

Discussing the Grand plan

Residents voice support as traffic issue addressed

BY GRANT PARPAN
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Baldwin residents urged the Hempstead Town Board to approve a \$100 million mixed-use development project at a former parking lot along Grand Avenue after traffic flow concerns were addressed by the developer.

At a second public hearing Tuesday for The Grand at Baldwin, a 215-unit transit-oriented rental project proposed by Breslin Realty Development Corp., several residents said the time has come to move forward on the project they hope will spark redevelopment of the area.

"We've lived with an unsightly and dirty storage lot for many years and it's time that we move beyond just looking at this ugly lot and get something in the ground," said Steven Greenfield of Harrison Avenue, the street that would see the greatest traffic impact from the development.

Residents along Harrison Avenue had expressed concern over a prior traffic plan that would have allowed residents



RENDERING

BEATTY HARVEY COCO ARCHITECTS OF MELVILLE, NY

A development in Baldwin would replace a former parking lot.

and visitors of the property to make a right-hand turn onto their street toward residences. At the request of Town Supervisor Don Clavin, the developers will instead require all outbound traffic head north to Sunrise Highway, away from the homes. The exit itself will be designed to make it difficult for drivers who might choose to ignore posted signs to make a right-hand turn, said Rebecca Goldberg, civil engineering director at Cameron Engineering in Woodbury.

The town is also working with the developer to post "no-parking" signs on both sides of Harrison Avenue for 350 feet south from Sunrise Highway to alleviate congestion around that narrow section of road.

The changes follow a meet-

ing Breslin consultants had with residents who spoke at an initial public hearing in October. Those same representatives for the developer said it was important to address community concerns to propel the project forward.

"This will spark commerce in that area and it will spark many jobs," said Elisabetta Coschignano, an attorney for Breslin.

Still, not every resident who spoke at last week's hearing is convinced the proposed modifications will work. Some said Long Island Rail Road commuters who park along Harrison Avenue would continue to do so, even closer to the residences, once parking is prohibited in the vicinity of the new development. Other residents said existing traffic problems

heading north to Sunrise Highway during morning rush hour will only be exacerbated if the apartments are built. Another neighbor was skeptical the project would really make a difference.

"I've seen many changes in Baldwin and not for the good," Janice Hartmann told the board.

Councilman Anthony D'Esposito said this is the type of project that can bring positive change in the community.

"This is what we've been working on for the last 10 years," D'Esposito said. "We're hoping for smart development to protect quality of life."

New York State awarded a \$10 million downtown revitalization grant for Baldwin in August 2019, with \$2 million designated for the lot where the building has been proposed. A mixed-use overlay district was created to give the town oversight on the proposals as they move forward.

While the town board reserved a decision on the site plan after closing out the hearing, several Baldwin residents said they hope that day comes soon.

"Vote for this project," said Susan Cools of Grove Street. "It's not perfect, but no project is."

The town has not yet set a date for a vote on the proposal.

Man killed in car crash

A New Hyde Park man was killed on the Wantagh State Parkway on Friday night when he drove a Ford Mustang off the roadway and crashed into a light pole and several trees, according to the New York State Police.

The driver, Gaetano Decrescenzo, 68, was declared dead at the crash scene, according to a state police news release issued Saturday.

The crash happened before 9 p.m. on the southbound side of the parkway, north of Exit 4, the release said.

While driving in the right lane, Decrescenzo's vehicle "left the roadway onto the right shoulder where it struck a light pole and then continued into the woods striking several trees," the release said. — MATTHEW CHAYES

Special visitor from the North Pole

Arthur Treglia, of Williston Park, watches as his son Charlie, 4, jumps for joy to see Santa Claus at Old Westbury Gardens on an overcast, rainy day Sunday in Old Westbury.



DEBBIE EGAN-CHIN

CORRECTIONS

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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1520 Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan reached the Pacific Ocean after passing through the South American strait that now bears his name.

1942 Fire engulfed the Coconut Grove nightclub in Boston, killing 492 people in the deadliest nightclub blaze ever. The cause of the fire, which began in the basement, is in dispute.

1961 Ernie Davis of Syracuse University became the first African American to be named winner of the Heisman Trophy.

1994 Serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer was slain in a Wisconsin prison by a fellow inmate.

2001 Enron Corp., once the world's largest energy trader, collapsed after would-be rescuer Dynegy Inc. backed out of an \$8.4 billion takeover deal.

2012 Gov. Chris Christie said New Jersey would need nearly \$37 billion to recover from Superstorm Sandy and that the state would seek federal aid to cover most of the expenses.