

FARMINGVILLE

# Zoning OKd for storage facility ★

Former site of garden center could also include a bank and a restaurant

BY CARL MACGOWAN  
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The Brookhaven Town Board has approved zoning changes for a Farmingville ministorage facility and commercial center that could include a bank and a restaurant.

Developers of the Holmesview Commons project at the intersection of North Ocean Avenue and Horseblock Road previously had planned a larger retail center without ministorage at the site, but abandoned those plans because they could not find major tenants.

The new plan proposes a 98,000-square-foot ministorage facility on about one-quarter of the 20.5-acre site, which previ-

ously included a nursery and garden center. About 12 acres of the property would be developed as a commercial center, town planning officials said.

The town board voted 6-0 to grant zoning changes allowing ministorage to be added to the site's proposed retail uses. The project still requires site plan approval from the town planning board and other approvals from the Brookhaven zoning board of appeals.

The new plan should generate less traffic than the earlier proposal, said Hauppauge lawyer Anthony S. Guardino, who represented developers including Art Garratano of St. James.

Ministorage "is a relatively benign use," Guardino said. "It

**‘Moving it to more commercial use is going to reduce the value of my home.’**  
— Resident Ryan Volkel

doesn't have a lot of noise. It doesn't have a lot of employees."

The L-shaped property wraps around a gas station and abuts several residential properties.

Some neighbors said they were concerned about traffic spikes caused by the project and questioned where drivers

would enter and exit the site.

Ryan Volkel, who said he bought his house on Old Medford Avenue two years ago, said he enjoys seeing wildlife such as foxes and deer on the site.

"This is all being stripped from me," he said during a hearing before the board voted. "Moving it to more commercial use is going to reduce the value of my home."

The town board in 2013 had voted 5-2 to grant zoning changes permitting a 110,000-square-foot commercial center at the site. Guardino said that project never was built because Garratano "could not find an anchor tenant, unfortunately."

Asked by Councilman Dan Panico how the new plan differed from the previous version, town planner Joe Sanzani said the revised proposal included "a lot less commer-

cial development."

Responding to questions from Supervisor Edward P. Romaine, Guardino said the revised project has drawn "significant" interest from potential tenants he did not identify, including a firm that would manage the ministorage units. He added that vacant land on the site would provide a buffer between buildings and neighboring houses.

"We'll put in whatever landscaping the planning board asks us to. That's not a problem," Guardino said.

He said a walking trail that had been proposed as part of the 2013 plan had been scrapped. Neighbors had opposed the trail, saying they were concerned they would lose their privacy.

A gazebo proposed in 2013 will be built as part of the new proposal, officials said.

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