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RESIDENTS' FIRST TASTE

Paulius Jumps Gun With NL Site Presentation

SAYREVILLE — About 120 residents late last week were given a taste of what to expect tomorrow when the four "finalists" seeking to be named as redeveloper of a 427-acre tract along the Raritan River, much of which is a brownfields site formerly owned by NL Industries Inc., will make public presentations at the regular meeting of the Sayreville Economic & Redevelopment Agency (SERA) at 6 p.m. at the Senior Citizen Center, Main Street.

SERA Chairperson Christine Spezzi has explained that the meeting was being moved from Borough Hall "to better accommodate the public," whose intense interest is anticipated.

A preview was offered by V. Paulius & Associates of Allendale, partnering with Jay Cashman Inc. of Quincy, MA, which held an "informational breakfast" at the Step Inn Ballroom, MacArthur Avenue, to obtain community input and comments on its proposal for developing the site.

The public can expect to see that proposal along with three other competing plans for the site by Forest City Enterprises of Cleveland, OH; The Spector Group of North Hills, NY, and LNR Property Corp. of Quincy, MA.

"There's a tendency to be polite and not criticize," Paulius Executive Vice President Lawrence "Pat" Kramer told the audience at the beginning of the informal meeting, featuring an elaborate scale-model of the proposal. "Don't hesitate."

Almost two hours later, at the end of the session, Kramer announced to the crowd that "you've given us exactly what we wanted this morning."

Kramer and the other presenters emphasized several times that they were "the New Jersey corporation," not out-of-staters like the other firms.

The Paulius/Cashman proposal includes a mix of uses including a 300-room hotel, offices, warehouses, a 300-slip marina with a lighthouse, a retail shopping area with a movie/performing arts theater, light industrial buildings, and 92 acres of both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. The firm's decision to exclude residential uses seemed to win attendees' approval.

"A lot of people criticize us," Kramer said. "They ask us, 'Why don't you have housing?'"

"No, no," voices called out.

"We think you've got enough," Kramer responded. "We made a

decision not to bring residential into this."

Also coming in for some negative reaction was the proposal to build a baseball stadium on the site.

"The spinoff from a minor league stadium is nil," Cashman Vice President Allen Peralt said. "It's a pretty-picture type of thing."

But Kramer indicated that his firm is ready to accommodate whatever residents and their representatives finally decide for the site. "If someone comes forward, we will build your stadium," he declared.

"Let's forget about this baseball thing," a man said to applause. "It's just a seasonal thing. We don't want any baseball stadium."

Most discussion, however, centered around the Paulius/Cashman plans and how to improve them.

Drawing particular attention was the plan's layout, putting recreational facilities behind light industrial buildings.

One woman suggested a different access-road to the youth recreation section to avoid having to travel through the industrial section, while another woman proposed "flipping" the two uses.

The regional mall center, with its transparent enclosure over an



PLAN OUTLINED — The Paulius/Cashman proposal to redevelop the former NL Industries Inc. site, Sayreville, including mixed uses, such as a hotel, offices, warehouses, a marina with a lighthouse, a retail shopping area with a movie/performing arts theater, light industrial buildings, and indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. *Courtesy of V. Paulius & Associates*

open courtyard, drew the audience's attention because of its prominence and central location.

Members of the Borough Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Environmental Commission had been invited to attend. Councilmen Thomas Pollando and Daniel Buchanan were there, along with SERA Executive Director Randall Corman and other local officials.

SERA acquired the NL property after a three-Judge Appel-

late Court panel ruled in December that it must pay \$32,075,000 into an escrow account to be used for remediation costs for the contaminated land, leaving any remainder for NL Industries. That figure was increased to \$33,550,000 after the amount of acreage was determined to be higher than originally estimated.

If remediation costs exceed that amount, NL Industries and whatever redeveloper is selected for the site must negotiate a cost-sharing agreement to cover the remainder.