

Shopping center proposed for Brunswick Hospital site

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A new redevelopment proposal could put a shopping center on the site of the former Brunswick Hospital property in Amityville.

BH Realty, whose principal, Dr. Amar Jit Singh, was part-owner of the hospital, is finalizing a lease with CVS Pharmacy and would seek a bank, a restaurant and stores as other tenants, a lawyer for the company said at Monday night's Amityville board of trustees meeting.

"This site is in dire need of redevelopment," said Joseph Buzzell, a partner in the Melville real estate law firm Buzzell, Blanda & Visconti. "All buildings and land uses have a life expectancy, and the hospital lasted for over a century."

Brunswick Hospital, prominently placed on Broadway at Loudon Avenue, once employed hundreds. Generations of Amityville residents -- including trustee Kevin Smith and Deputy Mayor Jessica Bernius -- were born there.

It closed in 2005, and most major buildings were demolished in 2012.

BH is asking trustees to change zoning for the 7.67-acre parcel from business and residential to all business. Trustees tabled the matter, but Mayor James Wandell said they would take it up again at their Dec. 9 meeting.

The proposal would require approval from the village planning board, Suffolk County and state Department of Transportation before construction could start.

Trustee Nick LaLota said he was excited about the "potential to develop what's a pile of bricks right now" on the village's north end. "This can be something we can all be proud of." Redevelopment would also strengthen the tax base, he said.

The hospital once accounted for more than 7 percent of the village's assessed value, village attorney Bruce Kennedy said. In 2011, BH Realty paid the village \$359,000, but payments plummeted following demolition. BH also challenged its property tax assessment, and its claim that it had overpaid \$2 million since 2004 was settled this fall for \$500,000.

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Bay Village Civic Association president Joan Donnison said redevelopment would bring needed tax revenue, but she worried noise from delivery trucks and problems of architectural style could come too.

"If this CVS is going to be built, I hope they realize we're not going to accept the typical box style," she said.

Buzzell said in an interview Tuesday that construction of the CVS site could start this summer, with other elements coming in phases.

He could not estimate the dollar value of the project or the tax payments, but said the project could spark commerce in the area.

"This is going to be active, quality retail with Class A tenants, and quality retail will improve the downtown," he said.

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