





*Adv/File photo*

# PlazaMAC talks return to East Patchogue

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The Suffolk County Film Commission has sought a location for the new and expanded Media Arts Center, ultimately moving off of Terry Road in Patchogue Village, where it neighbors the Patchogue Arts Center. The vacant lot at the corner of Avery Avenue and East Main Street in East Patchogue, an oddly shaped parcel in which the lot snakes through the back property lines with considerable parking, is a compatible option for the multi-structure PlazaMAC proposition.

The historic Plaza Theater, built in 1962, sat on this lot, with an absentee landlord that refused to sell the parcel hosting an abandoned theater for some time. Viewed as an eyesore by the community, the dilapidated structure was demolished in 2011.

The proposed move of the PlazaMac is part of a larger effort to revitalize consumerism on East Main Street in East Patchogue, similar to the product seen less than a mile west in Patchogue Village. This larger effort features a proposed 80-unit residential housing project on the opposite side of the intersection.

"An entertainment facility would bring people, and what a nice thing to have — people right across the street from a place you can go for entertainment," said John Quatrone, a member of Focus East Patchogue.

The project, spearheaded by PlazaMAC founder Campbell Dalglish, a playwright, screenwriter, director and professor of film at City College of New York, has been presented at various civic meetings over the last several weeks. Residents have asked about the economic sustainability of the PlazaMAC, and Dalglish said means of expansion will compensate for just that.

"A three-screen cinema — right now, we have a one-screen cinema — would sustain the screening aspect," Dalglish said.

Screenings of quality mainstream independent foreign films are a staple to the PlazaMAC since its inception, but a main feature being showcased to the public is the opportunity for anyone and everyone to participate in various film and film-editing classes, animation classes,

documentary classes and understanding the intricacies of media literacy.

"The media arts school would make us not just another place for people to come and consume, but a place for people to come and create, creating a culture that will be here forever," Dalglish said. "If you have student labs where people will want to come and create culture for the local community, those are usually government sponsored, and anyone interested in education wants to sponsor it."

The expansive focus and dedication to educational service is an emboldened field-trip attraction for teachers and students in school districts across Suffolk County.

Dalglish used the Burns Films Center in Pleasantville, N.Y. in Westchester County as a stencil for his project in Suffolk County. The center in Pleasantville is regionally known as a decorated arts and screenplay hub. Dalglish envisions a media arts center in East Patchogue that would create a more defined community attraction than in Pleasantville, given its demographic, local population and county school district data.

Suffolk County educates 113,000 more students than Westchester County and, alongside, the Patchogue area hosts visual and performing arts programs that a media arts center would fit right into, Dalglish added.

However, acquisition of the property has not formerly taken place yet and a site plan has yet to be submitted to the Town of Brookhaven.

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