



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Frank Padavan

"Three-Men-In-A-Room" Eliminate Northeast Queens Nature and Historical Preservation Commission

FRANK PADAVAN March 30, 2009

The Northeast Queens Nature and Historical Preservation Commission has been eliminated by Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Leader Smith as a part of their 2009-2010 State Budget, New York State Senator Frank Padavan (Queens) said today. The commission, established by legislation sponsored by Padavan in 1973, is a citizen watchdog panel charged with protecting and preserving the Northeast Queens shoreline.

For over three decades, the Northeast Queens Nature and Historical Preserve Commission has been instrumental in protecting the salt and freshwater marshes and wetlands of Udalls Cove and Alley Pond and has ensured the historic integrity of Fort Totten. The commission has been at the forefront in the fight against overdevelopment that has threatened the Queens community and the Northeast Queens shoreline.

"The Northeast Queens Nature and Historical Preserve Commission has been one of the leading organizations that has protected and preserved the natural and historic wonders we enjoy in our community," Padavan said. "Without the commission, we would not have been able to protect Udalls Cove, Alley Pond and Fort Totten. This action embraced by the Governor, the Speaker and the Senate Majority will set back years of hard work from so many in our community who have been dedicated to preserving and protecting our

environment and our heritage here in Northeast Queens. I am dismayed and outraged at their complete lack of concern for the unique environmental needs of our community. This is a decision that must be reconsidered.”

Under the “three men in a room” budget, the Northeast Queens Nature and Historic Preserve Commission will be eliminated and its functions and duties will be shifted to the New York State Department of Parks. The Commission has a tiny staff of one full time and one part time employee and consists of seven volunteer commissioners who receive no compensation.

“By transferring the duties and function of the Commission to the New York State Department of Parks valuable insight and tireless dedication of volunteers who care deeply about our environmental future and the advancement of a cleaner and greener Northeast Queens will be lost,” Padavan said. “In the long run, no cost savings will be achieved under this senseless action by Governor Paterson and the State Legislative Majorities as it will most likely lead to the need for more NYS Parks staff on the local level in Queens to undertake the mission of the Northeast Queens Nature and Historical Preservation Commission.”