

## Huntington, Asharoken and Northport sign water pact

*Partnership would help protect Northport Harbor*

BY SUSAN RISOLI October 02, 2014 | 10:20 AM

Water quality management in Huntington, Northport and Asharoken just got easier.

This week, village and town officials signed an agreement that will standardize waterway codes in the Northport Harbor embayment and help the three municipalities secure funds to reduce water pollution and protect tidal wetlands.

Huntington Town Supervisor Frank Petrone, Northport Village Mayor George Doll and Asharoken Village Mayor Greg Letica signed the pact at Huntington Town Hall on Monday. The cooperative agreement is an outgrowth of the Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Committee, formed in 2010 and co-chaired by Petrone and Adrienne Esposito, executive director of the Citizens Campaign for the Environment.

The agreement, dubbed "historic" in a Huntington Town press release, would create a six-member group called the Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Inter-Municipal Council. The group would be able to apply for state and federal funds "in order to conduct studies, develop management plans, provide education services and coordinate water quality protection and enhancement programs," according to the statement.

Petrone said an intermunicipal council would implement the agreement "so we would be speaking with one voice." Members of the new group will include Petrone, mayors Doll and Letica, and one additional representative from each of the three municipalities.

The council "will have the legal authority to apply for state and federal funds in order to conduct studies, develop management plans, provide educational services and coordinate water quality protection and enhancement programs," according to a press release from Huntington Town.

Letica called the Northport Harbor complex "a unique geological and coastal resource" for Long Islanders. Doll said that previously, it didn't make sense for Northport, Huntington and Asharoken to take different approaches to water quality, and that the new agreement would help the villages and the town work toward the same goals.

The agreement covers the specific waterways of Northport Harbor, Centerport Harbor, Northport Bay, Duck Island Harbor and Price's Bend/Eaton Harbor, according to the town statement.

Esposito, who was present at the signing, said in an interview that cooperative water quality management will help the municipalities do more to assess sources of water contamination, such as stormwater runoff, and respond proactively.

"Governments need to work together or the job won't get done," she said.

Huntington Town Councilwoman Susan Berland said in an interview after the signing that if fragile wetlands and waters aren't protected now, future generations would suffer. "It's our obligation," she said, and she called the intermunicipal agreement "an example to everyone of how, if we all work together, we can do phenomenal things."