

Riverhead Town, civic continue Knightland shopping center fight

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Adding a small delay to an already yearlong postponement, the Riverhead Town Board on Aug. 20 tabled a resolution that would have granted a land-clearing permit to the developer of a proposed 32,500-square-foot shopping center in Wading River.

That project, called Knightland, was approved by the town planning board on Dec. 15, 2011. The next day, a local civic association sued the town to block it, a lawsuit it ultimately lost in State Supreme Court after the developer successfully argued the association did not have legal standing to file the challenge.

But the Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition appealed that decision to a higher court. Its president, Dominique Mendez, asked the court to rule that the planning board failed to consider the overall impact of several other proposed shopping centers in the Wading River community before it acted.

The underlying issue of the Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition's legal standing is still unresolved. But when developer Kenn Barra applied recently for a land-clearing permit, Mendez went to court again.

She obtained the temporary restraining order which kept the town board from voting last week on the land clearing permit. Riverhead officials now have until Tuesday to respond. If they win their case, the temporary restraining order will be lifted and the land clearing permit can be issued.

But it will take yet another court decision on the validity of the original Supreme Court decision before the town can issue the needed building permit.