

# Town Board Sets Public Hearing for Blight Code and Adopts Draft Blight Study

posted on 10/6/2010 2:44:53 PM

**Farmingville, NY** - At the Brookhaven Town Board meeting on October 5, three resolutions to further the Blight to Light initiative were adopted: two resolutions set the public hearings for the Blight to Light code amendments for October 19 and another resolution accepted the Draft Blight Study, which examines the causes and offers solutions to the redevelopment of blight.

"Suburban blight has reached epidemic proportions in the Town of Brookhaven and the new Blight Code amendments will offer a real solution to turn Blight into opportunity," said Supervisor Mark Lesko, "The innovative scoring system will offer incentives to the private sector to encourage investment in properties where they otherwise would never invest, which will result in eradicating eyesores in our communities, stimulating exciting destinations, and creating jobs, thereby reducing property taxes."

The Town Board set two public hearings for October 19, 2010 to consider amendments to the Town code to establish a "Redevelopment Initiative", which is the Blight to Light scoring system. One public hearing will consider waiving Town fees as part of the incentive package and the other will consider amending Planning Board special permits for "Blight to Light" incentives.

The new code amendments will introduce attractive private sector incentives for the redevelopment of blight. Each project will be "scored" in three different categories: blight severity, location characteristics, and potential for re-development. For example, a project may receive points if the property has been vacant for decades and is a haven for crime, has community support, generates tax revenue and jobs, is a mixed-use project, is LEED compliant, and is located in a downtown or near a transit hub.

The combined "redevelopment achievement" score the project receives determines the level of the incentive package from the Town. The incentive packages, in order from the most basic incentive package to greatest incentive package, are:

- Illuminated Initiative Package: A redevelopment achievement score of 80-100 points.
- Bright Initiative Package: A redevelopment achievement score of 101-120 points.
- Radiant Initiative Package: A redevelopment achievement score of 121-140 points.
- Brilliant Initiative Package: A redevelopment achievement score of greater than 140 points.

If a project were to qualify for the Brilliant Incentive Package, the incentives under the Redevelopment Initiative, if adopted, could include:

- Expedited review by all Boards and Departments in the Town.
- 100% waiver of Town application and permit fees.
- Building permit refunds for LEED certified projects.
- An increase in Floor Area Ratio (FAR) through a special permit from the Town Planning Board.
- Shared parking credits.

The Town Board also accepted the Draft Blight Study in a resolution. There is a ten day comment period for this draft study. The Blight Study is a comprehensive document that defines blight, prioritizes properties for redevelopment, identifies blighted properties, and introduces redevelopment tools.

The hearings on October 19 will start at 6:30 pm.

## About Blight to Light

On April 26, 2010, Supervisor Lesko proposed the Blight to Light initiative. Lesko and the Brookhaven Industrial Development Agency premiered a film, "Blight to Light", at Stony Brook University's Charles B. Wang Center, which for the first time ever portrayed blight as opportunity. Following the premiere of the film, Supervisor Lesko identified "monuments to blight" in Brookhaven and introduced new proposals to provide incentives for redevelopment in the town, including a blight study, a sewer analysis, and new redevelopment incentives in the Town Code.

Since April 26, Blight to Light has had several successes in addition to setting the public hearings for the Blight Code and adopting the Draft Blight Study:

- Supervisor Lesko and Councilman Tim Mazzei announced the redevelopment of the former graffiti-ridden home depot on Route 112 in Patchogue, which will be a Raymour & Flanigan furniture retailer.
- Supervisor Lesko and Councilman Dan Panico celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Buckley's Irish Pub in Center Moriches, which was destroyed by a fire nearly five years ago.
- Supervisor Lesko and the Brookhaven Planning Department hosted a community meeting in July on the Ronkonkoma Hub and presented conceptual land use plans. 200 community members were in attendance at this meeting and many expressed their support.
- At the August 17 Town Board meeting, the Town Board awarded a contract to consultants to conduct a sewer analysis. The study will help to determine where sewers exist, where sewers are needed, who owns them, and if there is any opportunity to tap into excess capacity.

**Division of Public Information \* Office of the Supervisor**

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258