

News

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TUESDAY
AUGUST 30, 1988

Coalition firm on site buy-out

Group supports federal purchase

By TED PALIK
of the Potomac News

Reports that Hazel-Peterson Cos. has bought a part-interest in land adjacent to William Center will not stop preservationists support of a federal buy-out of the mall site, the attorney for Save the Battlefield Coalition said Monday.

Such a purchase would not mean a compromise between preservationists and mall developers Hazel-Peterson and the Edward J. DeBarbello Corp. of Youngstown, Ohio, Teresh Boasberg said.

"It's not a compromise in the sense that the federal government doesn't have to buy it," Boasberg said. If the government buys the 542-acre mall tract, preservationists do not care where the mall goes, he said.

Anne Snyder, coalition chairwoman, would not comment on the transaction because of doubts about its validity. "I would say first of all ... that it is very iffy that they'll ever acquire the land. It would be premature to speculate on it at this point."

"From what I've read, it's far from an accomplished fact," she said.

The transaction was reported Friday in the Prince William Newsletter, a Reston-based, bi-weekly real estate newsletter for builders, bankers and real estate agents.

According to Prince William County land records, Milton V. Peterson, general partner of BC Retail Properties Limited

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Partnership bought a 25 percent interest in 160 acres belonging to the Latsios family in exchange for two pieces of property in the Burke Center area of Fairfax County.

Peterson, who signed the deed, is a general partner in Hazel-Peterson Center site to the east.

The property is bounded by Va. 29 to the north, Interstate 66 to the south and the proposed William Center site to the east.

George Latsios of Alexandria refused to confirm the purchase of the property but said that Hazel-Peterson has been interested in the land for "a while."

The Latsios family has owned the parcel for more than 30 years, Latsios said. The family has never lived in Manassas and its only ties to the area are through the property, Latsios said.

Peterson bought the property June 30 from Stella L. Adamopoulos.

los. The property is part of a larger parcel owned by Lena K. Latsios, and records state.

George, Stella and Lena are brother and sisters, Latsios said. The two women could not be reached for comment Monday.

Mrs. Snyder and Boasberg believe Hazel-Peterson were negotiating to buy the so-called Latsios property when William Center was rezoned in 1986.

Hazel-Peterson spokesman Robert Kelly, president James Todd and a spokeswoman for DeBarbello could not be reached for comment Monday.

The property is designated corporate park on the county comprehensive plan. A mall at William Center or on the Latsios property would conflict with the plan, Mrs. Snyder said. A corporate park designation means the property may be used for offices and research facilities.

Prince William County officials

have supported the mall in anticipation of millions in tax revenues the commercial and residential project would produce.

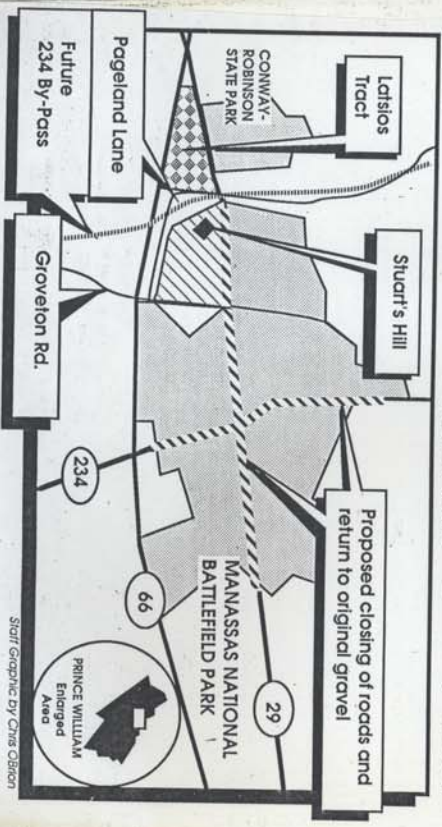
County Executive Robert S. Noe Jr. did not return calls to his office Monday.

Opponents say the mall site is historically significant because it staged the Battle of Second Manassas from Stuart's Hill, within the William Center property.

William Center lies west of the Manassas National Battlefield Park, bounded by Groveview Road, Va. 29 and I-66.

The U.S. House of Representatives earlier this month passed legislation that would buy the William Center Mall site and add it to the national park.

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is scheduled Sept. 8 to hear proposed legislation to buy the property.



Sketch Graphic by Chris Olson

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