

# Farmingdale

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## Third Times A Charm

### Project Could Create New Community Center

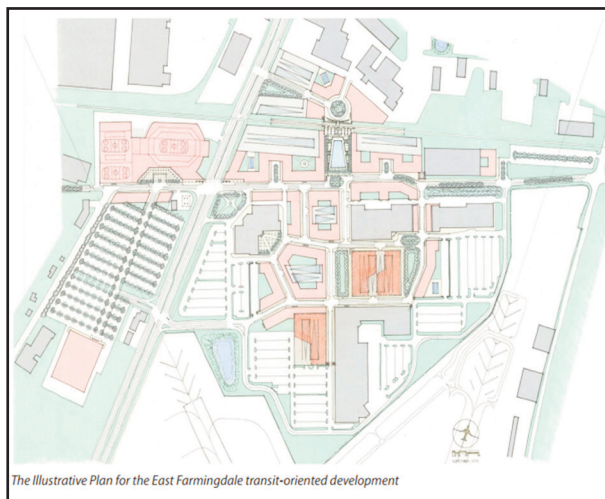
BY DANIEL OFFNER

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For most village residents the Eastern-most quadrant of Farmingdale, across the Rt. 110 border, offers little more than just the Multiplex Cinema, Republic Airport, the Long Island National Cemetery, Dave & Busters, and Adventureland. However, plans for a potential 10-15 year transit-oriented development project, centered around the former LIRR train station, could mean more business, housing and green space for the residents of East Farmingdale.

Located within the boundaries of the Town of Babylon, the East Farmingdale transit-oriented development project has historically received the support of Farmingdale village officials, including former Mayor "Butch" Starkie

**EAST FARMINGDALE on page 5**



The Illustrative Plan for the East Farmingdale transit-oriented development

## Book Explores Local Theme-Park

BY DANIEL OFFNER

DOFFNER@ANTONNEWS.COM

Growing up on Long Island, Christopher Mercaldo remembers how, as a child he spent countless hours with his family, marveling at the many different rides and attractions that Adventureland amusement park in Farmingdale had to offer.

Like many kids growing up in the area, Mercaldo says he was smitten with the idea of having his own little slice of Disneyland-magic right here in his backyard.

Adventureland first opened in 1962, at the height of a major suburban boom on Long Island. Over the last 52 years, several attractions have come and gone, but the park has continued providing the same family-friendly fun that it has for years.

"It is so unique," said Mercaldo, 24. "It's a small, family owned theme-park... that has stood the test of time."

Despite his fear of the large animatronic tree, which was a staple at the park throughout his childhood, he always had a thirst for knowledge. Even as a kid he would do his research, always staying up-to-date on who made the latest rides. He said that anytime a new book would come out about a rollercoaster he would buy it.

"My goal is to be the next Walt Disney," he said. "I hope to have a

**STREET FAIR on page 5**

**THEME-PARK on page 4**

## Street Fair Sees Successful Second Year

BY MARLO JAPPEN

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Customers shopped till they dropped, on June 8, as more than 200 vendors filled Main Street for the second annual Spring street fair, hosted by the Farmingdale Fire Department. Patrons from all across Long Island enjoyed the warm weather by wandering through a maze of hand-crafted jewelry, colorful dresses, handbags, sunglasses, workout gear, belts, phone cases, and baseball hats that were on display.

"I like looking at all the stuff," said 11-year-old Kim W. of Farmingdale. "My favorite is the posters."

Several local businesses also showcased their products, including Wild Lizzy's Gourmet Saltine Cookies, BrainCore Therapy, Planet Fitness, Power Home



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**STREET FAIR from page 1**

Remodeling of Melville and Bethpage Federal Credit Union, to name a few.

"The street fair is convenient because all the shops are close to each other," said Kim's older brother Josh, 15. "I came here to get new ear buds."

Throughout the fair the sweet aroma of fried dough filled the air, as shoppers went about perusing the unique merchandise. During the event, attendees indulged in fresh lemonade, gelato, Italian sausages, zeppoles, and pickles.

"I like the food," said Betty McDonald, 66. "The grilled cheese is delicious."

There were also plenty of attractions



for children, including bouncy castles, sand art, and pony rides. Throughout the fair, musicians played for the crowd, as vendors sold flowers outside of the Farmingdale Fire House.

For David McDonald, 76, the fair provides a fun way to mingle with members of the community.

"It gets everybody out of the house," he said. "I like meeting new faces. Also, it benefits local businesses."

**EAST FARMINGDALE from page 1**

who had been an advocate for the development along the East Farmingdale corridor.

Farmingdale's current Mayor Ralph Ekstrand says that while he is in support of the town's efforts to revitalize the area as a downtown hub, he said that historically people and consumers don't tread across the Rt. 110 barrier.

"[For the residents of East Farmingdale] to drive to a restaurant in the village has never been a common thing," Ekstrand said. "We would love to have a lunch crowd [on Main Street]... but in my opinion it's not going to work."

Similarly, the Village of Farmingdale has been working on its own transit-oriented development near the LIRR station at 120 Secatogue Ave.

"I am a firm believer in transit-oriented development mixed use buildings or affordable housing," Ekstrand said. "They're doing the same thing we're doing, they just have more space to do it."

The project, while still in the preliminary stages, originated in 2002 when former Babylon Town Supervisor Steve Bellone called for the reopening of the LIRR station off of Rt. 110. Due to an MTA budgetary shortfall, plans to reopen the station fell through, until 2010, when the town hired consultants with Speck & Associates.

"Long Island does not need to be tethered to a car," Jeff Speck told the *Farmingdale Observer* in March 2010. "If you give people a reason to walk instead of drive, you improve everyone's quality of life."

According to Jonathan Keyes, the director of downtown development for the Town of Babylon, the goal of the project is to create a "downtown" hub for residents living in

the East Farmingdale community. Working with members of the East Farmingdale Civic Association, the town's consultants proposed developing on top of 120 acres of property around the Airport Shopping Center.

The proposed development calls for 2.2 million square feet of new retail, residential, industrial and office spaces. Other key features include 4,300 new parking spaces and aesthetic improvements to some of the major roadways, sidewalks, streetlights, and plantings in the area.

"There are a few things we are looking for," explained East Farmingdale Civic Association President Thomas Joseph Jr. "We don't have a place for our children."

According to the East Farmingdale Civic Association, one of the key elements to the project involves "next generation housing," which would provide affordable living space with the goal of enticing young adults to stay in the area. He added that the project would also make the area friendlier to small business by creating a walkable community.

However, Joseph Jr. said that nothing is set in stone until the town selects a master builder.

In addition to any potential development, the proposal will once again look to try and reopen the currently defunct LIRR station after being shut down for more than 25 years.

Keyes adds that he hopes to see "commercial synergy" between some of the Farmingdale businesses in support of the 10-to-15 year long construction project, which is intended to generate tax revenue for the town. Although the town's consultants previously stated that depending on the cost of construction, the project could be a \$1-billion venture; Keyes said it would be premature to try and quantify how much money



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