resolution to form a Climate Smart Community Task Force. This ‘green team’, would include representatives from the local government (either staff or elected official) and informed community members. *The Task Force would assist the Town in procuring financial and technical resources that will help us respond to these challenges.*
- 3) Sea level rise is the most important environmental challenge facing the future of our Town and it is already threatening some of our most valuable residential and commercial properties. We understand that a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan was initiated to address critical waterfront issues and we encourage the town to complete the plan taking into consideration the sea level rise projections established by the NYS Community Risk and Resilience Act Part 490.
- 4) In early 2012 the Department of Planning and Development updated the town’s Comprehensive Plan. One of the 7 goals in this plan is to “protect the natural resources and environment of Islip”. In line with this goal , we recommend that the TOI join in an effort to first identify and then reduce the percent of hardened shorelines along our coastal waterways. Hardened shorelines exacerbate the problems of sea level rise by scouring the seaward sediment along bulkheads.
- 5) ITEC is here to help the Town with these recommended actions and can serve as a resource for ways to mitigate the increasing impacts of sea level rise and a changing climate. (For example ITEC recommends that the TOI investigate methods described in the following handbook: [https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/resilience/Model\\_Local\\_Laws\\_to\\_Increase\\_Resilience.pdf](https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/resilience/Model_Local_Laws_to_Increase_Resilience.pdf) . Here is a link to the NOAA sea level rise viewer. <https://coast.noaa.gov/slr/> and mapping tool identifier <https://sealevel.climate-central.org/matrix/>)
- 6) Finally, ITEC has only five active members. We strongly recommend that our membership be increased to our full contingent of nine so we can better help the town grapple with the difficult and critical environmental issues before us.

**ITEC Board Members:**

Nancy Manfredonia, Chairperson

Ginny Fields

Victor C. Gremler

Maureen Dunn

Stephen Plotke - Student Member