

# The Star-Ledger

TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2000

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THE NEWSPAPER FOR NEW JERSEY

## INDUSTRIAL TRACT POSES NEW ISSUE



ROBERT SCIARRINO/THE STAR-LEDGER

Some Hanover residents worry about the impact construction of 50 homes on this polluted industrial site will have on the school system.

## Hanover considers homes on factory site

By Margaret McHugh  
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The abandoned Rowe International vending machine factory in Hanover would be knocked down, the site cleaned of contaminants and replaced with 50 homes under a plan expected to be voted on by the planning board tonight.

While Mayor Ron Francioli is pleased that the polluted 34-acre Troy Hills Road site will get a new life, some residents and school officials worry about the impact the subdivision will have on the school system.

"Two years ago, Rowe International was a very terrible brownfield. It was a polluted site," Francioli said. "The idea of taking that industrial site, and making it clean even for housing to be built there was something the township applauded."

But there is a tradeoff. The township is allowing a higher density subdivision compared to the surrounding neighborhoods.

When Rowe moved out in 1995 after more than 40 years of operation, "they left us with a problem site," the mayor said.

The township changed the zoning from industrial to residential in 1997, requiring Rowe to do a much more stringent environmental cleanup, and Rowe sued.

But that lawsuit was dropped when a Colorado-based environmental remediation and development firm, called LandBank, stepped into the picture.

LandBank acquired the property, and has begun the cleanup while Livingston-based Sterling Properties seeks planning board approval for about 50 single-family, half-million dollar homes.

Sterling Properties will take ownership of the land when the cleanup is completed in less than two years, said Kyle Cascioli, director of real estate acquisitions at LandBank.

Cascioli said the developers needed the higher density to make the project profitable. LandBank, a five-year-old firm that has done a dozen projects nationwide turning polluted sites into usable ones, expects to pour as much as \$4.3 million into the Rowe property.

Committee member Len Fariello said that while he's glad the pollutants will be removed, the deal hurts the township.

"I think it's going to be a cost to the township in the long run" because of the additional schoolchildren, Fariello said.

Resident Fern Wolkin wondered how many students the development will add to the schools.

Wolkin attended the Dec. 21 public hearing, "and not a single person asked a single question about how this is going to affect the schools."

Hanover School Superintendent Salvatore Sansone said the project is forcing the K-8 district to begin studying options to make sure none of the schools gets overcrowded. The students would attend Bee Meadow School, under the current district setup.

Sansone expects the new development could add between 60 and 80 students, but that includes some who would attend the Hanover Park Regional High School District.

The district thought that the development of Rowe was at least four years off, "but the timeline has been greatly reduced," he said.