

LIPA tax plan in works?

■ **Sources say settlement for 4 LI power plants mullied**

■ **Business alliance urging pols to seek a 'phase-down'**

BY MARK HARRINGTON

mark.harrington@newsday.com

State lawmakers are mulling a plan that would rely on state funds to help cushion the impact of a possible tax settlement for four Long Island power plants, according to people familiar with the negotiations.

They say State Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (R-East Northport) met with LIPA and local officials last week to

discuss the proposed settlement, which would rekindle the approach of involving the state in a broad settlement of tax disputes for the plants in Northport, Island Park, Port Jefferson and Glenwood Landing. Talk of a settlement has heated up in recent weeks as the first of the four tax challenges is scheduled to go to trial in May.

Flanagan's office didn't immediately return a call seeking comment. Flanagan had backed the plan when the LIPA Reform Act passed five years ago. A Long Island Power Authority spokesman wasn't available.

Meanwhile, a coalition of business groups is urging taxing districts and state lawmakers to get on board with a settlement.

"We are aware that LIPA and local municipalities recently participated in discussions regarding a 'phase-down' settlement," the group, known as the Long Island Business Coalition, said in a letter Monday to Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, Flanagan and Democratic Assembly leader Carl Heastie (D-Bronx).

The group is urging state officials to increase funding for an existing program called the Electric Generation Facility Cessation Mitigation Program, and expanding its use to include tax settlements for plants that will remain open.

LIPA last year determined that it plans to keep open but not overhaul National Grid-owned power plants in Island Park and Port Jefferson. It has

yet to study whether the largest plant, at Northport, will be overhauled. LIPA still pays taxes for a plant site at Glenwood Landing, even though the major plant there was demolished. Smaller peak-power plants remain at the site.

In all, LIPA pays just under \$200 million in taxes on those plants. It has filed court challenges to lower the taxes over time.

The group wrote in its letter: "We urge you to increase funding for the Electric Generation Facility Cessation Mitigation Program and earmark those funds for the affected Long Island tax districts so that a fair phase-down settlement can be reached regarding LIPA's over-assessed properties."

STUDENT ARRESTED AFTER POSTING THREAT TO SCHOOL

BY WILLIAM MURPHY

bill.murphy@newsday.com

A student at Valley Stream North High School has been arrested in connection with a threat posted on social media, police said Tuesday.

Andrew Davies, 18, of Barry Drive South in Valley Stream, made remarks "threatening violence to the school/students," Nassau County police said.



Andrew Davies

Police said Davies made the remarks, which were recorded by a witness, during a fire drill Feb. 16, and he was arrested Saturday and charged with making a terroristic threat.

Davies was arraigned in First District Court in Hempstead on Sunday with bail set at \$30,000 cash or \$15,000 bond, according to online court records.

He entered a plea of not guilty and posted bail, said his attorney, Jeffrey St. Clair of Brooklyn.

"I in no way minimize what happened, but it was a stupid joke that he made," St. Clair said. "I am well aware of what is going on in the country, and as a parent I might have called police myself."

St. Clair said Davies has no criminal history.

"He consented to a search of his home and search of his phone, and police found nothing," St. Clair said, referring to Davies. "It was really just a bunch of stupid kids doing stupid things."

The school district released a statement saying it had cooperated with police officials.

"I want to reassure the school community that the safety and security of our students is the district's top priority and that we will continue to communicate any important information with parents," Superintendent Bill Heidenreich said.

Shelter Island bridge reinforces its legacy

BY VERA CHINESE

vera.chinese@newsday.com

A 113-year-old secluded Shelter Island footbridge noted for its innovative engineering has been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Ransome Japanese Bridge, once part of Borax tycoon Francis Smith's Shelter Island estate Presdeleau, was designed by architect Ernest Ransome. Built around 1905, the curved 60-foot span is 6 feet wide and travels over a lagoon off Smith Cove.

The bridge was unusual for its time as Ransome was one of the first architects to incorporate reinforced concrete in his designs. Ransome previously had designed a Bayonne, New Jersey, Borax factory for Smith, who was impressed when the concrete building was only slightly damaged in a 1902 fire.

For the bridge, the architect used a cross-section of twisted iron rebars known as "Ransome bars," set in hand-mixed concrete and cast in place. The surface of the bridge deck is cast concrete impressed with a brick pattern.

"Its engineering has a kind of importance in history," said David Lichtenstein, president of South Ferry Hills Association, which owns the bridge and its surrounding property. The bridge is likely the first span constructed out of rein-



The rebar-concrete Ransome Japanese Bridge was named to the National Register of Historic Places.

forced concrete in Long Island history, he said.

The organization recently had the bridge evaluated by an engineer, who said it was structurally sound, though the railing and baluster need some repair, he said.

It was used by Smith to access his yacht.

"They used it to walk from his mansion to the beach, to a wharf where his yacht was moored," said Edward Shillingburg, a Shelter Island historian.

The 1938 hurricane known as the Long Island Express destroyed the home, but the bridge remained intact, according to Shillingburg.

The bridge is located on private property off Merkel Lane, although the recently created nonprofit Smith-Ransome Japanese Bridge Conservancy may organize public visits in the future.

The bridge was added to the New York State Register of Historic Places in December.