



TOWN OF RIVERHEAD NEWS

Office of the Supervisor
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PRESS RELEASE

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PRESS EVENT: 111 East Main Street on February 14, 2020 at 2 p.m.

Town of Riverhead and Long Island Science Center Each Awarded Significant NYS Grants

After being awarded separate grants from Empire State Development, New York State's chief economic development agency, in December 2019, the Town of Riverhead and the Long Island Science Center believe their two adjacent projects in the heart of downtown Riverhead will play significant roles in transforming the riverfront business district. A joint press conference has been scheduled by the Town of Riverhead and the Long Island Science Center with federal, state and county elected officials on February 14, 2020 at 2 p.m. at 111 East Main Street, Riverhead.

The Town of Riverhead was awarded an \$800,000 grant through the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council for a project to create a Town Square consisting of a public gathering space, pedestrian connectivity and open vistas from Main Street to the riverfront. The primary goal of this project is to reorient the pedestrian focus from the traditional Main Street to the Peconic Riverwalk. The Town intends to repurpose some existing town-owned riverfront parking as public gathering spaces, with performance spaces, splash fountains and permeable brick/stone pathways interspersed with rain gardens that behind the new Town Square. These rain/river friendly areas will provide amenities for community members while also helping capture the occasional flooding experienced near the Peconic River. In addition, the site will include interactive environmental learning stations.

Similarly, the Long Island Science Center was awarded a \$775,000 grant through the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to support its expansion to a building adjacent to the proposed Town Square, enabling increased opportunities for families and schools to access its array of educational resources. The Science Center reopened a demonstration space in January of 2019, in Riverhead, after selling their East Main Street, Riverhead location — which marked the beginning of their long-term expansion plan. Plans for the new Long Island

Science Center location include more than 6,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, a new dedicated MakerSpace, and four classrooms. The new exhibition space will incorporate many of the current offerings and expand capacity to also allow for new offerings.

Riverhead Supervisor Yvette Aguiar said following the New York State grant awards, “the Long Island Science Center could have elected to relocate elsewhere in region. However, they made a distinct decision to expand in the heart of Main Street, next to Riverhead Town Square, I want to thank New York State for funding both of these important projects. My office, along with our CDA Director Dawn Thomas, look forward to this collaborative effort.”

"We are pleased to be entering the next stage of the expansion plan that would not be possible without the support of New York State and Empire State Development," Long Island Science Center Board President, Larry Oxman, said. "The new building will allow us to create a truly inspirational exhibition space for visitors to the Science Center, as well as plenty of classroom space to accommodate much larger groups than we can currently host," he said.

"We are going to continue to offer many of the most popular interactive exhibits we currently have including Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, 3D Art and Printing, and Engineering Zone," said Long Island Science Center Executive Director Cailin Kaller. "We are excited to expand to include new interactive spaces including coding and robotics, a citizen science space, electric circuitry, a special space for pre-school exploration, and a large exhibit area dedicated to the important and historic innovation and technology that was created here on Long Island."

“Long Island’s high-tech industry is continuing to grow with new businesses, development projects, and investments supporting innovative ideas, research, and advanced technology,” said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. “As chair of the statewide Regional Economic Development Councils, we want to make sure that students are trained for jobs now and in the future in the STEM fields to help ensure they have the skills they need to secure good jobs and meet businesses’ needs. Funding for the these projects will continue to advance the revitalization of Riverhead’s downtown and allow the Long Island Science Center to accommodate more students — enhancing the educational and visitor experience.”

“This important investment in downtown Riverhead will promote the continued revitalization and economic development of Riverhead’s business district and Long Island,” said Congressman Lee Zeldin. “I look forward to witnessing the Riverhead community capitalize on this investment and flourish under the leadership of Supervisor Aguiar.”

"Downtown Riverhead has made tremendous progress in its revitalization efforts in recent years. This community has a vision for a revitalized downtown and I commend the hard work and planning of all those involved in securing this grant and working to enhance facilities and improve access to the waterfront for all residents and visitors," said Senator Kenneth LaValle.

Assemblyman Anthony H. Palumbo said, “The synergistic combination of the Town Square and the relocation of the Long Island Science Museum have the potential to transform downtown into a thriving regional shopping and recreational destination.”

Assemblyman Thiele said, “The expansion of the Long Island Science Center and the revitalization of Riverhead’s downtown will attract countless new visitors to the area and will have lasting impacts on both the economy and the community. I am so pleased that these two important and complementary projects were chosen for such substantial funding. These economic development grants awarded to the Town of Riverhead and the Long Island Science Center represent a major commitment by the State to improve Riverhead’s economy, and help transform the business district into a booming Town Square.”

Empire State Development Acting Commissioner and President & CEO-Designate Eric Gertler said, “Placemaking is critical to sustainable economic development — and that is exactly what these two projects will do. The Long Island Science Center and Town of Riverhead have shown great foresight in planning these complementary projects, and we look forward to supporting both entities to ensure Riverhead’s revitalization is positioned for success.”

Suffolk County Legislator Al Krupski said, “The potential for meaningful downtown revitalization as a result of the relocation of the Long Island Science Museum on property adjacent to the proposed Town Square on the Peconic Riverfront, and with input from the community, will result in a flourishing downtown business district that will benefit all Suffolk County residents”

Supervisor Aguiar continued, “Unequivocally having other government entities as funding partners will be vital to ensuring that both projects’ full economic development potential comes to fruition. The Town Square will transform the downtown business district into a thriving regional hub that will attract thousands of people to live, work and play here in Riverhead. These two projects will have a synergistic redevelopment effect on Riverhead and the Long Island region.”

Attendees to the press conference are invited for light refreshments at the Long Island Science Center.