



Vacant stores and empty parking lot at Baederwood Shopping Center

The Baederwood Shopping Center (BSC) has been deteriorating for the last 2 ½ years. In addition to the closing of the movie theater, there are now 10 vacant stores. The owner, Brandolini Companies, has floated several different ideas for developing the property, but has not submitted a formal development proposal to the Township for approval. Since the Township is not able to approve “ideas”, I am actively encouraging Brandolini to submit a proposal as soon as possible. Once a proposal is submitted we can negotiate an outcome that will be acceptable to all concerned (the neighbors, the Township and Brandolini).

To recap, Brandolini presented an idea for re-developing the property at a town meeting convened by the Township on July 31, 2007. This idea (hereafter referred to as the “266 idea”) calls for redesigning the retail portion, building a 266 unit age-restricted apartment complex directly behind it and adding landscaping elements. Whole Foods Market would remain. Since that meeting, there has been no further progress on the project.

After I was elected on November 6, 2007, I began working to end the impasse. On November 30, 2007 State Representative Josh Shapiro and I met with representatives from Brandolini. We discussed the idea that was presented on July 31 and an additional idea that involved Brandolini purchasing the [Rydal Waters](#) property. This idea involves ceding the front 20 contiguous acres of the Rydal Waters property plus the existing building (the former Harbison home) to the Township for use as open space.

This idea is contingent on the Township consenting to two conditions requested by Brandolini. The first condition is Township approval for Brandolini’s request to build 31 homes on the rear portion of Rydal Waters (closest to the BSC). The second condition is increasing the proposed units in the BSC apartment complex from 266 to 500. Approval

for such an idea is not certain. In addition, Brandolini would need to submit a successful bid to purchase the Rydal Waters property. Such an outcome is also not certain.

On December 13, 2007, a meeting occurred among State Representative Josh Shapiro, Steve Kline of the Planning Commission and me. At the time, Steve was the incoming Commissioner of Ward 1. Since Ward 1 is immediately east of the BSC and will be directly impacted by any development there, I felt Steve's participation was important. The result of that meeting was a plan for Brandolini to submit a proposal to the Township for re-development of the BSC. I e-mailed that plan to Brandolini on December 18, 2007. The president of Brandolini, Fred Snow, responded on December 20, 2007. He stated that our plan "looks good." I briefed Township officials on this plan on January 3, 2008.

The plan focuses only on the 266 idea and excludes consideration of the Rydal Waters idea. The steps of the plan are:

1. Review of the 266 idea. This review is being conducted by me and Commissioner Steve Kline. We are soliciting reactions from Township staff and all interested/affected parties in the community. This review will be completed by February 7, 2008.
2. Meet with Brandolini on February 14, 2008 to present reactions to the 266 idea. This meeting will include State Representative Shapiro, Commissioner Kline, Township staff and me.
3. Brandolini is to review the reactions and respond to me on or before March 1, 2008.
4. After this, the Township and I will negotiate with Brandolini in an attempt to generate a proposal that is acceptable to the affected neighborhoods, the Township and Brandolini. The target date to begin the Township approval process for this proposal is April 1, 2008.

Step 1, the review of the 266 idea, is underway. During my election campaign, I met and spoke individually with hundreds of Ward 7 residents. The BSC was a major topic of discussion. I am confident that I understand the concerns of a significant portion of the Ward and can represent those concerns effectively. Some of those concerns, such as the loss of the movie theater, are beyond redress. Concerns that can be addressed are the residential density of the 266 idea, the impact on traffic, the retail tenant mix and the environmental impact.

In addition, as part of step 1, during January 2008, Commissioner Kline and I met with a group of retail tenants of the current BSC, with residents of the Rydal East-West apartments and with the executive board of the Rydal/Meadowbrook Civic Association. Their concerns mirror those of the residents I spoke with while campaigning.

For steps 2 through 4, I am optimistic that Brandolini will honor their commitment to the plan and work with us as partners to achieve the acceptable outcome we all want.

If you have any concerns, questions or ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will continue to keep you informed as events warrant it.

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