

## OUR TOWNS

### HUNTINGTON

#### Deal coordinates water quality efforts

The Town of Huntington has signed a five-year pact with Northport and Asharoken Villages to improve water quality.

The agreement yesterday formalizes plans for the municipalities to work together to pursue clean water funding and to support scientific research in the Northport Bay.

“There’s no sense in one person doing one thing and another doing the complete opposite,” said Northport Village Mayor George Doll at a meeting of the Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Committee at Huntington Town Hall. “We’ll all be working together to improve the water quality.”

The pact authorizes the Town of Huntington to act as the agent for the villages when applying for and receiving state and federal grants. The deal also commits all three municipalities to provide matching funds for future grants, but allows for the value of those matches to be determined later.

Often municipalities can’t receive state or federal grants without first committing a certain amount of money or resources when applying, and the deal guarantees that the town and villages are committed to those investments.

The municipalities will only pursue projects approved unanimously by a new six-person council. Huntington Town Supervisor Frank Petrone, Asharoken Mayor Greg Letica and Doll will be on the council. Other representatives will be appointed by the respective town and village boards.

Northport Harbor has been an area of environmental concern for years, ever since the emergence of red tide, an algae that contains toxins that can be fatal when consumed by humans. Red tide has forced multiple closures of shellfish harvesting areas since 2006.

Adrienne Esposito, co-chair of the Harbor Water Quality Protection Committee, said the bay has been found to have the highest density of red tide of any place in the United States.

The agreement includes Northport Harbor, Centerport Harbor, Duck Island Cove and Harbor, Steers Canal, Carter’s Bight and Eaton Harbor.

— VALERIE BAUMAN