

## ISLIP TOWN

## ★ Residents try to stop election

Brentwood group wants new system to include Latinos

BY RACHELLE BLIDNER  
rachelle.blidner@newsday.com

A group of Brentwood residents and community groups is seeking to halt upcoming elections for Islip Town Board positions until an election system they say prevents Latinos from having equal representation is overhauled, according to court documents.

Six plaintiffs in a lawsuit against Islip Town and the Suffolk Board of Elections have filed for a preliminary injunction, asking a federal judge to stop future at-large elections, in which candidates are elected by a townwide majority, the documents show.

“For too long, our Latino members in Islip have been denied fair representation,” Eliana Fernandez of Make the Road New York, one of the plaintiff groups, said in a statement. “We cannot let another election go by under a system that deprives them of the right to be heard.”

Plaintiffs — Ana Flores; her father, René Flores; María Magdalena Hernández, and Magali Roman, and advocacy groups Make the Road New York and New York Communities for



Attorney Frederick K. Brewington, wearing tie, with plaintiffs María Magdalena Hernández, left, Magali Roman, René Flores, Ana Flores.

Change — filed a lawsuit in federal court in June. They allege the at-large system violates the Voting Rights Act and are seeking to create councilmanic districts with at least one ward that has a Latino majority. They have proposed four total districts in Islip.

Five town government positions are up for election in November: supervisor, clerk, tax receiver and two council members, according to town spokeswoman Caroline Smith, who otherwise declined to comment, citing pending litigation.

A representative for the board of elections was not available for comment Monday.

Frederick K. Brewington, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said they filed for the injunction motion after state lawmakers moved primaries up from September to June.

“We want to vindicate and preserve voting rights,” he said.

The at-large voting system dilutes votes by Latino residents, who represent about a third of the town’s population but have never held town office, the lawsuit said. Few elected town officials have lived in largely Latino areas of Brentwood, Central Islip or North Bay Shore, even though they are the town’s most populous hamlets.

The lack of political power has also led to discrimination and substandard town services in Latino areas, the lawsuit said.

Islip would be divided into northwest, southwest, central and eastern districts of about equal population sizes under proposals by sociology professor Andrew A. Beveridge of Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Beveridge

was retained by the plaintiffs to draw the four-district plan, according to court documents.

One district would include Brentwood, North Bay Shore and a sliver of Central Islip. Another would include Bay Shore, Brightwaters, Islip and West Islip. Central Islip, Hauppauge and Great River would be part of a district. A fourth district would include Oakdale, Sayville, Ronkonkoma and Bohemia. Islip’s Fire Island communities would vote either in the southwest district or the central district.

Plaintiffs would rather prevent an election that does “irreparable harm” than cause confusion if election results are voided if the lawsuit is successful, the injunction motion said. The town would “face almost no hardship at all” because town government operations would continue under the current town board, the motion said.

Judges have previously granted injunctions in similar voting rights cases in New York, including against Albany County in 2003 and the Village of Port Chester in 2007. Several similar lawsuits against at-large election systems have been successful, including in the Town of Hempstead, which fought a 12-year legal battle that ended with a U.S. Supreme Court decision.

A hearing is scheduled for April 9 at the U.S. District Court in Central Islip.

## MASSAPEQUA

## TOWN PICKS 2 COMPANIES FOR BEACH CONCESSIONS

BY TED PHILLIPS  
ted.phillips@newsday.com

The Oyster Bay Town Board has selected two companies to operate restaurants and concession stands at Tobay Beach.

Board members chose Patchogue-based Island Time Hospitality Group LLC to run two restaurants on the bay side of the town beach and J&B Restaurant Partners Top Flight Foods of Holbrook LLC to operate the beach and marina concession stands. The selection was made at a special board meeting on Thursday.

Island Time Hospitality’s proposal called for a guaranteed payment to the town of \$100,000 plus 10 percent of sales above \$1 million annually. Company officials said the town would have real-time access to sales information.

The company plans to invest \$409,000 in the restaurants including a new kitchen, outdoor deck and outdoor bar, according to its presentation to the board. Island Time’s plan would remove the mini golf course adjacent to one of the restaurants.

J&B Restaurant Partners plans to pay the town \$120,000 for first year of concession operations with annual increases of 3 percent, plus approximately \$150,000 in capital improvements, according to its proposal to the board. The company plans to remodel the interiors of the concession stand structures, put in new tables and umbrellas, and add a tackle store at the marina.

The agreements are for five years, with two optional five-year extensions, according to the requests for proposals.

The concessions at Tobay were awarded to a company affiliated with Carlyle Catering in 2017 for 10 years, but that company defaulted and the agreement was terminated.

## CALVERTON

## Food waste facility moves focus to EPCAL site

BY JEAN-PAUL SALAMANCA  
jeanpaul.salamanca@newsday.com

A proposed \$22 million food waste-to-energy facility originally pitched for Youngs Avenue in Calverton will now focus instead on the Enterprise Park in Calverton as a potential destination after Calverton residents rejected the plant’s original location.

Mark Lembo, managing partner of Melville-based CEA Energy LLC, first proposed the facility — which would convert food waste to natural gas — be placed along 5 acres on Youngs Avenue at the site of the former town animal shelter, during a Feb. 14 work session of the

Riverhead Town Board.

Lembo said Thursday that he changed his mind after the Greater Calverton Civic Association held a meeting at the Riley Avenue Elementary School in Riverhead.

Lembo, a Riverhead resident, was invited to speak at the group’s meeting after residents and civic members said at the town board’s Feb. 20 regular meeting that they were caught off guard regarding the potential location of the plant.

“Where were you between November and February for the Greater Calverton area?” said Joseph Graziano, a resident of Old Orchard Estates in Baiting Hollow. “That’s a large

chunk of time that we were in the dark about it. The information did not flow and that’s why everybody’s hair went up.”

Lembo responded that it took time to get board members to agree to hear the proposal at the February work session, which he wanted to get done first. “It was my miscommunication not to come to you sooner, but this is not going to be done without your support,” Lembo said.

Frank Palmer, a Calverton resident, said he was worried that if the plant was built, the subsequent truck traffic might bring down his home’s value.

“I’m thinking my house may go down in value by \$150,000 if you build that plant,” Palmer

told Lembo. “What are we getting back for that? We’re not getting anything back. You need a better site.”

After the meeting, Lembo said that based on the community’s reaction he will instead seek to build the facility at the Enterprise Park at Calverton on Grumman Boulevard. Lembo said he is in negotiations with a property owner at the site’s industrial park, where multiple businesses are located. Several residents at Thursday’s meeting also suggested the EPCAL site might be a better location.

“I think more people would be willing to support it being at EPCAL because that’s where it belongs,” Lembo said.