

BABYLON TOWN

Flood area home plans create stir

Dozens object at zoning hearing for affordable housing

BY DENISE M. BONILLA
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Residents living near waterfront areas in Babylon Town are pleading with officials to reject proposals for affordable homes in flood-prone neighborhoods.

Dozens of residents turned out for town zoning board hearings last week on four properties where the nonprofit Long Island Housing Partnership is seeking to build affordable houses. The building plans for the properties — on Lee Place in Amityville and Deauville Parkway, Surf Road and Venetian Boulevard in Lindenhurst — all need variances, such as diminished property line widths and setbacks.

Residents told the zoning

It's 2 to 3 feet every time it rains. You cannot put a house there."
— Resident Barbara Connaghan

board that the properties, which all sit near either the bay or canals, flood regularly, as does the entire street nearby. They said they have experienced flooded garages and vehicles ruined by saltwater and have seen buses and ambulances struggle to get through the flooded streets.

"It's 2 to 3 feet every time it rains," said Barbara Connaghan, who lives near the Lee Place property. "You cannot

put a house there."

The superstorm Sandy-damaged properties are part of 23 on Long Island that the housing partnership obtained from NY Rising. The state bought all of the properties for a total of \$8.6 million through its acquisitions program. James Britz, executive vice president of the partnership, said properties with taxes from \$8,000 to \$12,000 were chosen.

The partnership plans to demolish the properties and build single-family homes consisting of three bedrooms and at least one-and-a-half baths, Britz said. About \$400,000 will be spent per house, he said, with an expected resale of about \$200,000. Public and private grant money will cover the remainder of the costs, he said.

Eligible home buyers must have incomes no higher than \$65,000 for one person to \$93,000 for four people, must be able to secure a mortgage

and must not have purchased a home within the last three years. The land of the properties will be held in a trust set up by the organization, Britz said, to ensure that the houses are affordable in perpetuity. About 100 people have applied so far for the homes, he said.

Britz noted community concerns, saying the partnership takes flooding issues seriously and that the homes will be elevated and potential homeowners made aware of the challenges of living in a flood zone.

"These are going to be well-built homes that meet and exceed flood standards," he said. "But there's still emergency training that has to be done, for things like people's automobiles, when floodwaters come in."

Britz said they tried to keep plans "near the footprint" of the original homes, but residents at the hearing criticized the need for variances and said the houses would block their

water views.

"This house is going to obstruct so many views of people whose homes have been there for years," said Lee Place resident Priscilla Zinser.

Three of the properties are in need of variances that would decrease the size of side yards. Board member Thomas Weinschen asked the architect to go back and redesign the Deauville Parkway house, saying he was "very uncomfortable" with the 4-foot side yard setbacks being proposed and that neighbors would prefer more space. Alicia Yabsley, project manager for Bay Shore-based Boulder Pfluger Architects PC, told the board they need the space to meet modern building requirements, but could ask instead for front- and rear-yard setbacks.

The zoning board has not made a decision on any of the properties and is holding the public record open.

BROOKHAVEN TOWN

Town, recycling operator near a settlement

BY CARL MACGOWAN
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The Town of Brookhaven and its former recycling center operator are nearing a settlement of the town's lawsuit against the company stemming from its decision last year to back out of a 25-year contract amid a collapse of the worldwide recycling market.

Green Stream Recycling and town officials have agreed to terms in which the company would pay Brookhaven a total of \$1.42 million over four years to settle the suit filed by the town late last year. As part of the settlement, Green Stream would also agree to refurbish its equipment at the town-owned Materials Recovery Facility in Brookhaven hamlet, town officials said.

The Brookhaven Town Board voted 7-0 Thursday to approve those terms, contained in a memorandum of understanding drafted by town and Green Stream officials.

Brookhaven chief of operations Matt Miner said Monday he expected a final settlement

to be reached in about two months. The settlement would require approval of the town board.

"We're off to a good start," Miner said in an interview. "The town and the town board are pleased with the steps that have been taken so far, but we still have a little way to go."

Green Stream, also known as Hudson Baylor Brookhaven, told Brookhaven officials in late October it would cease its operation of the plant because of plummeting commodities prices. Town and waste industry officials said prices for recyclables nose-dived last year, in large measure because China — the largest international purchaser of American recyclables — had curtailed purchases of plastics and cardboard.

Brookhaven officials on Oct. 25 sued the company for breaching its contract with the town. At the time, Green Stream officials said the company would fold. Green Stream was operating the Brookhaven facility under a 25-year deal struck with the town in 2013.

In an email, Hudson Baylor



Recyclable paper is loaded onto a truck in 2016 at Brookhaven's single-stream recycling facility, operated by Green Stream Recycling.

Brookhaven president George Bateman said: "We always hoped the matters and controversy with the Town of Brookhaven would be resolved amicably and we continue to work to achieve that result."

The town in late November switched from a single-stream recycling system, in which paper, cardboard, aluminum,

plastic and glass could be deposited by residents in a single container each week, to a dual-stream system, in which paper products and other recyclables are collected separately on alternate weeks.

The town discontinued curbside pickup of glass. Residents may deposit glass at seven collection centers around town.

Brookhaven also said it would no longer recycle items such as greasy pizza boxes and cardboard milk containers. Town officials said those items aren't clean enough to be sold on recycling markets.

Town officials said the potential settlement includes a provision requiring Green Stream, or any company that acquires its assets, to convert the town recycling center's single-stream equipment to dual-stream systems. The settlement also allows the town to purchase that equipment in the future under certain circumstances, such as if Brookhaven decides to buy out the Green Stream contract, officials said.

Brookhaven last year entered into a contract with the Town of Smithtown in which Smithtown would process many of Brookhaven's recycling collections. That contract was expected to last six months to one year, after which Brookhaven planned to explore possibly reopening its own recycling facility. The facility is dormant until town officials decide whether to reopen it.