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Coalition renews push for self certification to speed building permits

By DAVID WINZELBERG

A coalition of Long Island economic development groups is urging the state to pass legislation establishing a self-certification program for building permit applications and construction documents filed with local governments.

The coalition, which includes the Association for a Better Long Island, the Long Island Builders Institute and the Long Island Association, are lobbying elected officials to support two bills currently in the State Senate that aim to approve self certification statewide.

Self certification, also known as professional certification, allows qualified licensed engineers to inspect and approve several steps in the permitting process for construction projects – things like architectural plans, wastewater flow and landscape design – instead of waiting for municipal inspectors to get around to it.

The current legislation would allow the issuance of a permit based upon a certification by a registered architect or engineer licensed in New York State and that the application meets fire prevention and building codes. The program would reduce the backlog of applications the Long Island development community is facing where, as a result of COVID-19, some building departments have backlogs over 100 days. For the local municipalities to move forward in establishing a self-certification program, it requires the State Legislature and the governor to grant them the authority. The self-certification program has already existed in New York City for 25 years and has made the city's approvals process more streamlined.

This isn't the first time self-certification legislation has been floated. However, devel-



opment advocates say this time is different and the need is more pressing. They say that staffing levels in municipal departments are at historic lows and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are stifling delays in municipal building departments as a result of maintaining safety protocols.

"It is clear to all concerned that it is essential that our municipalities make their building permit process more efficient during these very difficult times so that millions of

dollars in private investment can be made all across Long Island, thus putting more of our citizens back to work," Mitchell Pally, CEO of the Long Island Builders Institute said in a written statement. "This legislation would allow each municipality to do so after they have already approved the construction of the project through its entire review process. It has worked extremely well in New York City and there is no reason why it cannot work in all parts of New York State."

The coalition is also supporting efforts by the Town of Huntington to adopt a self-certification program, which Supervisor Chad Lupinacci said "would reduce operating expenses and improve efficiency in the building permit approval process." The town would need state approval to adopt the program.

Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island, said self certification creates jobs and economic activity and saves local municipal resources that can be dedicated to far more pressing matters.

"There is no reason why Long Island shouldn't have the same economic development advantage as New York City which has been permitting self-certification since 1995," Strober said in the statement. "In this era of a painful pandemic-induced recession Long Island should be given every tool to rebuild its economy. This legislation would allow significant progress in achieving that goal."

Glen Cherveney, a principal of GRCH Architecture in Islandia, supports the effort to allow self certification.

"When the construction industry gets busy, it has been very challenging to get approvals and inspections from some towns," Cherveney said.

However, Cherveney has concerns about increased liability that self certification could put on architecture firms.

"As long as each design professional certifies their own work and it's not all under one umbrella, then that would work," he said.

While the bill on self certification has already been proposed in the State Senate, the coalition is working with a number of Democratic-majority assembly members from upstate to also introduce the legislation in the Assembly.

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Inked

3 Huntington Quadrangle, Melville

The law firm of L'Abbate, Balkan, Colavita & Contini leased 18,551 square feet of office space at 3 Huntington Quadrangle in Melville. The law firm is relocating from 1001 Franklin Ave. in Garden City. Phil Heilpern, Martin Lomazow and Matt Manoogian of **CBRE** represented the tenant, while **CBRE's** Robert Seidenberg, Ralph Guiffre and Daniel Brandel represented landlord Lionstone Capital in the lease transaction.

1121 Lincoln Ave., Bohemia

Pascall Mechanical leased 1,600 square feet of industrial space at 1121 Lincoln Ave. in Bohemia. Michael Zere of **Zere**

Real Estate Services represented the tenant, while landlord 1121 Lincoln LLC was self-represented in the lease transaction.

24 Railroad Ave., East Northport

Accord Bus LLC purchased a 4,074-square-foot industrial building on 1.56 acres at 24 Railroad Ave. in East Northport for \$1.125 million. Bob Desmond of **Industry One Realty** represented the buyer, as well as the seller, RRCB Realty Association LLC, in the sales transaction.

5187 Sunrise Highway, Bohemia

Jennifer Furniture leased a 10,000-square-foot retail space in the Sayville Plaza shopping center at

5187 Sunrise Highway in Bohemia. The space was formerly occupied by Pier 1. Rachel Butiu of **Mason Asset Management** represented the tenant, while Robert Delavale was the in-house representative for the landlord, the **Breslin Organization**, in the lease transaction.

19 Pinehurst Drive, Bellport

Research Property Holdings LLC purchased an 11,574-square-foot industrial building on 1.11 acres at 19 Pinehurst Drive in Bellport for \$2.7 million. Tom Attivissimo of **Greiner-Maltz Long Island** represented the buyer, while Jeremy Hackett of **Metro Realty Services** represented the seller, NAA Properties LLC, in the sales transaction.

75 Broadhollow Road, Farmingdale

LPS Office Interiors purchased a 21,392-square-foot building on .98 acres at 75 Broadhollow Road for \$3.5 million. The buyer was represented by **Northwind Realty**, while Richard Cohen of **Ashlind Properties** represented seller Ideal Furniture Outlet in the sales transaction.

1 Arnold Drive, Huntington

Global Logistics, a trucking and transport company, leased 46,000 square feet of industrial space at 1 Arnold Drive in Huntington. Doug Donatello of **Metro Realty Services** represented the tenant, while Scott Silverstein of **Colliers International Long Island** represented the landlord Shemrock Holdings in the lease transaction.