

# Hockey arena

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A public hearing for Plaza Auto Mall was scheduled for March 13 but was postponed due to the applicant's request to submit a new map, said a town spokesperson. The application, he said, is still waiting for approval pending the public hearing, which will be rescheduled once the new map is submitted. As for the hockey arena, he said the town would not comment because an application has not been submitted as of yet.

According to a Plaza Auto Mall spokesperson, the map will be submitted "soon."

Civic association members and other Medford residents expressed their disinterest in Plaza Auto Mall's purposes. "Medford housing values and the Medford community will go down the tubes," said Brett Houdek, the president of the civic association. "People thought that Medford would be a dumping ground for a casino that would help bail out OTB. We should not be tied to our politicians telling us what they're going to give us. We should be telling them what we want. We want [a hockey arena]. And if it's not this, there are other projects just as good."

The proposed 7,500-seat hockey arena would incorporate various activities and events, including concerts. This facility would also potentially allow for Stony Brook University to incorporate a Division I hockey team, as they currently do not have access to a facility.

"On this part of the island, you attract a lot of people from the Hamptons during the summer," Shereck said. "What we're going to be providing in the way of sports entertainment is family-affordable."

A new home for the WNBA team the New York Liberty was also mentioned among other Long Island sports teams that lack the game attendance for large and expensive venues.

"Madison Square Garden is a very expensive facility for a team that only draws about 4,000 people during the regular season to a game and about 6,000 during the



A hockey arena, which would not require a change of zone, has been proposed at the former movie theater in Medford, 440 South Service Road, a \$130 million alternative project to the planned automobile wholesale operation.

playoffs," Shereck continued.

Two ancillary buildings are also proposed in the project: a second ice rink for practicing and for public use, and the other an indoor field house with artificial turf that will be used by professional indoor lacrosse teams.

A convention center is proposed atop one of the ancillary buildings, which would involve a partnership with Discover Long Island, bringing various three-to-five-day events to the site.

Atop the second ancillary building would be a sports medicine rehabilitation center with a focus on head trauma injuries and CTE, and the center will most likely be run by Stony Brook Hospital or medical school, Shereck said. The overall project will take 24 to 36 months to construct and will create union jobs and generate tax revenue for the Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County and at the state level, he added.

"Wherever there is live entertainment, it rains money," said William Cassidy, a Med-

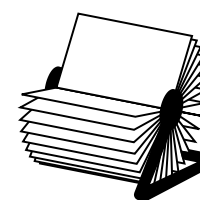
ford resident who has worked in entertainment venues on Long Island and New York City, including MSG and Nassau Coliseum. "It's like a cloud burst of private-sector money into the community. The quality of life always increases. The idea of a sports arena in Medford is gold."

However, funding for the project will be reliant on investors, but Shereck suggested multiple investors are lined up. ■

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