

WHAT TO WATCH Today

DIX HILLS

BUDGET SURVEY. The Half Hollow Hills school district will host a community meeting at 7 tonight at High School East (50 Vanderbilt Pkwy.). The results of a budget survey of district residents on cost-cutting scenarios proposed by district officials will be presented. Check Mackenzie Issler's **Twitter updates @mackissler**.

HAMPTON BAYS


VILLAGE TALK. The Hampton Bays Civic Association will hold a two-hour forum at 7 tonight in the Southampton Town Community Center (25 Ponquogue Ave.) on the possibility of creating a village in the community. The mayor of 2-year-old Mastic Beach Village will speak. Check Mitchell Freedman's **Twitter updates @eastwatch**.

FREEPORT

BUDGET TALK. Freeport Village's board of trustees meets at 7:30 tonight in the Main Conference Room at Village Hall (46 N. Ocean Ave.) on the coming fiscal year's budget. The proposal includes a 9 percent tax increase. Check Patrick Whittle's **Twitter updates @pxwhittle**.

NOW ONLINE
Catch up with these stories today at newsday.com/towns

TOPtweet

 Found out today that I will be earning about 3/4 tuition to Molloy college
@Stephenello

COLD SPRING HARBOR

FUELING A recovery

Land alliance to give former ExxonMobil terminal site a makeover

BY MACKENZIE ISSLER
mackenzie.issler@newsday.com

For 78 years, the plot on Cold Spring Harbor's eastern shore was a fuel distribution terminal supplied by a steady stream of barges. Storage tanks and a building cluttered the property.

Now the site is empty. The land has been cleared and cleaned, and a high chain-link fence encircles ground that is mostly barren — save for some fledgling native grasses.

The North Shore Land Alliance has plans to accelerate that recovery, now that ExxonMobil has given the group the 8-acre plot.

The alliance plans to create a maritime grassland and a freshwater tidal marsh. The restoration will help protect the shoreline during storms, officials said, and is another step the organization is taking to protect the harbor's health.

Six acres of the property are on the harbor, the remaining two are under water.

"We all learned through experiencing Hurricane Sandy about how natural shorelines can help absorb some of the brunt of the storm," said Jane Jackson, the alliance's associate director of stewardship.

"Those threats are going to increase with climate change and sea level rise," Jackson said. "The more vegetation and marshland we have in place . . . the better those storms will be withstood."

Jackson said the planned grasslands could attract a variety of birds and insects, and "should be a wonderful place



North Shore Land Alliance's Jane Jackson at the site in Cold Spring Harbor

PHOTO BY STEVE PROST

for a stopover for migrating birds."

She said the site also will be used for educational activities. The group intends to construct a small trail through the property and is planning a walk there in the spring.

The Shore Road property was purchased in 1924 by the Standard Oil Company of New York — which became ExxonMobil after several name changes — and operated as a fuel distribution terminal until 2003. ExxonMobil completed removal of the storage tanks and building in 2010, followed by soil remediation to clean contamination. The company then planted the seeds of several Long Island native grasses to start the restoration, according to the alliance, and gave the Peconic Land Trust a conservation easement.

ExxonMobil's intent was "to



SOURCES: ESRI, TELEATLAS, NEWSDAY

preserve the natural habitat, open space and scenic values of the property as well as to create opportunities for ecological restoration, passive recreation and education on the land," spokeswoman Claire Hassett said.

Jackson said the alliance

probably will not start its planting until next year, to let existing grasses grow and improve soil quality. She said the alliance will have to raise money for the restoration, which she estimated would cost thousands of dollars. She said the group is looking to partner with other agencies, like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for guidance, such as how to secure grants.

The land alliance also is working with Suffolk County and Huntington Town to purchase nearby land — 31 of the 42 acres of the DeForest Williams estate, which it says also is critical to the harbor's health.

"Protecting both the ExxonMobil and DeForest Williams properties will go a long way in ensuring that water quality is maintained in this historic coastal community," alliance president Lisa Ott said.