

Two more coastal demos for Mastic Beach

BY RANDALL WASZYNSKI

The Brookhaven Town Council voted Feb. 8 to demolish two coastal properties in Mastic Beach. Demolishing structures on these properties will tally three total demolition projects ordered by the town on coastal properties in Mastic Beach.

Both properties are located on Riviera Drive, a half-mile stretch of road that rides the coast and one side of The Lagoon docking area. Other than the properties developed on its inland side, the road is mostly surrounded by marshland.

According to the town, this area is one of the lowest-lying floodplains on Long Island and the board expressed interest in restoring wetlands at the property located at 719 Riviera Drive, the main structure of which has been standing since the 1920s. "The more marshland we can restore, the better

shot they have of surviving the next flood," said supervisor Ed Romaine. "Marshlands act as sponges."

With the goal of preserving the original Mastic Beach, a prospective buyer of the property present at the meeting vouched against restoration of wetlands on the property and said he intended to rebuild on posts for flood concerns after paying the taxes. The board instructed the buyer that various permits at the state level would need to be acquired and also assured that nothing has been set in stone regarding wetland restoration on the property.

The property contains one main structure as well as a garage and a shed at the rear of the property, all of which are in extremely poor condition — partially due to Hurricane Sandy. The structures violate the international property maintenance code, international fire code and code of the Town of Brookhaven on several fronts.

"I grew up in Mastic Beach," said councilman Daniel Panico. "I always went down there crabbing. I don't ever remember anyone living, in my lifetime, in this house."

Suffolk County is also in the process of acquiring the property at 136 Riviera Drive with the intention of demolishing the existing structures.

The property contains one main structure and a garage toward the back of the lot, both of which are in extremely poor condition. The back half of the main structure's roof has collapsed and there are large cracks on the exterior walls and holes in the walls. Some openings were not properly boarded, and graffiti is present on the walls.

The garage's interior walls are severely cracked, and the garage door and its opener are in extremely poor condition. There is also a toppled-over oil tank on the property.

The site has also been subject to several high-grass violations over the years, "so this has been a problem house since before the village was created, before this village was dissolved," town attorney Annette Eaderesto added.

The structures will be demolished by the town in approximately 30 days unless the owners acquire a demolition permit before the time has elapsed and perform the project independently. ■

Energy grant to go to streetlight project

BY RANDALL WASZYNSKI

In an effort to reduce long-term energy expenses, the Brookhaven Highway Department announced the intricacies of the \$4 million streetlight conversion project at the Feb. 5 Brookhaven work session. The town plans to allocate grant money from the Department of Energy to assist in funding it. The grant contains about \$900,000, and an application must be processed to approve the allocation of the funds, commissioner of finance Tamara Wright said. The plan will replace a little under half of the town's 40,000 light fixtures to light-emitting diode lighting over a two-year period. The amount of fixtures installed will increase into the second year as the more expensive, higher-wattage units will be tackled in the first year out of necessity to brighten arterial roads and freeways. "At the end of the second year, we would realize already a \$1 million annual recurring savings, and that is just in current electricity costs," superintendent of highways Dan Losquadro said. LEDs

are not only beneficial for their efficiency qualities, maintenance on the fixtures is also less urgent since they dim over time because they contain multiple diodes that fail individually. There are a number of fixtures in the town currently equipped with high-pressure and low-pressure sodium bulbs, which emit an amber-colored light, that manufacturers have pulled back or even halted production on in recent years. So the price of these bulbs has skyrocketed. "One of our priorities in this plan is to get those high-pressure and low-pressure sodium bulbs off of our inventory — change those heads out," he said. "We really expect those bulbs to become increasingly difficult to find." Brookhaven has already converted 5,000-6,000 fixtures to LED lighting, and the goal is to reduce the town's carbon footprint as much as possible, supervisor Edward Romaine said. In the aftermath, "one thing I expected as I did my budget last year is our electric costs would go down, which they did not," he said, referring to a 102 percent delivery service charge increase from last year. ■



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