

FROM LIBN.COM

# Bill pitched to speed building permits in Nassau

Republican legislators in Nassau County have filed a bill aimed at speeding up the process of approving building and curb-cut permits.

Prompted by complaints from residents and developers about the often lengthy approvals process, the bill would set a 30-day time limit for the county's Department of Public Works to report to the county Planning Commission and applicable municipality with approval, disapproval or approval subject to stated conditions.

Under the proposed legislation, sponsored by Deputy Presiding Officer Howard Kopel, county fees associated with the building permit application will be reduced by 25 percent and a further 25 percent every 10 business days thereafter that the report is late.

If fees were collected previously, they will be refunded, according to the bill. If the

reductions result in no fees, the application shall be "deemed approved" so long as, at the time of filing, a New York State licensed professional engineer or architect certified that the proposed project plans comply with all applicable rules and regulations.

If the commissioner requests additional information or clarification from the applicant, the initial time period will be extended for the number of business days during which the commissioner is awaiting the additional information.

"Red tape and governmental delays have cost those doing business in the county, jobs and money, and that is unacceptable especially as many residents struggle with the financial impacts brought on by the pandemic," Kopel said in a written statement. "The changes we are proposing will streamline the finalization of building and curb cut permits



and make it easier to get work done in the county. This will cut through the unnecessary red tape that has plagued residents and businesses."

Known as 239f, the application review by the public works department is mandated by the state to ensure stakeholders are protected from adverse impacts of construction and development.

"For years, the 239f process has been a cumbersome hurdle in spurring economic development in Nassau County," says Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island. Strober also serves as co-chair of the county's 239f Blue Ribbon Panel that's been created to examine ways to improve the approvals process.

"County Executive Curran wisely convened a blue ribbon panel to explore how best to make the process quicker and more efficient," Strober said. "Legislator Kopel's bill continues to underscore the need for reform and the panel enthusiastically welcomes suggestions and insight to better the process. In the next few days, the panel will announce its six-month progress report and will reach out to Legislator Kopel regarding his proposal."

— DAVID WINZELBERG

## Trying to ward off a home-health aide shortage

Dana Arnone is trying to address a home-health aide shortage in the time of COVID.

A registered nurse and owner of Reliance Senior Home Care in Massapequa, Arnone said agencies like hers are struggling – even though demand for homecare is up amid the pandemic.

"There are not enough workers," Arnone said.

Reliable transportation challenges factor into the equation, she said. This will worsen as cash-

strapped public transportation systems look to slash bus service, making hard-to-reach areas by mass transit more difficult, she said.

U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer is urging the Senate to vote on "a comprehensive relief bill," adding state and local funds are key for the MTA.

But funding issues aside, Arnone said caregivers and would-be clients don't always feel safe about mass transit travel. She is working on new initiatives to help fill the void.

She launched All About HomeCare, a non-

profit to raise awareness about the growing issue of transportation for caregivers.

"By just offering some means of transportation for the worker, you'd resolve some of their fears of exposure to COVID," Arnone said. "You'd decrease their time riding on a bus. You'd have more consistent care for the patients."

Arnone's agency participated in a pilot program to provide transportation through ride-sharing platforms such as Uber.

Now, Arnone is calling on state lawmakers

to fund the program so that it may continue. She says funding for a full year is about \$1.61 million, estimating that transportation for a healthcare worker is typically \$22 each way.

And she's raising awareness about home health care careers, including through education by providing classes. That way, "we create our own workers" who learn about state and federal protocols so they don't have "fear of being in someone's home."

— ADINA GENN



## Island Harvest Responds to COVID-19

Island Harvest Food Bank is a lifeline for people struggling to put food on their tables during this unprecedented public health crisis, but we need your help.

Your generosity will allow us to continue to provide critical food and support for homebound seniors, veterans, working families, and children.

*And, if you, or someone you know, needs food assistance, or to support our work on Long Island call 631-873-4775 or visit [islandharvest.org](http://islandharvest.org).*

### HOW YOU CAN HELP OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED:

#### MAKE A DONATION

Every \$25 donated will support a family meal kit which provides food for 3-4 days.

#### ENGAGE YOUR EMPLOYER

Matches of employee gifts will make a major impact. Employers can create a custom fundraising page.

#### SPREAD THE WORD

Encourage friends and family to donate and set up your own crowdfunding page.