

Babylon IDA to unveil tax plan for AvalonBay at public hearing in Amityville on Monday

By Carolyn James

The Babylon Town Industrial Development Agency (IDA) will be holding a public informational meeting on Mon., March 16 to outline the tax benefit package being offered to AvalonBay, which is building a multi-residential community on the old Brunswick Hospital site at 366 Broadway, Amityville.

The IDA offers financial incentive packages to developers designed to help lower operating costs, and, in turn, encourage development and economic prosperity to the town. These include real estate tax abatements, sales and use-tax abatements for exemption on. State and county sales tax on materials end equipment included in the project and mortgage recording tax abatement, if a mortgage is used to finance the project.

In the case of AvalonBay, the IDA is offering the developer a 15-year PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) program. The estimated savings to the developer over the 15-year period is \$17.2 million.

Currently, the annual taxes paid on the property is \$110,326; in the first year of the PILOT, the developer will pay \$154,589, with those annual costs increasing each year throughout the 15 years. The final year's payment is expected to be \$2.6 million, and the total taxes paid over the term of the PILOT will be \$19.2 million.

The abatements apply to all taxing entities including the town, county, village, schools and fire department.

"We will see additional tax revenues on that site from the first year on, with a full assessment in 15 years, which is not bad," said Mayor Dennis Siry. "When you consider all of the other advantages of this project, it is a win-win for everyone."

The developer is investing \$119.4 million in the project, which is expected to create 7 full-time jobs, as well as construction jobs over the three-years the project is expected to be completed.

AvalonBay is building 317 apartments with 21 townhomes on the 7.68 acre site. There will be 49 studio apartment, 184 one-bedroom, 69 two-bedroom and 15 three-bedroom units.

The hearing will be held in Village Hall, 21 Ireland Pl., Amityville at 7 p.m.

Winter movies at the Amityville Public Library

Enjoy snacks and a winter movie at the Amityville Public Library! Residents can enjoy a free film with their friends and family on March 19, beginning at 1:30 p.m. at 19 John St. in Amityville.

No registration is necessary. For more information, call 631-264-0567, or visit www.amityvillepubliclibrary.org.

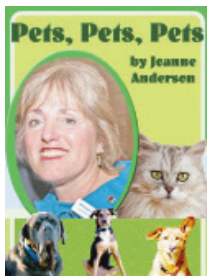
Friends of the Copiague Library book and DVD sale

The Friends of the Copiague Library will hold a book and DVD sale on March 21, 2020 in the Copiague Library Auditorium, located at 50 Deauville Blvd. in Copiague, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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85 Broadway, Suite A, Amityville, NY 11701



The Dog Search: In August 2018, the Martinez family from Hackensack, NJ, visited Last Hope in Wantagh looking for a dog who would bond with their oldest child Maria, then 12, to adopt and be trained as her seizure-alert dog. They'd been to three other LI shelters that Saturday and were about to give up when they discovered Last Hope Animal Rescue, was next door to Town of Hempstead Shelter.

For the last few months, soon after Maria's seizure disorder suddenly surfaced, they'd searched on Petfinder plus at shelters and adoption events in NJ. They'd looked at about 50 dogs but none fit their criteria of a young, medium-sized dog that would be drawn to Maria until their stop at Last Hope.

Hope, a two-year-old Border Collie/Cocker, arrived from Bowling Green Shelter in KY that day. Maria and Hope gravitated to one another right away, even though Maria's three younger siblings were present too. Maria was insistent "Hope" was the one, especially because of the dog's and the shelter's name. She felt "Hope from Last Hope" was meant to be her service dog.

Training at Home: People can purchase (for as much as \$20,000) a trained seizure-alert dog but waiting lists are 18 months and training can take 18 more months. Maria needed a canine companion much sooner. The family researched seizure-alert dogs. Dad Gabriel had done his homework and relied on a book about training seizure-alert dogs, and advice from a trainer at their local Petco.

From day 1, Hope became Maria's dog. She slept on the bed next to Maria who fed, walked and played with her to cement their bond. Hope became friendly with the other children, ages 11, 6 and 4 in 2018. She watched over them, but essentially stayed with Maria. She met Grandpa's four playful dogs, but was more interested with being near Maria. This young dog is an old soul.

The seizure-alert skill is a combo of training and the dog's intuitive bond with her person. Hope detects an imminent, epileptic seizure by smell, and would alert and then lie down next to Maria. Psychogenic (panic seizures) do not give off a scent, but Hope learned to anticipate these too by Maria's behavior such as crying or hyperventilating. She gets "in her face" and licks Maria to calm her, similar to what PTSD dogs do.

Hope alerts Maria to an epileptic seizure with three signals: 1) she barks, 2) she "grumble" talks to her, 3) she walks in a close circle. If Maria falls down, she alerts a family member by barking. Her talking is amazing. Hope was already housebroken when adopted. The family lives in an apartment building so barking must be kept low. Hope would talk and stare at her family when nature called. It's as if she is having a conversation with them.

Winners go to Disney. Hope is a Last

Hope adopted dog and a winner. She went to Disney too.

Hope is a service dog, a miracle worker and formerly a discarded dog from a Southern shelter, transported to Last Hope and her wonderful new life.



Maria and Hope, her seizure-alert dog adopted from Last Hope in 2018.



Hope and her family in Disney World.



Maria's Purple Day poster bringing awareness to epilepsy and seizure-alert dogs.

now 14, spoke about epilepsy at one of the conference panel discussions with Hope lying at her feet for two hours. The dog sighed after an hour, but settled down with just a kind word from Maria.

Last Hope volunteers are thrilled for our coincidental pairing of Maria and her Kentucky rescue dog named "Hope." Maria's dad Gabriel noted: "We saw other seizure-alert dogs during the Disney conference. Most were Golden Retrievers or Labs who took their job seriously, but none looked as happy as Hope while doing so. Hope is truly a blessing."

Training Classes: Hope was also enrolled in training classes at Petco. She learned to walk on a leash with her head up rather than sniffing the ground. When her six-foot leash is held long, it means she is free to go potty. When her leash is held short, Hope is working and her head should be up. She wears a harness when she is outdoors on the job, and just a collar when home and more relaxed but still alert. Two weeks after moving to NJ, Hope became a student in Canine Good Citizen (CGC) classes at Petco. She passed the test of 10 tasks the first time and earned her CGC title.

Gabriel works with Hope, who has mastered commands like Leave It, Snack, Crate, Let's Go, Out. They are still perfecting her ability to ignore dogs who pass by because Hope wants to say "hello" to them.

Maria's Pet Partner: Despite her family's requests and reassurances, the Hackensack school district won't allow Maria to bring Hope to school, citing allergies and other students' fear of dogs as reasons. Instead, they assigned an aide to Maria. Hope accompanies Maria alone or with family on all other outings: sporting events, visits to friends, shopping. If Hope were to alert Maria while out on the street, she would also help her get to a safe space.

Maria has been seizure-free for six months. She's back in honors classes. Gabriel attributes much of this physical and emotional improvement to Hope's presence. Maria no longer has an aide at school, but if seizures return, her parents want Hope accompanying Maria to high school.

Hope Vacations with Family: A year ago, Hope flew to California with her family. She is permitted to stay in the cabin because of her service dog vest and a letter from Maria's doctor. She lies at Maria's feet on the plane. The kids love to dress Hope up for occasions. This West Coast trip added boots to her wardrobe. Hope was reluctant at first but when her paws felt the hot pavement, boots became another fashion accessory.

Several weeks ago the Martinez family flew to Disney World for an epilepsy conference hosted by the Anita Kaufmann Foundation, a public charity created in 2001 with the mission of educating the public not to fear people with epilepsy and brain trauma, and the Global Sponsor of Purple Day® the largest grassroots epilepsy awareness initiative in the world. Hope, wearing Mickey Mouse ears, enjoyed Disney attractions with her family. She accompanied Maria on the mermaid ride, and was not afraid of the life-size characters.

About 700 people attended the conference. Hope greeted autistic and other special needs children without hesitation. Maria,