

materials. Amtrak's schematic maps provide capacity to convert the "Penn Station South" siding into the MTA's "East Side Access" project towards Grand Central Terminal.

The same map drawings show the No. 7 Subway potentially continuing south and east between the Javits center and the Moynihan Station. ".5 mile versus five miles to Secaucus," read the accompanying text.

Orange & Essex County Debate Reservoir Status

WEST ORANGE: Essex County intends to start construction on its "Boathouse at South Mountain" project here April 15 although a growing impasse with the City of Orange Township over the Orange Reservoir will have to be settled before its marina is to be completely finished.

Anthony Puglisi, spokesman for County Executive Joseph N. Divincenzo, told "Local Talk" Feb. 16 that the project's first phase is the restaurant to be built on county property near the reservoir shoreline. The restaurant and marina will follow the recently built miniGOLF Safari as part of the South Mountain Recreation Complex.

The complex - to the reservoir's eastern shore - includes the Turtle Back Zoo and the Richard J. Codey Sports arena. The zoo and former South Mountain Arena were renovated and expanded in the last 20 years.

The marina's construction, from which paddle boats are to start and end their runs, may be affected on whether the county and Orange can come to terms over the reservoir.

Orange Mayor Eldridge Hawkins and the City Council said, on Feb. 15, that they have turned down the county's offer to buy the 100-acre reservoir property. Hawkins said that they were willing to consider leasing the body of water instead.

"We were advised by the county executive that the county isn't interested in leasing our former reservoir but wants to immediately purchase the property for about \$700,000," said Hawkins in a Feb. 15 statement. "This pitiful offer is not acceptable for land that West Orange Township has valued at about \$2.1 million based on its assessment. The larger issue is that the reservoir is not for sale."

Orange's elders created the reservoir by damming a branch of the Rahway River in 1870. The body in West Orange's St. Cloud section had been the city's primary drinking water supply into the early 1990s.

Although potable water now comes from wells deeper into the county's South Mountain Reservation, Orange officials said that city residents use the water and shoreline for hiking and fishing. At-large councilman Rayfield Morton, in Hawkins' release, added that the reservoir is the site of the city's annual senior picnic.

"We're open to entering into a long-term lease with the County that would preserve the ability of Orange residents to financially benefit from the property and preserve our ownership rights," continued Hawkins. "Unfortunately, the County . . . has informed us that if we don't sell them the property, they'll take our land through eminent domain."

Hawkins further added that the county has laid tracks "for a carnival train to the Turtle Back Zoo illegally" on city land. It is the recollection by "Local Talk" staff and of others it had talked with that the scaled train ride has existed since the 1960s.

DiVincenzo, in a Feb. 16 statement to "Local Talk," said that "Developing the Reservoir will be beneficial for the residents of Orange and the entire County." The executive said that "we have made numerous fair leasing and acquisition offers based on the opinions of professional appraisers" to Orange.

"Through the years, Orange has demonstrated an inability to maintain and secure the Reservoir property, and this neglect has led to extremely hazardous conditions on or along the waterway and in the abandoned water utility buildings," continued DiVincenzo. This will remove a potential liability from the city, provide access to an underutilized waterway and restore the natural beauty and enhance safety in the area."

At least two of nine public speakers at Orange's Feb. 15 urged the Hawkins Administration not to sell the reservoir property. They referred to the leasing of the reservoir and related buildings during the East Orange Water Commission's attempt to attract regional customers during the mid-1990s.

There has also been disagreement over how profits from the new development would be split between the county and the city.