

Untangling 'red tape'

Nassau hopes to make approvals easier for projects on county roads

BY SCOTT EIDLER
scott.eidler@newsday.com

Nassau County is moving to ease the permitting process for development projects fronting county roads as it targets an "infamous" mix of costly and complicated rules that has hampered developers and economic expansion, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran said Wednesday.

Curran unveiled the results of an eight-month review by a special panel that examined ways to streamline development approvals. The "239-F" regulations are specific to de-

velopment projects that face county roads.

Cutting "red tape" will help "reinvent suburbia with transit-oriented, walkable downtowns that attract our next generation," Curran said.

The panel's report noted progress on the permitting issue.

Nassau is moving to create a new center to help developers obtain permits for projects, and to switch to an electronic system for reviewing permitting plans, the report said. The bulk of current reviews are done on paper.

The permitting center would be located in Nassau's Department of Public Works building

in Westbury. Project designers and county planners could meet at the permitting center to review project plans.

The county launched a webpage with information about submitting projects that qualify under the 239-F review. Public works commissioner Ken Arnold, a task force co-chairman, said developers would also be able to track at what stage the project was in the review process. He said projects wouldn't need to be referred to the county for review, depending on the type of work. Also, Arnold said officials were looking to combine reviews to prevent redundancies.

The report also recommended that Nassau revise its process for calculating a "cost of construction" review fee so

that the cost was proportional to the scope of the proposed work. A change in the fee structure must be approved by the County Legislature.

"It is vital to get this right for the economic development of our county," Curran said. "It's the number-one concern . . . of developers looking to come, to expand, to settle, to build in Nassau County."

Task force co-chairman Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island, a developer group, said, "there's universal agreement that this process has been flawed. Taking almost two years for approvals is simply unacceptable. And if we want to have a chance to be competitive . . . then this process alone has to be sped up."

MS-13 GANG LIEUTENANT ADMITS KILLING TEEN

A top MS-13 lieutenant on Long Island pleaded guilty Wednesday to second-degree murder in the 2017 slaying of a Roosevelt teenager who was hacked with a machete before his remains were buried in concrete, officials said.

Victor Lopez, 31, also pleaded guilty Wednesday before Judge Patricia Harrington in Mineola's criminal courthouse to second-degree conspiracy and fourth-degree conspiracy linked to the July 21, 2017 homicide of Angel Soler, 15, Nassau County District Attorney Madeline Singas said in a statement.

Lopez's guilty plea makes him the second high-ranking gang member with the so-called Hollywood clique on Long Island to plead guilty this week to Soler's murder, officials said.

On Monday, David Sosa-Guevara, 28, of Wyandanch, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder. Prosecutors said Sosa-Guevara personally ordered the killing of the teen.

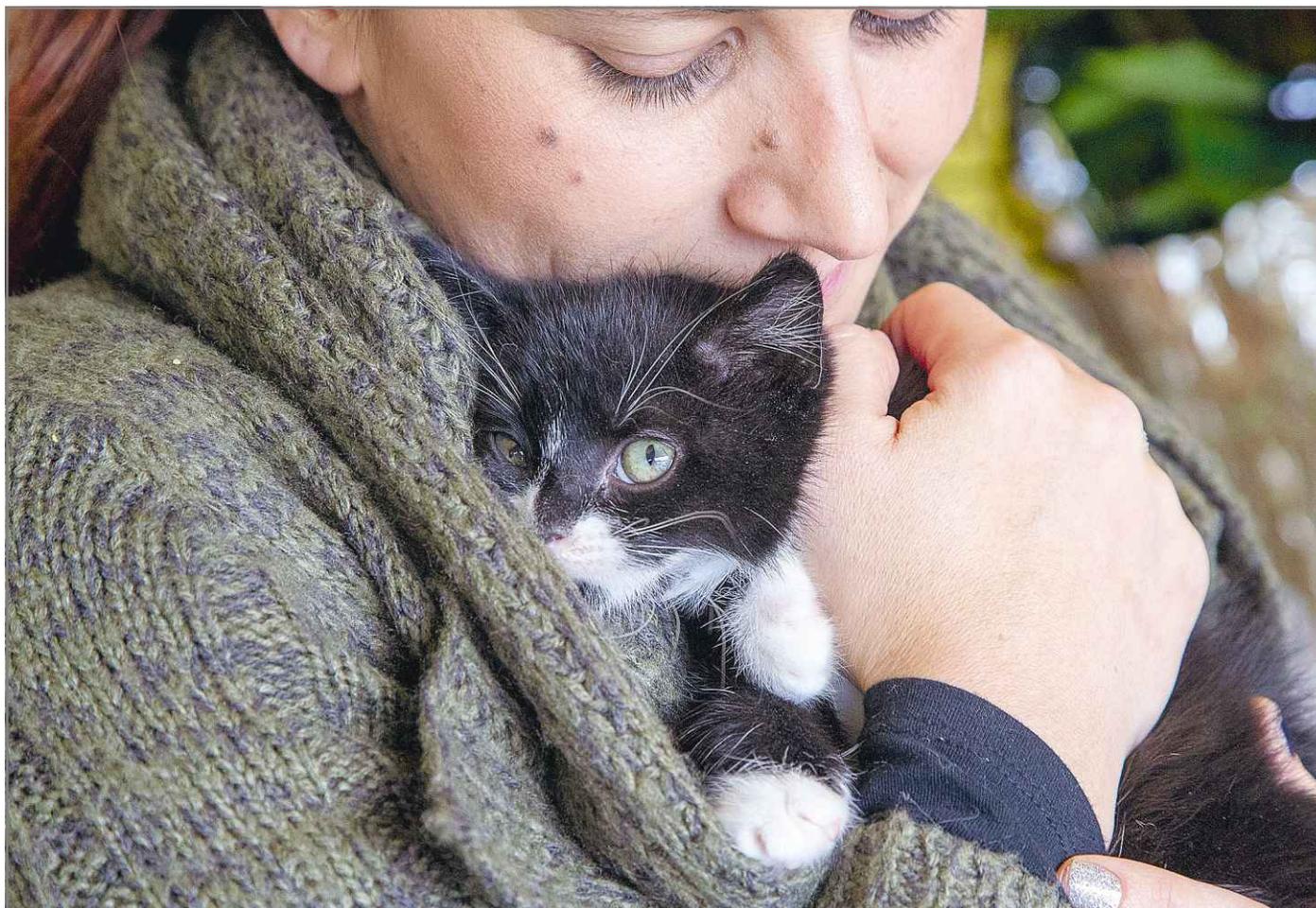
Lopez will be sentenced Jan. 23. He is expected to be sent to prison for 23 years to life.

Lopez's attorney could not be reached for comment Wednesday night. Lopez, known as "Persa," was a close associate of Sosa-Guevara, known as "Risky," who led the clique, officials said.

Soler's body was discovered by authorities on Oct. 19, 2017, nearly three months after he was killed. His mutilated body showed injuries consistent with the use of a machete. The teen was discovered under cement, burned and with blunt force trauma to the head, in a wooded area of Roosevelt near the Southern State Parkway.

Soler's mother brought him to the United States from Honduras to flee gang violence, Newsday has reported. Members of MS-13 targeted him because of the gang's belief that he might have been in the rival 18th Street gang, officials have said.

— ANTONIO PLANAS



HOWARD SCHNAPP

Needing a home 'fur' the holidays

Kristi Trentinella, Town of Oyster Bay animal control officer, holds Riley the kitten at the town animal shelter on Wednesday in Syosset. In its "Home For the Holidays" promotion, the town said the shelter is waiving adoption fees for dogs and cats throughout December.