

Around LI

State asked on public land use

Southampton Town officials are seeking a state opinion on whether an agreement that allows a Water Mill property owner to encroach on public land violates state law.

In February, the Southampton Town trustees reached a deal with Rose Hill Road property owner Randy Frankel that allowed him to encroach on a .61-acre parcel known as Hayground Cove in exchange for maintaining the rest of the property and dredging a nearby boat ramp. Many community members have since spoken out against the agreement, saying it privatized public land.

The question is whether the deal constitutes parkland alienation, which occurs when a municipality wishes to sell, lease or abandon parkland and requires approval from the State Legislature and governor.

The land was acquired by the town for public use in 1943. It was never formally declared a park by the town.

The agreement will be voided if the state determines the land is parkland, according to a news release issued by Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman.

— VERA CHINESE

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YVONNE ALBINOWSKI

We rounded up the top **50 family-friendly places** in Nassau and Suffolk, chosen by Long Island parents. **Learn more at** newsday.com/family

UPPER BROOKVILLE

Bringing back DOGWOODS

Residents giving \$200 to a village fund get a pair of the flowering trees

BY DAVID OLSON

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A fungal tree disease in the 1970s and '80s wiped out most of the hundreds of dogwoods that each spring dotted Upper Brookville with a riotous burst of white and pink flowers.

Now the village is working with residents to bring dogwoods back, starting with 125 trees that were planted on residents' lawns in May.

"They're very beautiful to look at and they bring back the charm" of the pre-tree-disease North Shore village, said Helen Solomon, 56, a member of the village's beautification committee, which spearheaded the dogwoods effort. Trees also increase property values, she said.

Residents obtained two 7-foot-tall North Carolina-grown dogwood saplings by contributing a minimum \$200 to the village's beautification fund, said Mayor Elliot Conway. The contributions — some of which were well above \$200 — covered the village's cost of buying the trees at a volume discount. Fifty more trees will be available in the autumn, he said.

The village requires they be planted within 50 yards of a road and be visible from passing vehicles, so all village residents and other passersby could enjoy the trees, Conway said.

Jonathan Lehrer, chairman of the Urban Horticulture and Design Department of Farmingdale State College, said he's unaware of any other municipality on Long Island that has mounted a concerted effort to bring back the dogwoods.

Cornus florida dogwoods are indigenous to Long Island, but the dogwood anthracnose disease spread throughout the Island and killed most of



NEWSDAY / ALEANDRA VILLA

Ginny and Frederic Kunken alongside one of the dogwoods they planted along their curbside.

BUYING INTO BEAUTIFICATION

The Village of Upper Brookville offered residents two dogwood saplings in exchange for a minimum \$200 contribution to the village beautification fund. The village distributed the trees in May.

Upper Brookville offered two choices:

- Stellar pink dogwoods, pink-flowering trees that are a hybrid of the cornus florida dogwood — trees native to Long Island that were mostly wiped out by dogwood anthracnose disease in the 1970s and '80s — and Asian kousa dogwoods, which are resistant to the fungal disease.
- Appalachian spring dogwoods, a white-flowered cultivated variety of cornus florida that is more resistant to the disease than the cornus florida native to the Island.

them, Lehrer said. The dogwoods Upper Brookville bought are less susceptible to the disease, he said.

Residents chose between stellar pinks — a hybrid between cornus florida and highly anthracnose-resistant

Asian kousa dogwoods — and Appalachian spring dogwoods, which are a cultivated variety of cornus florida that are more resistant to the disease than most of the dogwoods native to the Island. Dogwoods flourished through-

out Long Island for centuries, but residents recall that Upper Brookville had an especially high number.

Ginny Kunken remembers how after she and her husband moved from Bayside, Queens, to Upper Brookville in 1974, they were wowed by the "absolutely breathtakingly beautiful" sight of "pink and white everywhere" when the trees bloomed in the spring.

"It was magical," she said. "It was like a fairyland. We had 17 dogwood trees on our property alone."

The Kunkens last month planted two of the dogwoods purchased under the village program and are looking forward to seeing them — and dogwoods across the village — bloom next spring.

"It's going to be so nice to see this come back," she said.