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Ruling That Long Island Village Engaged in Biased Zoning Is Upheld

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS MARCH 23, 2016

A federal appeals court on Wednesday affirmed a lower court's finding that the predominantly white Long Island village of Garden City had discriminated against blacks and Hispanics when it made a zoning change that favored building townhouses or single-family homes over modestly priced apartments.

The decision by a three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit came a little more than two years after Judge Arthur D. Spratt of Federal District Court in Central Islip ruled that the rezoning by Garden City, an affluent suburb around 20 miles east of Manhattan, "had both an adverse impact on minorities and tended to perpetuate segregation." In its decision, the appeals court noted that village residents had used racial code words at public hearings amid their effort to exclude minorities.

As part of his decision, Judge Spratt gave the plaintiffs in the case 30 days to propose remedies Garden City should take.

Lawyers for the village did not immediately return messages seeking comment on Wednesday.