

# Westbury Approves Bartone Development

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**T**he Village of Westbury Board of Trustees gave its approval for a 72-unit apartment building at 461 Railroad Ave. on Sept. 16.

Developer Terwilliger & Bartone Properties became the first applicant to take advantage of the new zoning approved by the village in December 2019 to transform a mainly industrial area of approximately 50 acres surrounding the railroad station. It was tabbed the Maple Union Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District to, per the language of the resolutions, "permit the development of transit oriented multi-family residential and mixed-use projects in the area surrounding" the LIRR Station.

In the resolutions approved by the board, the village noted that the proposed project included 80 parking spaces and "certain amenities (including affordable housing in excess of that required by the Code, preferential housing for veterans, inclusion of micro-units, and a sidewalk 'bump-out' which allows for a wider sidewalk and plantings)."

With village approval, and a green light from the county's Industrial Development Agency (IDA) for tax abatements and other benefits for the project, construction is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2022. It is estimated



**The entrance foyer to the Cornerstone in Farmingdale, one of the numerous projects developed by Terwilliger & Bartone Properties. (Screenshot)**

that it will take about 18 months.

Firm principal Anthony Bartone told the board at an August public hearing that 10 units will be set aside as lower than market rents for residents who meet federal housing guidelines regarding income.

Bartone has designated the Long Island Housing Partnership to manage the lottery for the affordable units in the building.

The board also found that Bartone's application is consistent with its Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) for the new zoning. At the public hearing, Mayor Peter Cavallaro had questions about

the traffic study that he felt needed further explorations. More specifically, the traffic conditions generated by the tenants and at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and School Street.

Bartone's representatives, R&M Engineering, submitted further studies that satisfied the village leaders that "the project will not result in an adverse change in the existing level of traffic," and further, "The traffic expected to be generated by the proposed project will be approximately twice the quantity of traffic as the existing use, some of which may be mitigated by the proximity of the LIRR train station."

In addition, no traffic light

is warranted at the corner of Railroad Avenue and School Street and the 80 parking lots were also deemed sufficient for the expected number of tenants.

In summary, the village determined that "the proposed action will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment," that the project "is consistent with the intent and the type of development contemplated by the TOD Zone," and "will not adversely affect the natural environment or property values in the area, and in fact will enhance them."

The resolution concluded "that the subject property is currently an underutilized and somewhat blighted light industrial site and the project is expected to uplift the use of the property, be additive to the tax base, enhance the aesthetic and visual appeal of the property, and enhance the land values of adjacent parcels."

Or as Bartone told the board last month, "Investment encourages investment. Revitalization encourages revitalization," The building will be five levels, with a parking floor partially below grade, and for zoning purposes the village will count it as four stories. At 50 feet, it is lower than the 65 feet allowed with bonuses under zoning.

As far as the payments in

lieu of taxes (PILOT) that the project is seeking, the village concludes that "there will be no revenue loss to the village or other taxing jurisdictions. Rather, there will be an increase in tax revenue, phased in over time, that will be accretive to all taxing jurisdictions, above what they are collecting today."

The current property, according to county records, paid \$62,461 in school and library taxes in 2020-21. County, town and special district taxes totaled \$30,800 in 2021.

Bartone stated that the warehouse pays \$9,647 in village taxes. He estimated that this figure will rise to \$52,403 once the apartment is done.

The village will require the apartment owner to agree to the following conditions:

"Minimum PILOT payment, pre-construction shall be no less than current gross taxes (school and village tax years 2021-22, general tax year 2021), and shall never decrease below that amount; Minimum first year PILOT payment, post-construction, after certificates of occupancy are issued shall be no less than \$136,614.11 (aggregate, excluding village make-whole)."

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