

**Around LI**

**Policing session set in Northport**

Northport Village officials have scheduled a virtual public comment session to discuss a recent survey conducted by the Northport Village Police Review Committee. The virtual session will be on Feb. 2 at 6 p.m.

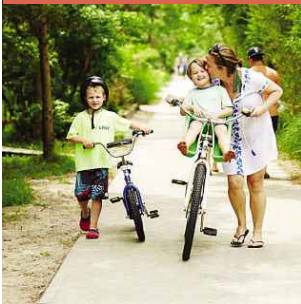
The purpose of the survey was to determine the community's attitudes about its local police force and to specifically identify areas of concern.

The committee was formed by Mayor Damon McMullen in accordance with an executive order issued by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo last June to address "tensions and lack of trust between communities throughout the state and the law enforcement that serves them," a village news release said.

The order requires each local government in the state to adopt a plan by April 1 to be eligible for future state funding.

Visit [northportny.gov](http://northportny.gov) or the police department's website at [northportvillagepolice.com](http://northportvillagepolice.com) for more information. — DEBORAH S. MORRIS

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YVONNE ALBINOWSKI

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**BROOKHAVEN TOWN**

**SENSE OF REPURPOSE**

With new zoning, housing could take over empty strip malls in the town

BY CARL MACGOWAN  
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A new Brookhaven Town zoning code believed to be the first of its kind on Long Island could help rejuvenate languishing retail and commercial sites by reusing them for new purposes, officials and business leaders say.

The Commercial Redevelopment District zoning category, adopted last month by the town board, would allow property owners to propose housing projects and other uses for abandoned bowling alleys, strip malls and big-box stores, town officials said.

Supporters of the plan say it could help eliminate eyesores that remain without tenants amid a changing economy and the fiscal devastation of coronavirus. The new zoning would come with special incentives to help create housing for people with special needs or redevelop properties near train stations and other mass transit hubs, officials said.

"This is a code to help us kind of renew the look for Brookhaven," Town Supervisor Edward P. Romaine said Thursday. "We're living in an economy that changes very rapidly."

The redevelopment districts are what planning officials call a "floating zone" that can be superimposed on a specific property without changing the site's zoning. For example, the zone could allow apartments or single-family homes on a site zoned for retail, as long as the housing project meets certain conditions.

Business groups had lobbied public officials for several years to loosen zoning restrictions in areas where they say codes make it difficult to replace stores that had become antiquated or obsolete.

"The retail environment has changed — we all know that — for a variety of reasons," said



NEWSDAY / JOHN PARASKEVAS

Owners of Port Plaza in Port Jefferson Station, an older shopping center, are contemplating redevelopment.

Mitchell Pally, chief executive of Islandia-based Long Island Builders Institute. "Our goal here is to take underutilized retail centers . . . and use them for a beneficial purpose. No one wants to see them empty. No one wants to see them vacant."

Pally, a Stony Brook resident, said some retail sites would be perfect for housing, which usually is not allowed under commercial zoning.

"Having multifamily in these areas is good planning," Pally said, adding that the redevelopment district zoning is the first of its kind on the Island. "Our thought is it makes perfect sense. . . . Brookhaven hopefully is going to be the leader in making it happen."

Changing zoning designations is much better than dealing with chronically blighted properties, Jennifer Dzvonnar, president of the Port Jefferson

**Everything old . . .**

. . . might be new again under Brookhaven Town's new Commercial Redevelopment District code. Here are some examples of areas that could benefit.

■ **Port Jefferson Station:** Owners of the Port Plaza shopping mall on Route 112 are contemplating redevelopment, town officials said.

■ **East Patchogue:** Brookhaven officials say a section of the Montauk Highway shopping district could be ripe for revitalization.

■ **Lake Grove:** Vacant box stores may need to be replaced with housing or other types of uses, Long Island Builders Institute chief executive Mitchell Pally said.

Station-Terryville Chamber of Commerce, said at a Dec. 3 public hearing on the issue. She said the new districts would be

"fantastic" and would help create "more of a downtown feel" in her community.

Redevelopment districts also had the support of the Association for a Better Long Island, which represents the Island's real estate industry. The group said the districts would help Brookhaven communities recover from the economic ravages of COVID-19.

"ABLI views this as a zoning game changer for a region not known for quickly responding to lethal economic threats like the wreckage being created by COVID," ABLI executive director Kyle Strober said in a statement. "The creation of a floating zone, the Commercial Redevelopment District, provides the development industry with the necessary flexibility to repurpose existing properties to better serve the surrounding community's needs."