

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON

High Hopes For Low Pollution

Water Quality Protection Committee mulls county grants; outlines goals

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The Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Committee is trying to keep its head above water, battling trying weather conditions as it tries to keep plans for environmental upgrades on track.

On Tuesday, committee members put their heads together to brainstorm ways to push along projects including upgrades to the Northport Sewer Treatment Plant and dredging in Northport Harbor.

The Village of Northport has received \$485,754 in reimbursements for the \$9.3-million sewer plant project, funded by two Suffolk County grants totaling \$4.6 million and two other grants from the state, according to deputy mayor Henry Tobin. Grants facilitated by Legislator William Spencer's (D-Centerport) office cover about 50 percent of the total project and overall, \$6.8 million of the sewer plant project will be funded through grants.

The project, which started late last spring, will reduce nitrogen levels to improve public health and the shellfish population that calls Northport Harbor home. Next week, the village will file for another \$310,636 reimbursement from the county.

However, while Suffolk County has agreed to hand over reimbursements for grant funding, committee members said that if the county does not hand over the remaining grant money reimbursement the remitted money would turn into bonds.

Northport Village Trustee Damon McMullen said Tuesday that the denitrogenation building is finally enclosed and that electrical work is most likely to begin next month. The ethanol tank will be installed by the end of the week, McMullen said, and once the building foundation is completed construction crews will start work on interior paneling and plumbing work. Once the groundwork is complete, the village will be in compliance with collection system standards.

"We are barely on schedule but we're doing it," McMullen said.

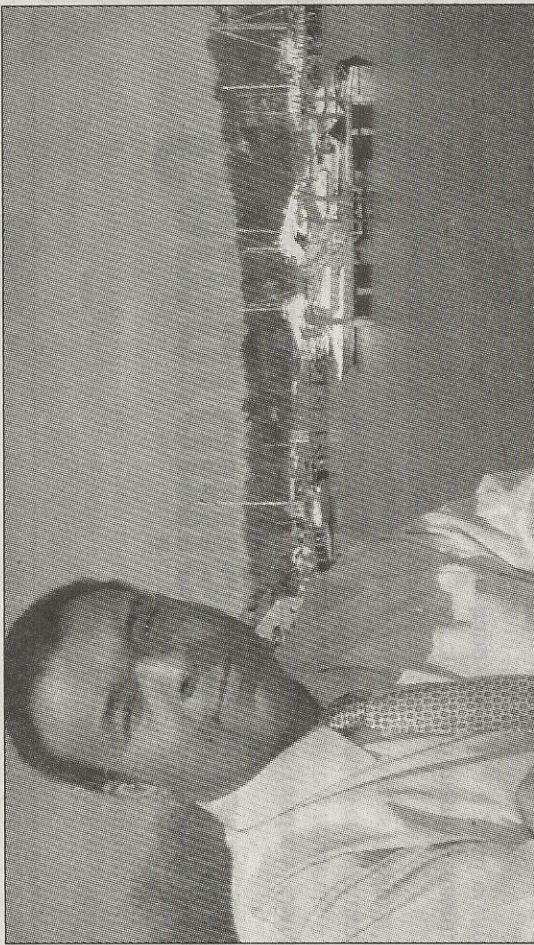
The frozen ground has made it difficult for workers to break ground on underground pipe installations and methanol placement work.

By April, water should be flowing through the denitrogenation system and it will be fully functional by Aug. 1, McMullen said.

The new, sophisticated system will have the ability to regulate and monitor pH levels that can be self-maintained by technology at the treatment plant.

The dredging project, an effort to reduce contamination in the water and increase depth in the harbor, is also underway. Director of Maritime Services for the Town of Huntington Ed Carr said Duck Island Harbor is the ideal location to place dredging waste. And while the money hasn't reached Northport's pockets yet Legis. Spencer, Carr said, has guaranteed that the funding will be there.

Going forward, the town and villages



Legislator William Spencer has been instrumental in securing grants for projects that will help reduce water pollution, according to a recent report by the Northport Harbor Quality Protection Committee.

will work toward forming an inter-municipal agreement between Huntington and the villages of Northport and Asharoken to create a uniform legal policy for non-permitted discharge; to create a time table for long-term planning; and to revamp the town's 20,000 catch basins.

Committee co-chair Adrienne Esposito said she was disheartened by the lack of progress maintaining catch basins for which the highway department is responsible. In the past, Esposito said, the department was not always willing to main-

tain and install new catch basins and filters. But recently elected highway superintendent Pete Gunther told the committee he is willing to put in the work for catch basin upkeep, Esposito said.

In an effort to educate the public, the committee has distributed informational packets from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to local libraries; will hand out fun, informational placemats with colorful sketches of the Harbor and is working to launch a website.