



*Bridget Fleming  
Suffolk County Legislator  
Second District*

*75 Washington St. / P.O. Box 1827  
Sag Harbor, New York 11963  
631-852-8400 / Fax 631-852-8404*

For Immediate Release  
Contact: Elizabeth Sutton (631) 852-8400

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## *Legislator Fleming Hosts Successful “Charting the Course” Event for Small Businesses in Westhampton and East Hampton*



**CAPTION: Second District Legislator Bridget Fleming moderates “Charting the Course”, East Hampton session. From left: Gil Anderson, Commissioner, Suffolk County Department of Public Works; Nick Gibbons, Principal Environmental Analyst, Suffolk County Parks Department; Bridget Fleming, Suffolk County Legislator; Larry Cantwell, East Hampton Town Supervisor; Craig Knepper, Associate Public Health Engineer, Suffolk County Health Department; Christopher Sortino, Chief, Bureau of Public Health Protection, Suffolk County Health Department; Scott Campbell, Chief, Arthropod-Borne Disease Lab, Suffolk County Health Department.**

Suffolk County Legislator Bridget Fleming on Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup> hosted two town hall style panels, one in Westhampton and one in East Hampton, to benefit businesses on the South Fork. County and town officials were present at “Charting the Course” to field questions from business owners and community members about local government services available to help businesses thrive.

“This event served as an opportunity for county and town officials to show small businesses how valuable they are to our community. This is an important first step in creating a partnership between East End businesses and local government to grow our

economy,” stated Legislator Fleming. “I would like to thank Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory for initiating these discussions throughout Suffolk County and County Executive Bellone for his support.”

The panels were composed of representatives from Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning, Department of Health Services, Department of Parks, Department of Public Works, and Industrial Development Agency. Additionally, East Hampton Departments of Human Services, Planning, Housing, and Fisheries and Southampton Town’s Community Services, Parks and Planning departments were in attendance at their respective sessions.

Westhampton Beach Mayor Maria Moore, who attended the earlier session, joined Southampton Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman in sponsoring the event. Deputy Supervisor Frank Zappone participated on behalf of Mr. Schneiderman.



**CAPTION: Bridget Fleming Moderates “Charting the Course” in at the Rechler Equity Partners building in the Hampton Business District in Westhampton.**

“Partnership between the public and private sector is critical to our area’s economic health. This forum took an important step toward strengthening that partnership” stated Deputy Supervisor Zappone.

"The panel discussion provided an opportunity for important collaboration between a variety of government experts, elected representatives and the business community. This type of coordinated teamwork is sure to yield benefits for everyone,” added Mayor Maria Moore.

The Westhampton session was held in the Hampton Business District, sponsored by Rechler Equity Partners. “We are honored by the opportunity to host this important event focused on growing business on the East End,” said Mitchell Rechler. “We commend Legislator Fleming for taking the initiative to bring County and town officials together with business owners and providing them with a forum to express their greatest challenges and concerns.” A recording of the Westhampton event will be aired by SEA-TV.

East Hampton Town Supervisor Larry Cantwell and members of the East Hampton Town staff joined Legislator Fleming in sponsoring the East Hampton event.

“This was an excellent opportunity for town and local business leaders to share information about our town’s local economy, the need for year-round jobs, housing, and transportation.”

The East Hampton session took place in LTV Studio 3 in Wainscott. “LTV was thrilled to host "Charting the Course" both as an integral part of the East Hampton community and as a not-for-profit on the East End with exactly the same concerns as commercial businesses - traffic congestion, lack of affordable housing, and how to thrive and prosper despite those challenges,” stated Morgan Vaughan, LTV Executive Director, “we are always happy to be part of the solution.” A recording of the East Hampton event will be aired by LTV.

“I found the open and frank discussion of the leading issues facing the East End to be a great start to discuss opportunities and solutions for affordable housing, water quality, and transportation problems” stated John Barrows, Long Island Builders Institute. “The East End Council of LIBI looks forward to continuing the discussion.”

Legislator Fleming thanks all who participated in the first “Charting the Course” event on the East End to make it a success and particularly Legislative Aides for Economic Development Robert Fonti and Ray Donnelly, from the Presiding Officer’s office.

“‘Charting the Course’ started as a single event to open a dialogue between businesses and county government,” said Presiding Officer Gregory. “Due to such positive reception, that single initiative has expanded, as we are now going directly into Suffolk’s legislative districts and hosting events tailored to their needs. Legislator Fleming and the ‘Charting the Course’ team did an incredible job hosting the first event in this series, and we look forward to the many more projects already planned in other districts to discuss with business owners the ways the county can help them thrive.”

The Legislator plans to initiate further opportunities for businesses and local government to work collaboratively in the coming months.