

ISLIP TOWN

# Rolling up their GREEN sleeves

Student group and agency work together to bolster the environment

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The Islip Town Environmental Council is getting the green light to shift its focus to improving the town's energy sustainability.

The council has recently started looking into ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions at town facilities after decades of concentrating on other eco-friendly measures, chairwoman Nancy Manfredonia said. It is also adding members to its previously undermanned ranks.

"For a small group, we've got our hands full," she said.

The volunteer group, which operates under the town supervisor's office, was created to advise town officials on environmental matters in 1972 after the first Earth Day. Members have sought mainly to improve water quality for the Great South Bay, which will continue to be a top priority, Manfredonia said.

Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter announced at a town board meeting last month that the council "has been reorganized and re-energized" to act on sustainability efforts. She also approved appointing two more members to the council last fall, Manfredonia said.

The council of six is finishing preparing an annual report that will include sustainability recommendations, such as aiming to become a "climate-smart community," a state designation that would make Islip eligible for grants funding sustainability efforts, she said.

Manfredonia attributed the council's new focus to the work of an "impressive" group of high schoolers from Sayville and West Islip. The students of the Suffolk Student Climate Action Committee's Sayville High School board have repeatedly called on Islip officials to set a goal of using only renewable energy sources by 2030. Students also attended the environmen-



Student committee members, from left, Eric Stenzel, Mary Jo Chan, Lilia Bartolotta, Victoria Creviston, Olivia Davidson, Sarah Sciortino and Harrison Bench have made recommendations to town officials.

tal council's March 15 meeting and said they plan to participate in as many future meetings as possible.

"It's good to hear them be so passionate and have so many facts," said Manfredonia, who also works for the nonprofit Central Islip Civic Council. "We've been talking about it for a while, but this prodded us to make it a priority right now."

The students have repeatedly told town officials about their concerns for Islip's future in the face of climate change, citing that the town is behind other ones on Long Island with renewable energy initiatives.

Harrison Bench, the group's 16-year-old president, said town officials have not yet com-

## A sustained effort

The Suffolk Student Climate Action Committee has recommended that Islip Town officials:

- Set a goal of using only renewable energy sources at town facilities by 2030.
- Set aside funding in the town budget for renewable energy projects.
- Hire a staffer to oversee town sustainability efforts.
- Conduct an inventory of how much greenhouse gas the town produces.

recommendations, which include setting aside funding for renewable energy initiatives, such as installing solar panels.

"I, for one, am hopeful we will make progress," the

Sayville student said. "There comes a time when we have to ask ourselves, what more can we do to get them to understand what trouble we're in?"

Town spokeswoman Caroline Smith declined repeated requests for comment and did not make any town officials available for interviews.

The town's energy reduction efforts included replacing streetlights with LED lights, according to a previous news report.

"They care, but we have to push more," committee co-president Olivia Davidson, 17, said.

The students asked anyone who is interested in getting involved on environmental issues to contact the group at [ssclimateaction@gmail.com](mailto:ssclimateaction@gmail.com).

## Around LI

### Hearing on dogs allowed at park

The Town of North Hempstead will hold a public hearing April 17 about allowing residents to bring dogs into Clark Botanic Gardens in Albertson.

The hearing will be at 7 p.m. at Town Hall in Manhasset. If the action is approved, leashed dogs could be brought into the park. Dogs would not be allowed to roam free, town officials said, and they would be allowed in the park only on Wednesdays.

If it's approved, Clark Botanic would join three other town parks that allow leashed dogs: North Hempstead Beach Park, Mary J. Davies Park and Michael J. Tully Park.

Town officials are planning North Hempstead's first dog park at Tully Park. Last month, the town hired a design firm to draw up the plans, and the town hopes to open the dog park by the fall. — **KHRISTOPHER J. BROOKS**

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