

Residents discuss Lucent site's use

By **SAMETTA M. THOMPSON**
KEYPORT BUREAU

HOLMDEL — Curious about the future of the former Lucent Technologies' Bell Labs site, residents packed the Senior/Community Center on Thursday to voice their concerns over a developer's plan for the 472-acre property off Crawfords Corner Road.

A mix of commercial and residential development is planned.

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— *Agnes King, Holmdel*

In the three-hour-plus Township Committee workshop, residents had a laundry list of issues for the committee and township professionals such as the planner, attorney and tax assessor. They ranged from tax ratables to roadways and infrastructure.

The one thing everyone seemed to agree on was for the committee and the township's professionals not to rush into any decision on a property that could have a huge impact on the community's quality of life.

A township resident for 31 years, Agnes King said she supports the residential component of Preferred Real Estate Investment's proposed redevelopment of the area.

"Age-restricted and corporate would bring in ratables and would please both sides. I think this is a great idea," she said. Preferred, based in Consho-



Plans for development at the Lucent Technologies' Bell Labs site in Holmdel were discussed by residents at a Township Committee meeting. (PRESS FILE PHOTO)

hocken, Pa., wants to turn the property into a mix of commercial and residential development. The company plans to build 250 age-restricted, two-to-five-bedroom homes or 300 age-restricted two-bedroom to four-bedroom units. The plan includes 1.5 million square feet of commercial redevelopment. The project would bring in about \$1.2 million in annual local tax revenue, with a total tax revenue of more than \$8.2 million if fully built over a seven-year period.

Members of a local nonpartisan group, Citizens for Informed Land Use, passed out literature outlining why they believe housing is wrong for the site. The group questioned who

would maintain the roads and the landscaping once the homes are built.

The group's members argued that the development could negatively affect Ramanessin Brook and its water quality, and said flawed conclusions were made on the development's impact on local traffic.

Some residents said they wished they had access to more information about the Lucent tract prior to attending the meeting.

Lee Beaumont, a Bell Labs employee for some 20 years, said the professionals at the meeting didn't give a balanced view of the issue, and that there was a blur between the responsibility of the residents and that

WHAT'S NEXT

Mayor Serena DiMaso said the Township Committee is working to form a Citizens Advisory Committee that would consist of a cross-section of residents.

of the township. The township failed to provide an independent quantitative analysis on alternative uses for the property, said Beaumont, of Middletown.

Preferred's senior officials were not at the meeting, but representatives were there only

to take notes.

Mayor Serena DiMaso told the audience that the committee is working to form a Citizens Advisory Committee, which would consist of a cross-section of residents. The group would evaluate all of the information provided by Preferred and Holmdel professionals, and would assess what would or would not work on the property.

Board of Education President Martin F. Pflieger and CILU member Ralph Blumenthal will chair the advisory committee. DeMaso wants to have the group formed by April 19.

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