

OUR TOWNS

BROOKHAVEN

YAPHANK PARCEL TO BE PRESERVED

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A 120-acre Yaphank property that had been eyed for a housing development will be preserved as open space with hiking trails, Brookhaven officials said yesterday.

Town officials formally announced plans to buy the property for \$12 million from developer Silver Corporate Park LLC, which had planned to build a 622-unit retirement community at the site. The purchase is part of an agreement settling a lawsuit filed against the town by the developer.

Supervisor Edward P. Romaine said the town agreed to pay "a very reasonable price" for the site, which he said is the largest privately held parcel in the fragile Carmans River watershed.

The site, with four to five miles of trails and wildlife such as red-tailed hawks and white-tailed deer, will be preserved



ED BETZ

Brookhaven Supervisor Ed Romaine, and Richard Amper, of the Pine Barrens Society, view map of the newly purchased land.

as open space, he said.

"This is a very excellent deal for us, because this whole property would have been bulldozed," Romaine said, surrounded by civic leaders and environmental activists during a news conference at the site.

The legal battle over the parcel lasted nearly a decade.

Silver Corporate Park had sued Brookhaven in 2006 after the town board rescinded its approval of rezoning plans related to a proposed retirement

community.

Under the settlement announced last month, the company will be allowed to build a light industrial development on 47 acres it owns along the Long Island Expressway service road, south of the property that will be purchased and preserved by the town.

The settlement pleased civic and environmental activists, several of whom said they had been frustrated by the slow pace of the legal proceedings.