

BROOKHAVEN

SEEKING TO USE \$900K FOR LIGHTS

BY DEON J. HAMPTON
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Brookhaven Town officials plan to ask the U.S. Department of Energy to repurpose \$900,000 in grant funds to replace street lighting fixtures.

Town officials said they believe the federal government will allow the money to be used for that purpose. The town board is to take up the issue at its Thursday meeting.

The \$900,000 is what remains from a \$4 million grant the department awarded in 2009, in part for energy improvements to homes and town buildings, as well as solar programs, town officials said.

The request, if approved by resolution, would be part of a larger project Brookhaven Town Highway Superintendent Dan Losquadro proposed Monday to replace nearly half the town's light fixtures.

Losquadro wants the town board to consider a \$4 million capital improvement project that would replace 20,000 old street lighting fixtures with energy-efficient lights over a two-year period.

He said replacing the old lights would save the town \$1 million in electricity costs during the two years.

"The new LED lights use less power and they are much more durable," Losquadro said after his presentation at Monday's town board work session. "A regular street light might last a few years, depending on the type of bulb it is." The new lights can last 20 years, he said.

Brookhaven has 45,000 light fixtures and in recent years has replaced 5,000 of them, highway department officials said.

Town board members may also set a public hearing on Losquadro's proposal at Thursday's meeting, which begins at 2 p.m. instead of the usual 5:30 p.m. start.

Town officials said older residents have requested more daytime meetings so they can attend but not have to drive in the dark.

NEW CASSEL

Senior housing clears hurdle

■ **Board approves** rezoning for new mixed-use building

■ **Some** at hearing speak of need for workforce housing

BY CHRISTINE CHUNG
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A developer's plans to build a three-floor mixed-use building in the hamlet of New Cassel are progressing, with the North Hempstead Town Board approving a rezoning to allow construction.

The nearly 12,000-square-foot building on the northwest corner of Prospect and Brooklyn avenues is to house a medical office and credit union on the first floor, and 10 one-bedroom senior housing units on the top two floors.

Attorney Kathleen Deegan Dickson of Uniondale-based Forchelli Deegan Terrana LLP said the developer, Euroamerican Funding Group LLC of Chappaqua in Westchester County, envisioned a "vibrant development" that would "fit squarely" into the community and bring underrepresented commercial uses to the area.

"It's designed to fit very well and be complementary in this community," Deegan Dickson said at the board meeting.

New Cassel residents at a Jan. 30 public hearing voiced dismay at the plans, saying the hamlet had more pressing needs than another development.

What the area needed most



The building at Prospect and Brooklyn avenues will include a credit union, a medical office and senior housing.

was not more senior housing, but more affordable workforce housing for younger generations, said Robin Bolling, of New Cassel.

"To keep catering to our senior population, we are never going to have any young people coming back to pour into our community," Bolling said.

The median age of the hamlet's residents is 32, according to the 2016 U.S. Census American Community Survey. The median age in Nassau County is about 41.

North Hempstead Town Councilwoman Viviana Russell responded that the hamlet had many workforce apartments,

and she wasn't hearing of a need for more.

The board voted 7-0 to approve the rezoning from residential to business.

Edwin Benitez, 26, of New Cassel, said that while the proposed building sounded "beautiful," it should not be the first priority to revitalize the community.

"I believe this is a great plan and a great idea, but not for our community. Our community needs a lot more than making it look fancy but really being otherwise," Benitez said. "Building something right now should be the last thing on our minds."

The development is to be built

on three lots previously owned by the North Hempstead Community Development Agency that are to be sold to Euroamerican for \$450,000. The town board is scheduled to vote to finalize the sale at its Feb. 27 meeting.

Before receiving a building permit, the developer will need to request variances for lot size, building setbacks and parking space dimensions at the March 7 Board of Zoning Appeals meeting, town spokeswoman Carole Trottere said.

Construction is to begin shortly after permits are issued and take about six to nine months, Deegan Dickson said.

SPRINGS

District to outline \$23M school expansion plan

BY VERA CHINESE
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Residents in the Springs school district are invited to attend a public presentation Thursday on a proposed \$23 million plan for upgrades at the K-8 school, a project that will go to voters next month.

The School Street building can comfortably accommodate 400 students, but 743 students are now enrolled, Superintendent Debra Winter said. Student enrollment is projected to be 739 in 2019 and then to taper off, de-

clining to 687 in 2025, according to a 2016 report from Western Suffolk BOCES.

The report attributes overall enrollment growth to "changing resident characteristics and housing factors."

The population demographic in Springs, a relatively affordable enclave in East Hampton Town, has shifted with Hispanic residents making up 16.4 percent of the population in 2000 and 36.6 percent in 2010, according to the BOCES report.

The plan calls for seven new classrooms, including a technol-

ogy and science lab, a middle school regulation-sized gym with locker rooms and a nitrogen-reducing septic system, among other upgrades.

"We have 90 students [in gym] at a time," Winter said. "Right now our students are not receiving the requirements for gym."

The project, which is expected to total \$22,963,298, will be paid in part by an estimated \$16,960,000 bond, as well as \$6,003,298 from the district's capital reserve funds. District officials are expecting state aid to reduce the borrowing cost.

If approved, the average cost of the bond would be about \$13.60 per month, or \$162.93 per year, for a resident whose property is valued at \$600,000, district officials said.

Springs school board members will present the plan at 6 p.m. Thursday at Ashawagh Hall. The vote is set for March 6 from 1 to 9 p.m. in the Springs School library on School Street in East Hampton.

An outline of the project is available on springsschool.org, the district's website, in English and Spanish.

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