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## Riverside Hamlet Center Unveiled

### Consultant says it's an 'action plan'

By Rebecca Cooper

As he outlined a conceptual layout for a new hamlet center in Riverside along Route 24 at a Town Board work session on Friday, consultant Ernie Hutton pointed out that for once, results of a town-sponsored study were not just a pipe dream.

"This is really an action plan," he said of the future development, which would encompass the old drive-in movie theater site in the hamlet and an adjacent parcel that together total almost 50 acres.

"It has real property, and real potential tenants," he added. "It's not just a plan for someone else's property."

Mr. Hutton's consulting firm performed a study of the site at the town's request, after the property owners expressed an interest in guiding the development to the needs of the community, according to town officials.

The town had already approved a light industrial subdivision on the 35-acre parcel owned by Bruce Barnet, that would have subdivided it into 32 commercial parcels, but the Quogue developer agreed to work with the town and the community after a hamlet study recommended a walkable, mixed-use hamlet center on the parcel and adjacent property.

The neighboring land, a narrow, 12-acre residential parcel that runs between State Route 24 and Old Quogue Road owned by developer Tom McCarthy, could help provide road access to the new commercial development as well as add a residential component.

Mr. Hutton's study calls for the entire site to be rezoned from light industrial and residential to a mixed-use special zone that would retain the uses of the underlying zoning, but also allow for small retail stores, offices, accessory apartments and a community center.

Mr. Barnet still plans to develop about half of his property with industrial tenants, but Town Supervisor Patrick Heaney, who said he has spoken with Mr. Barnet through the planning process, said the developer agreed to set those buildings toward the back of the property and away from Route 24-making room for the hamlet center.

The consultant and the town's land management department began formulating a plan for the site after a three-day design forum held at the Phillips Avenue School in Riverside in March that incorporated the suggestions of numerous residents who turned out for it.

As it stands, the conceptual plan includes several buildings for such businesses as a small grocery store, dry cleaner, coffee shop or retail options that the Riverside hamlet is lacking, according to the community. Each retail store would also house small apartments on the second floor.

The plan also includes a hamlet green, a community recreation center, and, eventually, a Five Towns College satellite campus for its graduate broadcasting program. The college already has two radio towers for its radio stations on the site.