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Long Island
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Tallgrass approved

By **DAVID REICH-HALE**
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The Town of Brookhaven on Tuesday approved the Tallgrass development plan in Shoreham that will convert 320 acres into residential units, commercial property and ballfields.

The land is currently occupied by a sod farm and golf course.

By a 5-2 vote, the town's board approved a change of zone that allows the planned development district to move forward. The plan had the support of Supervisor Brian X. Foley, but was opposed by Councilman Kevin McCarrick, who represents Shoreham on Brookhaven's board.

McCarrick said he would rather see 283 single-family homes which could be built as-of-right on the Tallgrass site.

According to Alec Ornstein, of Ornstein Leyton Company in Garden City, one of the developers that own the property and has proposed the Tallgrass mixed-use project, the 283 homes would foster more school-age children, resulting in a \$4 million-a-year increase in costs for Shoreham schools. On the other hand, Shoreham schools would net a \$500,000 increase in tax revenue if the planned development district is built.

McCarrick argued that the Tallgrass plan had grown too big, and if implemented, would have too much of an impact on Shoreham and surrounding areas. The town will impose size restrictions on retail space at Tallgrass to avoid any mega-stores.

The latest configuration of the plan called for 387 condos, 175,000 square feet of retail and office space, open space and 18 acres of athletic fields. The golf course would remain.

But the Brookhaven town board approved a slightly scaled-down Tallgrass plan that allows 352 housing units and 125,000 square feet of retail space, with the largest store no larger than 45,000 square feet. The developers' attorney, Larry Feldman of Farrell Fritz in Uniondale, said that the town went into great detail in their approval, outlining more than \$40 million in public benefits from the project, like preserving the golf course, building ball fields and parks, and from property tax revenue.

The Tallgrass plan still needs to be approved by the Pine Barrens Commission, which is scheduled to vote on the project next month.