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Meetings to focus on the future of Lucent site *Developer plans town gall meeting; advisory committee will report*

HOLMDEL — With interest high in the future of the Lucent property, two public meetings will be held to inform the public on the redevelopment.

Lakewood-based Somerset Development, contract purchaser of the Alcatel Lucent property, has plans for a town hall-style meeting with residents and interested parties.

In addition, the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Lucent Property will present its report on how the township should handle redevelopment of the property.

According to Holmdel Mayor Serena Di-Maso, Somerset Development will hold a town hall meeting Sept. 24 to gather input from the community regarding redevelopment of the former Bell Labs site. The forum will be held 7 p.m. at the Bell Labs building at 101 Crawfords Corner Road.

We had a response from Mike Bruno, the attorney for Somerset," DiMaso stated in an e-mail. "They would like to hold their town hall-style meeting on Sept. 24. [Somerset] would like to hear from our residents and said they just want a town hall-style meeting to introduce themselves to the residents and get their feedback."

She added that after Somerset compiles all of the data, the developer has indicated a formal presentation will be made sometime in October.

The Citizens Advisory Committee for the Lucent Property is scheduled to present its report at 7 p.m. Oct. 2 at the Senior/Community Center.

Somerset Development made an offer to purchase the 472-acre Lucent property on Crawfords Corner Road in early August and has signed a contract with the technology giant, according to Alcatel-Lucent spokeswoman Mary Ward.

Ralph Zucker, a principal in the Lakewood based development company, initially stated that the company planned a mix of uses for the property and the Eero Saarinen designed building on the site.

"We feel that the building and site are conducive to a mix of uses and plan on keeping a significant portion of the building for office space," Zucker said in an e-mail in early August.

Zucker said in the same e-mail that Somerset would attempt to keep much of the iconic building as office space, but market conditions might limit that use.

"We feel it is necessary to incorporate other uses as well," he wrote, "including a hotel, a conference center, restaurants, shopping and other supportive retail and some residential."

According to DiMaso, the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting was originally scheduled for Sept. 24 with a backup date of Oct. 2.

Loni Lucina, of the township's administration department, confirmed the meeting date.

"No [additional] professionals will be there, as it will be a regular committee meeting," she said, adding that Township Administrator and Chief Financial Officer Joseph Annecharico and Township Attorney Duane Davison would be at the meeting. Lucina added that a representative of township engineering firm T&M Associates, Middletown, would be present.

In their report, the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Lucent Property makes a number of recommendations; the strongest is that the township hire a professional planner to assess the site for large-site redevelopment.

"The advisory committee recommends that the township engage significant professional assistance to develop a sound portfolio of options and a thorough analysis of the characteristics of each option. Without such assistance, any analysis will be of limited value," the report states.

According to the report, the Township Committee appointed the advisory committee to come up with "a non-partisan report of factual information concerning the redevelopment of the Lucent property and to make appropriate recommendations. An objective is to seek a redevelopment plan for the property that is in the best long-term interests of Holmdel residents."

The report lists observations made by the advisory committee and the recommendations they came up with based on those observations.

The 16-page report, prepared by the dozen or so members of the committee, lists about nine potential uses for the property.

Among those are a conference center, a farm, governmental use, industrial use such as manufacturing or a warehouse, and institutional, for example, educational or medical.