



New Westbury building to add to revival plans

Originally published: July 2, 2013 9:14 PM

Updated: July 2, 2013 10:07 PM

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Westbury's revitalization plans have begun to take root in the last decade, marked by elegant facades being installed and new businesses and apartments opening.

Tuesday, the village edged closer to its goal after the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency approved a financial assistance package for a project that had been delayed several years, paving the way for construction of a new building that will consist of apartments and retail shops. They will replace three "eyesores" at 157-161 Post Ave. that once were delis, and auto body and butcher shops, but are to be razed.

A spokesman for County Executive Edward Mangano said the project is expected to cost \$1.9 million.

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The assistance package, approved 5-0, calls for 10 years of payments in lieu of taxes, called a PILOT. In its first year, the developer will pay \$38,000, the current real estate tax, according to IDA officials. That figure will ramp up to \$101,618 in the final year, they said.

Developer Massimino Girona, who runs M.P.A. Owners, of Farmingdale, said the tax abatement was a deal breaker; the project was delayed because a bank withheld funding, he said. "If we didn't get it, we weren't doing it," he said.

Girona said the 20,700-square-foot structure would add 10 rental units and up to six retail stores. The site, said village Mayor Peter Cavallaro, "is one of the last remaining pieces that needs to be redeveloped."

Cavallaro said the project is in line with a nearly decade-old strategy to revitalize the downtown area. About eight mixed- and multifamily-use condominium and rental complexes have been installed near the Long Island Rail Road Station in the village, he said, which is housing for about 850 people.

Most of the housing projects, Cavallaro said, replaced empty lots and single-family dwellings.

All eyes are on the new performing arts center set to open in August, which is called The Space at Westbury, and replaces a condemned theater that first opened in 1927 and has been closed since 2001.

"I think you will see a gradual transformation and a development of a better mix as the theater opens and other things take place," Cavallaro said.

The relief, Girona said, allows for more "breathing room" in the first few years.

Joseph J. Kearney, executive director of the IDA, said he "strongly recommended" endorsing the project.