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Review of massive development in Yonkers could begin this month

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YONKERS - The city's review of the massive Struever Fidelco Cappelli redevelopment project could begin by the end of February - if City Council designates the equally massive environmental report as complete.

A few words of explanation: Complete here does not mean the process is over, but rather complete as in ready for Yonkers officials and residents to review and, no doubt, argue over details of the \$1.5 billion project. It would contain a minor-league ballpark, a retail complex, two 50-story apartment towers, all located next door to City Hall, and two 25-story apartment towers on the waterfront.

It's about time, say Mayor Phil Amicone and officials with the development partnership who have grown impatient with City Council's initial examination of River Park Center's draft environmental impact statement, which they received in July. The delay resulted because City Council decided the roughly 3,000-page document failed to adequately address several issues. Those included, Council President Chuck Lesnick said last week, daylighting of the Saw Mill River at Larkin Plaza and the possible reuse of buildings in the area, including the art deco office building that houses several city agencies at 87 Nepperhan Ave.

In the past few days Struever Fidelco Cappelli shipped back the revised document for City Council and its consultant to review again for completeness.

"There's a lot of desire to move forward onto the substantive discussions, and I'm hopeful they have addressed 95 percent of the things we had raised," Lesnick said.

If that is the case, Lesnick said, City Council is likely to designate the review complete at its Feb. 26 meeting. That would let the environmental review begin in earnest, a process that in some major developments has taken two or more years.

City officials and the developers, however, have made it clear that they want the review completed this year. Joseph Apicella, SFC's executive project manager, said in late December that if the review took a year, "We are out of there."

Mayoral spokesman David Simpson initially was skeptical about any City Council action coming this month.

"I'll believe it when I see it," Simpson said, adding that the mayor would prefer to see the council act at its meeting Wednesday.

"They now seem willing to move it forward, but still not with the urgency the mayor would like to see," Simpson said.
