

# Opportunity zone requests and wiring concerns

BY RANDALL WASZYNSKI

The Town of Brookhaven will be submitting information on four of its hamlets to the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council in hopes that at least one or two will be selected as opportunity zones tied to federal tax incentives designed to attract investors to low-income communities.

Among the eligible communities across New York State, Gov. Andrew Cuomo has the liberty to select 25 percent to become opportunity zones. Mastic-Shirley, Mastic Beach, North Bellport and Middle Island (Gordon Heights) are the eligible communities within Brookhaven Town, though the majority of the communities are located upstate.

"We can possibly attract investors in these communities and help create jobs and help improve each of these communities," supervisor Ed Romaine said at the town board's March 19 work session. "It's not our decision, but we are making the best case for each of our areas that we can."

The goal of the relevant portion of the Tax Cut and Jobs Act passed by Congress in December was to allow investors to defer federal tax payments on capital gains through 2026 into opportunity funds that will directly benefit the target community.

Also at the Brookhaven Town work session, Romaine announced plans to draft a letter to Cuomo stating the board's concern for allowing aluminum electrical wiring in homes, which is 55 times more likely for a connection to be a fire hazard, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.



Brookhaven Town Hall

"I have a great concern about aluminum wiring in terms of fire safety," Romaine said. "Obviously, it's cheaper than copper, but it certainly doesn't seem safe."

Aluminum wiring raises issues with heat expansion, as it is not as stable of a metal

as copper. Also, crust builds on aluminum when oxidized and compromises its conductivity over time.

No businesses are currently installing aluminum wires within the Town of Brookhaven, though many homes built

decades back still contain those hazardous connections.

The town's request to ban aluminum wiring in 2011 was denied by the state, but the town never changed its code to conform with the state's. ■

## Active shooter drill at town hall

More than 100 officers from several police departments throughout Suffolk County participated in an active shooter drill in Brookhaven Town Hall earlier this month. The training conducted and coordinated by the Suffolk County Police Department's Emergency Service and Homeland Security sections is scheduled several times a year in schools, hospitals and businesses throughout Suffolk County. Brookhaven Town public safety commissioner John Meehan assisted in coordinating the event that included the participation of town fire marshals, who also serve as armed peace officers, as well as officers from the SCPD and other departments including the Suffolk County Sheriff, park rangers, auxiliary police, Riverhead Town

police, Northport Village police, Lloyd Harbor Village police, Brookhaven National Laboratory police, New York State Park police and Smithtown Department of Public Safety. Following classroom training, officers were put through several real-life scenarios designed to improve the officers' tactics in stopping threats in an active shooter situation. The session concluded with a debriefing to review individual performance. "In today's world, it's important to keep our guard up and be prepared for any situation that could arise. We've taken a number of proactive steps on our own to enhance security and raise the level of vigilance throughout the building, but there's always room for improvement," said town supervisor Ed Romaine. ■

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