



Storage facility plan for Elmont gets Nassau tax breaks

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A self-storage facility that is planned for Elmont received tax breaks Thursday night from Nassau County because it will remove blight and address a consumer need, officials said.

The \$10.4 million project is one of at least six self-storage operations to receive help recently from an industrial development agency on Long Island. Others are in Amityville, Deer Park, Glen Cove, Hicksville and Lindenhurst.

The trend was derided by some critics of IDAs who said valuable tax incentives should be reserved for large employers, such as factories and service companies. Only a handful of jobs would be created or protected with each self-storage project.

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The Elmont facility would be located on Linden Boulevard in a blighted parcel once home to a nursery, said Daniel J. Baker, an attorney for the developer. The building will consist of 116,000 square feet of space over three stories.

"There weren't many takers for the property besides my client," Baker told the Nassau IDA. He said the developer group, led by Hampshire Real Estate Companies of Morristown, N.J., "cannot do this deal without the [tax] benefits."

The IDA board Thursday night unanimously approved a sales-tax exemption of \$258,750 and \$20,475 off the mortgage recording tax. Property tax bills will be frozen for three years and then rise modestly over the following 12 years.

IDA executive director Joseph J. Kearney said the project would generate \$3.5 million more in taxes over 15 years than if the land remained vacant and would create the equivalent of four full-time jobs, each paying between \$40,000 and \$50,000, excluding benefits.

"There is an unmet need for self-storage facilities," Kearney told the board. "This is an absolutely suitable project."

The IDA recently aided a storage operation in Hicksville that was slated for closure and expects another to apply for help. But Kearney said in an interview, "I'm not saying as a matter of course that we will seek to put self-storage facilities on every corner."

Long Island Jobs With Justice, an advocacy group that has been critical of IDAs, expressed concern. "How is this company that is receiving 15 years of tax subsidies going to give back to the community?" said executive director Anita Halasz.