

## Yonkers Business Groups To City Council: Don't Miss Opportunity For Re-Development

By Dan Murphy

The three largest business organizations in Yonkers have joined together to call on Mayor Phil Amicone and the City Council to move forward on the \$1.5 Billion downtown revitalization plan for downtown Yonkers, submitted by Struever, Fidelco, Cappelli (SFC). The message from all three groups was the same - a growing concern that prolonged delays might jeopardize the plan from ever happening, and that with the future economic climate uncertain, the time to move forward on approvals is now.

Business leaders from the Yonkers Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown / Waterfront Business Improvement District, and the South Broadway Business Improvement District, all held separate meetings with

the Mayor and the City Council leadership to both express their support for the project and to ask the officials to commit to a more aggressive timetable and concrete action in early 2008, with some calling for an initial vote on

the project by the end of January. The City Council received scooping documents on the first phase of SFC's redevelopment plan last July. In last week's Home News & Times, Council

*Continued on Page 10*

### Polls Show 80% Of Yonkers Residents Support Economic Development Plans

Three polls conducted over the past year show the overwhelming majority of Yonkers residents support the economic development planned and underway in their city. The Home News & Times has received the following polling data from Mayor Phil Amicone's office, which shows the following:

On three different occasions, a large sampling of

Yonkers residents were asked the same two questions:

1 - Are you familiar with the revitalization and development projects for downtown Yonkers and the waterfront?

2 - Do you support the development project for the downtown and waterfront?

The results to both questions were basically the same in all three polls. Between 68%-

*Continued on Page 10*

## Opportunity For Re-Development

Continued from Page 1

President Chuck Lesnick claimed that the Council was just doing its due diligence, and was waiting for further explanation and documentation from SFC on their plan.

Some in the business community are becoming apprehensive about the Council's inaction, including their lack of a vote on the scooping documents, which would begin the lengthy public review and comment process. Their concern is that the city may not be really committed to moving this development project, and other development proposals, forward. The effort by these three business groups in Yonkers is an attempt to press city officials to break any logjams that may exist.

"We are very anxious to see this project proceed, and proceed at a reasonable pace," said Kevin Cacace, President of the Yonkers Chamber of Commerce. "Without a doubt, the SFC project is the greatest opportunity we have had in my lifetime to revitalize downtown Yonkers. But if the city doesn't begin to move it forward, we're afraid that the opportunity will be lost, and that would be catastrophic for business in this city."

The Chamber of Commerce and both Business Improvement Districts have been following the project closely since its unveiling in February 2006. Leaders from all three organizations say that the future success of their member businesses is closely tied to the success of the downtown revitalization.

Jose Velez, Executive Director of the South Broadway Business Improvement District, explained his group's support for the proposal. "We understand that successful development downtown does not just bring in new businesses, it helps those of us who have been here for a while as well. When more people come to live and shop and work in the downtown, it will help all of us to prosper by creating a critical mass of people who can support a growing and thriving business community," he said.

Steve Sansone, Executive Director of the Downtown / Waterfront Business Improvement District, echoed those sentiments. "Reinvestment in the downtown infrastructure will benefit the entire BID membership. While we want the City Council to be thorough in their due diligence, time is money in retail. Clearly our existing businesses are anticipating the additional foot traffic that this proposal could bring."

Cacace said he was encouraged by both meetings and optimistic that the project would begin to move forward. "I think the Mayor and the Council leadership came away with a clear understanding that the business community is firmly behind this project and wants to see action. We also understand that city officials have to do their due diligence, but they must move quickly. Public opinion seems to be behind the project. We just don't want to see politics get in the way of progress," Cacace concluded.