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News

Hotel plan excites

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After a proposal made at the Greenport Town Board meeting Tuesday, it appears that the town may soon play the host to a new hotel, restaurant, and family entertainment complex.

Harbalwant Singh, a commercial real estate broker from Montgomery, Orange County, went before the board to propose a mixed-use complex, with a 100-room hotel, restaurant, and even a family entertainment complex. On top of this, he proposed a gas station and convenience store right next door to be built during the same time frame.

According to the broker, the new project will generate a substantial number of jobs-somewhere between 70 and 100 total.

Singh acquired the land for the project in April of 2008, and intends the complex to be built on the sight of the long-abandoned V&O Press Factory, on Route 66 in Greenport. The older structure is still standing, and he hopes to utilize as much as 60 percent of the existing building's blueprint.

Though a new hotel is something which many residents of Greenport and indeed the entirety of Columbia County have been hoping for quite some time, it was the gaming and family entertainment part of the project that Singh really seemed excited about.

According to him, the complex will include everything from a fully stocked arcade and sports bar, to bowling lanes, an indoor play-station for younger children, and even a laser-tag arena. This part of the overall project would encompass two floors, for a total of 52,000 square. ft.

"We need this," said Singh. "Where can kids go right now for this?"

Though the Planning Board ruled to wait until a more complete site plan was brought in to approve any aspect of the project, the Town of Greenport does not have a zoning law, which means that he can use the land for any type of building he sees fit.

"If you think that a hotel is proper use for the site, bring back all the forms and we'll consider it," said Planning Board Attorney Carl Whitbeck. He went on to say that he didn't believe the board could say anything about whether they would specifically approve a hotel or not until they saw the site plan, but told Singh that the next step for him would be to bring the board

a site plan that was ready for review.

"The Town of Greenport can't wait for this property to be used," the attorney told Singh as he exited the floor.

Board Chair Don Alger refrained from comment on the project in it's present state.

There is no expected ground-breaking date on the project, but Singh told the board that he believed he could have the entire complex- including the gas station and convenience store- done within 24-28 months of the starting date.

Though Singh is eager to get the project underway, the board still wants some environmental issues, such as site pollution from the old factory, put to rest before the project can move forward, but Singh is confident everything can be cleaned up and worked out to the satisfaction of all involved.

Regardless of these assurances, the board advised the broker to bring in the state Department of Environmental Conservation to declare the site free of pollutants and ready to go.

Singh intends to come back and present a revised plan, as well as what he plans to do about the possible environmental issues, at the next meeting of the planning board on Sept. 22.

"The Town is glad to see that someone wants to make unproductive land productive again," said Whitbeck after the meeting, adding that the town will be happy to work with Mr. Singh in the future.

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