



Marshall Brown

Co-Founder, Save The Great South Bay
Co-Founder, The Long Island Conservancy
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09/03/2025

Hon. Kevin J. Kiley

Village Justice
Village of Williston Park

Kerry Collins

Building Inspector
Village of Williston Park

Re: Letter of Support for Ms. Aimee Kemp

Dear Justice Kiley and Inspector Collins,

I am writing in support of Ms. Aimee Kemp regarding the claim that her yard has become “overgrown” under Village code. I respectfully urge the Village to recognize her efforts for what they are: an informed, forward-looking approach to landscaping that reflects the best available science and the growing community demand for native plantings.

As Co-Founder of *Save The Great South Bay* and its *Bay Friendly Yards Program*, Co-Founder of *The Long Island Conservancy*, and Co-Founder of *Spadefoot Design & Construction*—now the largest native planting company on Long Island—I have devoted the last dozen years to rethinking how suburban landscapes can serve both people and nature. On less than half an acre, I cultivate over 3,000 native plants, and I regularly host civic groups and elected leaders to demonstrate what a functioning, ecologically beneficial yard looks like.

The science is clear: without native plants, there is no native wildlife. Native plantings are essential to restoring pollinator populations, reducing flooding, cleaning our waters, and adapting to climate change. Ms. Kemp, as a graduate student in environmental studies, understands this deeply—and her work has already helped her neighbors understand it too.

Far from being a liability, native plantings are increasingly valued in communities across Long Island and the nation. Yards that feature these landscapes are no longer seen as “messy” but as *Bay Friendly* and *climate resilient*. They are now contributing to higher property values and improved community well-being. This is not speculation—it is a documented trend, reflected in national media and in real estate markets (see, for example, recent coverage in *USA Today*).

The future is in “re-wilding” and “going native.” This is not fringe or experimental; it is part of a local, national, and global movement. Given this shift, I respectfully suggest that the Village update its codes to recognize native plantings as compliant landscaping. To hold residents like Ms. Kemp in violation for doing what the science, the public, and our shared environment demand is to apply an outdated standard.

In short: Ms. Kemp is not in violation of the spirit of the code. She is helping lead Williston Park into a healthier, more resilient future. I ask that the Village recognize her plantings as a model, not a violation, and consider revising the code accordingly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Marshall Brown, President, The Long Island Conservancy