

# LIPA board taps tax lawyer

New trustee is strong advocate of tax challenges

BY MARK HARRINGTON  
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The Long Island Power Authority has named Lauren Harris, a prominent tax-challenge attorney who heads a local developer's group, to its board of trustees.

Harris, president of the Association for a Better Long Island, will replace Tom McAteer, an appointee of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo who left the board in December.

ABLI, which represents some of the island's largest developers, has been a powerful advocate for LIPA's decade-old strategy to challenge property taxes on power plants the authority believes are over-assessed.

Harris, a noted tax-certiorari attorney, joins LIPA's board as the authority is becoming increasingly aggressive, and successful, in its tax challenges of local power plants that are owned by National Grid.

In December, LIPA announced settlement of challenges in Nassau County over taxes it pays for the E.F. Barrett Power station in Island Park, and the Glenwood Landing property in Glenwood Landing, which no longer has a large power plant.

The settlement needs approval by the Nassau County Legislature. Island Park residents, who face tax increases of up to \$200 a month by the last year of the settlement have been intensely critical of



Lauren Harris heads the Association for a Better Long Island, which represents large LI developers.

the agreement.

Brookhaven Town already has settled a tax case for the Port Jefferson power station.

Harris has been an attorney for more than 30 years and is the founding member and president of the Institute of Real Estate of Hofstra University. She also serves as Downstate chairman in Tax Certiorari and Condemnation for the New York State Bar Association.

Harris in an interview called this "a pivotal time" for LIPA given recent tax-challenge settlements and a continuing case with Huntington Town.

"It's a sticky situation," she said. "It's emotional, it's hard to

dissect. I have a good understanding of the subject. I get where people get confused. I look forward to demystifying and allaying fears."

LIPA is awaiting a verdict in the largest of its multiple tax challenges — the \$84 million it pays annually in taxes on the Northport power station. LIPA over a period of seven years wants to reduce by taxes on the plant by half, but residents and the town are fighting the reduction. A trial was held last year.

ABLI executive director Kyle Strober said Harris' appointment "underscores our organization's shared goals with the governor" of reduced energy costs and more sustainable, reli-

able energy. Harris "has the insight, expertise and commitment to help drive that agenda."

Harris' appointment is in stark contrast to that of Ali Mohammed, who was appointed by the state Senate last year. When the Wall Street executive joined the LIPA trustees in July, he declared one of his "first priorities" was to "end LIPA's practice of reckless tax-certiorari lawsuits against communities and school districts."

LIPA "must immediately cease all litigation" relating to tax-challenge suits, he said, though he's since been less vocal on the topic at LIPA board meetings.

## Police probing death of man found in New Cassel

Police responding to a call for assistance at an abandoned home on a side street in New Cassel Sunday evening found a man dead — and said detectives are now investigating the case as a homicide.

Nassau County police did not release the identity of the victim, described only as "a male Hispanic in his 30s" and

did not detail how they believe the man died.

Police said Third Precinct officers made the discovery at the home on Broadway, just west of the Wantagh Parkway, at 6:02 p.m.

Homicide Squad detectives are now investigating, but police said Monday additional details were not available.

— JOHN VALENTI



A body was found by police Sunday evening at this abandoned house.

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### CORRECTION

A photograph of Jacqueline A. Rappel, a partner at Forchelli Deegan Terrana in Uniondale, was provided by Forchelli Deegan Terrana. It appeared in Monday's business section with an incorrect credit line.

### THIS DATE IN HISTORY

**1783** Britain's King George III proclaimed a formal cessation of hostilities in the American Revolutionary War.

**1789** Electors chose George Washington to be the first president of the United States.

**1945** President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin began a wartime conference at Yalta.

**1974** Newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst, 19, was kidnapped in Berkeley, California, by the radical Symbionese Liberation Army.

**1976** More than 23,000 people died when a severe earthquake struck Guatemala.

**1983** Singer Karen Carpenter died in California, at age 32.

**1997** A civil jury in Santa Monica, California, found O.J. Simpson liable for the deaths of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

**2004** The social networking website Facebook had its beginnings as Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg launched "Thefacebook."