

\$1.5 Billion Yonkers Waterfront Plan Clears Hurdle

By John Jordan

YONKERS—With preliminary environmental approvals now in place, the developer of the ambitious \$1.5-billion waterfront redevelopment plan for the Yonkers waterfront is now pressing forward to the next critical stage of the approval process with the hope of obtaining final approvals and breaking ground later this year.

On March 18 the Yonkers City Council by a unanimous 7-0 vote deemed the now nearly 4,000-page Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the joint venture Struever Fidelco Cappelli, LLC as complete and ready for public review. No public hearings have been set as yet, but it is believed those hearings could begin sometime in April. Struever Fidelco Cappelli, LLC consists of: the Fidelco Realty Group of Millburn, NJ, Cappelli Enterprises of Valhalla, NY and Struever Bros. Eccles & Rose of Baltimore.

City Council President Chuck Lesnick said of the council's vote, "This is a small step for the City Council and a giant step forward in creating a renaissance of Yonkers' downtown and waterfront areas." The development plans calls for a massive infusion of new residential, commercial, entertainment and hotel development along with the construction of a new 6,500-seat minor league baseball stadium.

SFC executive Joseph Apicella said that once the developer submits the various environmental studies to city and state agencies, the City Council would then schedule public hearings on the Draft DEIS. Apicella, who is also a senior vice president with Cappelli Enterprises, said that the goal from there would be to have the city finalize the environmental review in the form of a Final Environmental Impact Statement and then come up with its findings for the project.

Final approvals could be obtained as early as late September or October, he noted. "We would like to begin construction sometime this year, perhaps late October or early November," Mr. Apicella said. Concerning the council's unanimous vote on the venture's DEIS being complete, he said, "This is an important first step in the environmental review process and we applaud the City Council and its legal/planning consultants on a job well done. It is our hope that the detailed review process will now cause the balance of the approval process to be expeditious. The public has been waiting for the public hearings and we believe that our outreach into the community all these months will now pay dividends."

Mayor Philip Amicone, a strong supporter of the waterfront revitalization project, commented, "When it's complete, the SFC project will be the most significant development in our history and from the beginning we have demonstrated how government and the private sector can partner together to do something truly monumental for the city of Yonkers." The mayor complimented the City Council for its work on the project and added, "I look forward to a complete, but timely public review period in hopes of getting shovels in the ground this year."

The plan before the city is the first phase of what is projected to be a more than \$3-billion effort to revitalize some sections of the waterfront. The four main

components of the Phase I development include River Park Center, Cacace Center, Palisades Point and the reopening of the Saw Mill River.

River Park Center, which is located in the area known as the Gateway District, includes development of two city blocks in the heart of downtown just east of City Hall. This includes the site known as "Chicken Island," the Getty Square municipal parking lot and the government center parking garage. River Park Center will feature a mix of retail, office, residential and entertainment components including: 465,000 square feet of retail space, 325,000 square feet of office space in multiple buildings, 80,000 square feet of restaurant space with restaurants opening onto a new riverwalk along the reopened Saw Mill River, a 15-screen, 80,000-square-foot movie theater, a 6,500-seat ballpark located on the roof of the River Park Center for a new team in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Clubs, 950 residential apartments in two buildings and parking facilities with approximately 4,340 spaces.

The plan for Cacace Center calls for a new 150,000-square-foot office building and a new 75,000-square-foot 150-room hotel on the corner of Nepperhan Avenue and South Broadway adjacent to the Cacace Justice Center. More than half of the space in the new office building will be occupied by the city agencies currently located in a 91,000-square-foot building at 87 Nepperhan Avenue. That building will be razed as part of the redevelopment plan.

The existing government center garage will be torn down to make way for a new parking facility. Before that takes place, a new 1,470-space parking structure will be built on the south side of Nepperhan Avenue on a now vacant site adjacent to the Cacace Justice Center. The current firehouse building will be demolished and a new 50,000-square-foot, six-bay fire headquarters will be built adjacent to the new parking garage at the Cacace Justice Center at the corner of Nepperhan Avenue and New Main Street.

The Palisades Point development, which is planned for two Hudson River waterfront development sites south of the Yonkers train station, will be comprised of two 25-story residential buildings with a total of 436 condominium residences, 9,000 square feet of ground-level retail/restaurant or office space and two parking facilities with 725 spaces.

The fourth component of the phase one redevelopment plan is the re-opening of the Saw Mill River that now runs underneath parts of downtown or is inaccessible to the public near Getty Square and in Larkin Plaza. Landscaped public riverwalks would be built along the portions of the Saw Mill River in Larkin Plaza and the River Park Center site near Getty Square.

The phase one development is estimated to create 13,000 construction jobs and 5,460 permanent jobs. It will also generate \$14.8 million annually in tax revenue for Yonkers as well as \$14 million in taxes for the state and \$4.9 million for Westchester County, according to figures supplied by the SFC partnership.



A rendering of the minor league baseball stadium that will be part of the \$1.5-billion redevelopment of the Yonkers waterfront.