

NEWS

TOWNSHIP OF WOODBRIDGE



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COUNTY FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR CRABIEL & WOODBRIDGE MAYOR McCORMAC ANNOUNCE COUNTY TO PURCHASE TOWNSHIP LAND FOR OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Vacant School Board Property in Woodbridge Township to Remain as Open Space

Woodbridge Township Mayor John E. McCormac today announced that Middlesex County Freeholder Director David B. Crabiel and the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders are on track to approve the purchase of two tracts of undeveloped land in Woodbridge Township as part of Middlesex County's and Woodbridge Township's open space land preservation program. The County-sponsored open space land purchase will add more than ten acres to Woodbridge Township's open space and environmental resource inventory – currently in excess of 286 preserved open space acres – will expand the county-owned Merrill Park with additional recreational open space, and will curtail any future development next to Indiana Avenue School #18 in Iselin and near the Woodbridge High School.

Joining Mayor McCormac and Freeholder Director Crabiel at School #18 to make the announcement were Freeholder Stephen J. "Pete" Dalina, County Parks Director Ralph Albanir, Woodbridge Township Municipal Councilman Jim Major, Vincent Smith, Woodbridge Township Superintendent of Schools, Brian Molnar, President, Woodbridge Township Board of Education, and neighborhood parents and students.

"We truly appreciate the County's consideration and funding assistance in the purchase of these open space parcels," Mayor McCormac said. "By preserving land near schools and parks in Woodbridge Township, the County of Middlesex is sending a clear message that further housing development in these areas is not consistent with smart growth and that keeping the areas as open space compliments the Township's continuing efforts to ensure environmental preservation."

"The Freeholder Board dedicates Open Space dollars for projects that have wide-ranging benefits to the community. We are pleased to move forward with this purchase, knowing that the added open space will benefit not only Iselin and Woodbridge Township residents, but everyone throughout the County that visits Merrill Park," said Freeholder Director Crabiel.

According to Mayor McCormac, the County has agreed to purchase 7.5 acres of undeveloped land along Elizabeth Avenue and Winding Road, near Indiana Avenue School #18 in Iselin and a second parcel totaling just over three acres along Harrell Avenue in Woodbridge for \$2,389, 800.

The open space funding will allow the County to purchase land owned by the Woodbridge Board of Education off Elizabeth Avenue and next to Indiana Avenue School #18 in Iselin for \$775,000 – the purchase will become part of the county-owned Merrill Park. The open space purchase will curtail the development of at least five residential properties and will keep traffic congestion in the area more manageable.

“The Elizabeth Avenue property rightfully belongs as part of Merrill Park – not as a future residential development that would add to already difficult traffic congestion and parking,” said Councilman Major. “This is a win/win for all Iselin residents. I would like to thank Director Crabiel and the Freeholder Board for their affirmative response to our request to add to the Township’s Open Space inventory and to preserve the quality of life for all our residents.”

Additionally, the Open Space purchase includes a similar undeveloped area totaling three acres along Harrell Avenue in Woodbridge, behind Woodbridge High School at a price of \$1,614,800. The property is also owned by the Board of Education. The undeveloped lots on Harrell Avenue are located on a residential street on either side of several homes and will remain as open space.

First Ward Councilman Charles Kenny said that, “Even though various developers have sought these building lots in the past, the Woodbridge neighbors and residents have consistently voiced their opinion in opposition to any future development. I believe the open space purchase will go a long way in keeping the neighborhood livable.”

Vincent S. Smith, Superintendent of Woodbridge Township Schools, said “the Board of Education couldn’t be more pleased to see the County and Township arrange to purchase the school board property in Iselin. By keeping the property as open space, we will allow our school children and neighborhood residents the opportunity to have the property available for future recreational and educational use.”