

# Fleming, Kabot Seek Seat In Suffolk Legislature

## Two popular winners force voters to make a tough choice

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Bridget Fleming, Linda Kabot. Independent/Justin Meinken

The race for the second district Suffolk County Legislature seat may well be the featured event on the fight card.

It pits the Democrat incumbent Bridget Fleming, seeking a third term, against Republican Linda Kabot, the former Southampton Town Supervisor. Both candidates served on the Southampton Town Board as well, and have proven to be effective and popular with voters.

The pair met with The Independent editorial board on October 17. Fleming has worked hard on keeping

the groundwater clean, and the county has been faced with significant roadblocks along the way, including PFC pollution.

"It's taken a concerted effort from the state and municipalities," Fleming pointed out. "All of us are in this together. It's region-wide."

Kabot continually attacked the county's spending record under County Executive Steve Bellone and Fleming. "We have the second worst bond rating. It's one grade above junk." That, she said, hampers new projects.

Kabot suggested a "lock box" approach where funds are earmarked for future projects so the funds aren't raided.

Fleming said county spending bottomed out under Bellone's predecessor, Steve Levy, a Republican, and that it was slowly improving.

Kabot took a hiatus from politics after a narrow loss to Anna Throne-Holst in the 2013 town supervisor's race and now has a successful career in real estate. She reentered politics, in part, she said, to support John M. Kennedy, who is running for county

executive. But she still possesses her fierce combativeness, preparedness, and attention to detail. Her vote-getting prowess is such that she once garnered 4000 votes as a write-in candidate.

Fleming had to endure the back-room dealing of third-party political bosses almost from the outset, but prevailed. Her work-ethic is her calling card, and she learned reluctantly that she needed to promote herself more. Much of her work in the trenches went unnoticed. She gave

**Continued On Page 29.**

29

## Fleming, Kabot

Continued From Page 10.

the three-decades long incumbent Ken LaValle all he could handle in the 2012 race for state senator.

Both candidates agreed that spending was tight, with Kabot declaring, "There should be no more capital projects until debt is under control."

Both candidates agreed the sprawling county bus system has to be more effective.

Fleming suggested a more flexible scheduling system for buses. "It may require riders to walk a little more . . . the bus may have to go out of its way a little bit."

Providing affordable housing is tricky on every level. "People scream about density. You see what happens when it goes before a town board," Kabot said. She advocated for modular home communities.

But that was unrealistic, Fleming countered. "I don't think our communities will embrace this sort of density. They won't embrace sewer systems."

Fleming, who lives in Water Mill, pointed out tax credits are available for the right projects and that she has championed the County Affordable Housing Opportunities Program.

Fleming serves as chair of the Ways and Means Committee, co-chair of the Health Committee, and as a member of the Public Works, Environmental Protection Agency, and Public Safety Committees in the legislature. Her primary policy focuses are on protecting and preserving our natural environment (particularly water quality), public health, and responsible economic development.

She worked for almost a decade as an assistant district attorney for DA Robert Morgenthau in Manhattan. Fleming was first voted into public office when she was elected to the Southampton Town Board in a special election in March 2010 and won reelection in 2011 for a four-year term.

Kabot lives in Quogue. She served a two-year term as Southampton Town Supervisor, six years as a town board member, and began her political career as executive assistant to the late Supervisor Vincent Cannuscio for six years.

Fleming wants the opportunity to continue the fight to save our waterways and counterattack erosion and destructive weather problems. She envisions "a region-wide coastal resiliency model, using a holistic approach and collaborative sources."

Kabot lists public health and public safety as two main issues, and urges transparent financial management.