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Ferry: An app for that soon

BY SARAH ARMAGHAN
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The Fire Island Water Taxi is test-piloting mobile technology this summer to give riders the option to pay by credit card — with hopes to bring it aboard ferries by Labor Day, company officials said yesterday.

The app, powered by London-based technology company Manabi, which has created apps used for the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad, went live for use on the water taxis after Memorial Day weekend, said Tim Mooney, president of Fire Island Ferries, which also owns the water taxi company.

Mooney said he found out about the technology from a friend who operates ferries in London.

The rollout has been smooth sailing so far, Mooney said, and if all goes as planned, tickets for ferry rides will be added in September.

“When things slow down a bit and we work any kinks out, we’ll add the ferries,” Mooney said. “So far, we haven’t hit any roadblocks, but for the taxis, we’re talking about tens of thousands of passengers each summer. For the ferries, it’s hundreds of thousands.”

Sean Carlin, a manager with the water taxi, said there have been customers interested in being able to pay by credit card for years. “It’s a long time coming for us,” Carlin said.

While “convenience” for riders is the biggest sell, both Mooney and Carlin believe it will help speed up the boarding process, especially on packed boats. Carlin hopes the ease of mobile payments will increase ridership as well.

“People are on vacation and, it being Fire Island, it’s a little secluded and it’s not easy to have a bunch of cash on you all the time,” Carlin said.

Paper tickets can still be purchased at ports or on boats, but only with cash.

It will cost the companies a “standard fee” for each credit card transaction, but the companies, for now, will not pass that charge on to customers, Mooney and Carlin said.

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Farmingdale fatality

A 14-year-old girl riding as a passenger in a minivan Wednesday night in Farmingdale was killed when an oncoming Jeep Wrangler struck the vehicle, Nassau police said. The name and hometown of the girl had not been released as of last night.

Suffolk police said the girl was a passenger in the 2017 Honda Odyssey about 6:15 p.m. when the 45-year-old driver attempted a left turn from westbound Fulton Street onto southbound Main Street. The Jeep, heading east-

bound on Fulton Street, then hit the minivan, police said.

The Honda spun and hit two other vehicles waiting at the traffic light in the northbound lanes of Main Street, police said. The drivers of the Honda and Jeep, and an occupant of one of the stopped vehicles, were treated for injuries that were not life-threatening, police said. Police did not release names of either driver or the injured occupant of the stopped vehicle.

— WILLIAM MURPHY



Colonial Springs farm and nursery.

Anger

BY DENISE M. BONILLA
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Wheatley Heights residents expressed anger and disbelief this week that they are still fighting the development of an apartment complex more than a decade after the project was first proposed.

The residents spoke out Wednesday at a Babylon Town Board public hearing on the rezoning of 16.09 acres of Colonial Springs Farm from single-family home zoning to multiple-residence. Property owner

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Hull of a party

At left, Landon Porter, 9, of Mattituck shows off strawberries he hulled yesterday at the Mattituck Lions Club Strawberry Festival. Above, Lions Club member Manny Merino of Greenport volunteers at the four-day festival, which runs through Sunday.

More photos: newsday.com/strawberry

Violence costs tavern liquor license

BY DEBORAH S. MORRIS
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It's last call for at least two years at Melissa Restaurant in Huntington Station.

The New York State Liquor Authority denied a new application request for a license for the restaurant, known locally as Melissa's Tavern and a place that has been beset by violence in recent years.

The previous owners in November surrendered the license to serve alcohol to satisfy several charges brought against Melissa's by the state liquor authority.

The full authority board voted June 8 to deny an application submitted by Rosa Alvarez De Romero, the sister of the previous license holder, based on "character and fitness" of how the tavern was run previously. They also expressed concern that she was related to the previous owner.

"We know now with certainty for the next two years there won't be a liquor license at that location," Huntington Town Board member Mark Cuthbertson said. "I'm thankful the state liquor authority took into account all the information they received about the criminal activity and violence at Melissa's."

Cuthbertson had provided the liquor authority with a 19-page document that included police reports and newspaper reports of violent activity associated with the tavern at 1419 New York Ave.

Matthew Fleischer, the Mines-based attorney representing Alvarez De Romero, did not respond to requests for comment.

The previous owners, Jose and Maria Bautista, gave up their license in response to pending charges against them and paid the state \$1,000 penalty, a liquor authority spokesman said previously.

A lawyer who represented the couple in previous liquor authority proceedings said the couple sold the establishment but he didn't know when.

Longtime Huntington Station resident Jim McGoldrick, who has been active in efforts to improve quality of life, said denying the license for the tavern is another positive step toward that goal.

"Any establishment that endangers the public safety can't be tolerated," McGoldrick said. "If you want to run an establishment you got to run it fair and clean and you can't have any issues, especially violence including gunshots."

over plan for rental housing

Gustave Wade wants to build 264 one- and two-bedroom rental units on the southern portion of his 32-acre site, the town's last working farm.

"I feel a little like Yogi Berra, it's déjà vu all over again," said attorney Fred Eisenbud, who spoke on behalf of the Concerned Taxpayers of Wheatley Heights/Dix Hills, a civic association.

In 2001, Wade proposed rezoning to build 494 senior units and 100 assisted-living spaces on the 32-acre parcel. In 2004, he sought to build

264 senior apartments and 149 co-op units. In 2006, the town board approved Wade's application to build 56 single-family homes on the site.

"I don't understand why we're back here," said resident Lystra Gaddy. "This was done. As far as I'm concerned this is disrespectful to our community."

As with past rezoning attempts, residents protested the proposal, saying the project is too dense and will negatively impact their community.

"I'm appalled that this is

being entertained," said Darlette McFarlane. With the latest proposal "we still have the traffic problems, the environmental problems, just the quality-of-life issues that have not been resolved, and we're still coming back to this."

Wade, of East Northport, cited a recent Long Island Association report stating that more than 515,000 millennials live on Long Island. Those residents, who are between the ages of 20 and 34, are spurring the need for more rentals, Wade said. "Long Island's fu-

ture is in the hands of the millennials who are getting out of college and looking for a place to live," he said. "This board has the ability to keep the millennials here."

David Fliegel of New Hyde Park is one of those millennials, and he said he favors the project because a lack of affordable rentals has forced him to live 25 miles from his job. "I would like to remain on the Island and continue my future here, but at this moment I frequently debate jumping ship," he said.

PHOTO: JIM BERRY FOR NEWSDAY