

# Storage Of Boats At Canal Disputed

By Thomas Frank

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A nasty dispute over water access that has divided a community in Wantagh sprang into public view yesterday as the Hempstead Zoning Board of Appeals considered applications to store boats on land along a small canal.

The zoning appeals could have implications for the many people in Hempstead who store their boats during the winter on otherwise vacant land.

At yesterday's hearing, three people sought zoning variances to store their boats on land next to the Grand Canal, which they said the town has told them is illegal.

The dispute arose last year after people who own homes across the street from the canal protested to the town that the boats were unsightly and blocked their views of and access to the water.

"They're an eyesore," Ambrose Splescia said yesterday during a break in the hearing. "This changes the whole character of the neighborhood. We have a strip boatyard in front of our property."

But the people who own the 40-foot-long plots of land along the canal say they are being singled out by members of the Mandalay Property Owners Association because they don't live in the neighborhood.

"Everybody's been storing their boats for years," said Hank Kieseheuer, who was seeking permission yesterday to store his 29-foot boat on the 40-foot-by-20-foot lot he bought in 1987 for \$30,000.

Meir Moza, the lawyer for Kieseheuer and applicants Irwin Shangold and William Weber, told the zoning board if the three men could not store boats on their property, their property would lose all its value. "There's no other value for the property other than storing boats," Moza said. Moza said storing boats on the lots does "no harm to the community." He also told the zoning board if his clients are denied permission for boat storage, he would seek to have owners of boat lots elsewhere in the town denied storage access.