

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Local News 25-30

Sports 15-20

Classified 21-24

Currents 9-14

Oil Depot Future To Be Discussed Sackets Site Development Milled

By Greg Smith
Times Staff Writer

SACKETS HARBOR — The future of an old oil depot that is on historic land is going to be the subject of an invitation-only meeting later this month.

Land Bank, a Lakewood, Colo., company that owns the property, is inviting local elected officials and business leaders to a meeting March 30 at the Sackets Harbor Brewing Co. The meeting is to trade input on development of 111 acres of land adjacent to Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Park. An unused oil storage facility sits on the land, where part of the second Battle of Sackets Harbor occurred.

"We want to meet with town, village and business leaders and get their input and their thoughts as to the reuse of the property," said Kathe G. Paris, an associate in the real estate acquisitions department of Land Bank.

"We're just looking for fair ideas of what we think might make the most sense in terms of us making a profit off the sale, and doing some-

thing that's going to be a good project," Mrs. Paris said.

Land Bank is a private company and not a bank. The company purchased the land in 1998 from Atlantic Fuels Marketing Co. as part of a portfolio of 14 old petroleum storage sites. Land Bank specializes in acquiring and developing properties that have environmental contamination.

"We clean up the properties, as we intend to do with this one," Mrs. Paris said. "Development of the property could have a large impact on the village's future. It's very much a win-win situation for us and the village."

The company has identified some small oil spills, which involve about 300 cubic yards of soil. It plans to clean up those areas this summer by removing the soil.

Land Bank has already considered uses, which include single-family residences, recreation and possibly industry.

The property is in three parcels: 1.5 acres that lie between Ontario

See Sackets — Page 28

Sackets...

► From Back Page

Street and Lake Ontario; 77.5 acres between Ontario and Ambrose streets and adjacent to the park, and 32 acres on the southeast side of Ambrose Street and across from the 77.5-acre parcel.

A concrete and steel pier, which was used to off-load oil barges, is in the 1.5-acre parcel.

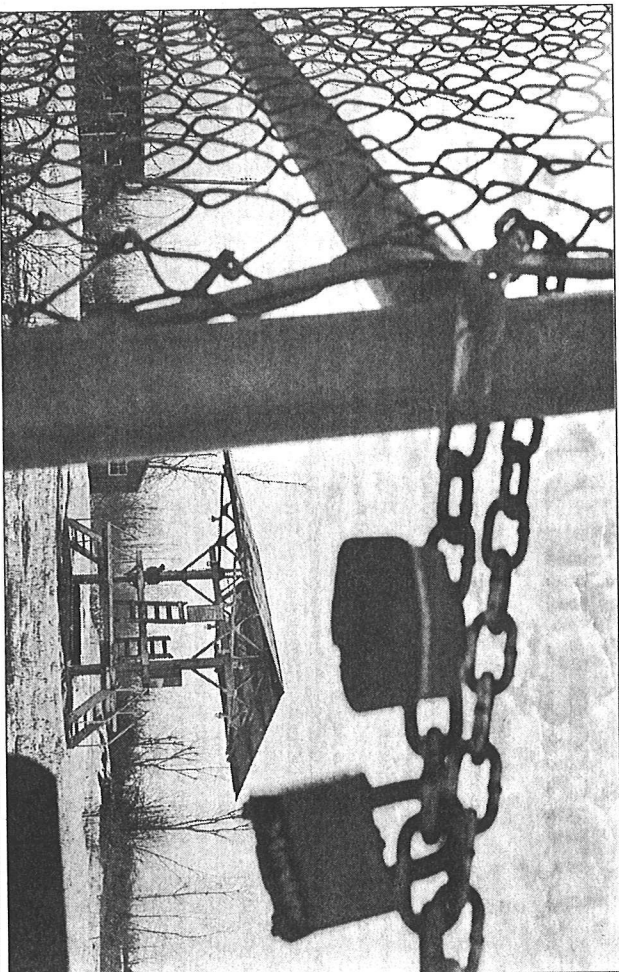
Mayor-elect Jon P. Constance, who was contacted by Land Bank earlier this month, said he would favor developing single-family housing.

"There is some history; part of a battle was fought on the land," Mr. Constance said. "But we have a large historic site adjacent to it which is underused. I don't know if we need a larger historic area. I think we should use it to develop single-family homes to increase the tax base. Every time someone builds a new home, it helps us all. I will encourage that to happen."

The president of the Chamber of Commerce said the area could use a golf course.

"We hear it all the time: 'Do you have a real nice golf course?' I don't know; it's just off the top of my head. But I have been asked about it a lot," said Michael W. Campbell, chamber president.

The property, Mrs. Paris said, is zoned for single-family housing, and any other use would require rezoning.



ANDY BLEWKUSH ■ WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES

How to develop the old fuel depot in Sackets Harbor will be discussed by officials later this month.

The oil depot was decommissioned in 1988 and the 12 above-ground storage tanks were removed in 1989.

Sackets Harbor Real Estate is the listing broker for the property.

According to Robert E. Brennan, an unofficial village historian, the area was first used as a petroleum depot in the 1920s by Standard Oil.

Mr. Brennan got the state interested in purchasing the parcel in the late

1980s, but ultimately there wasn't enough interest.

Mr. Brennan said the battle is not just a footnote in history, but might have saved Northern New York from becoming part of Canada.

"The battle saved the whole northern area of New York from being under British control," Mr. Brennan said. "Who knows, maybe the border would have been down by the

Barge Canal."

On May 29, 1813, a British force landed near the site and, according to the account of Capt. Rufus McIntire, of the Third U.S. Artillery Regiment, pushed a half mile inland before being pushed back off American soil.

"It was very important," Mr. Brennan said. "But now days it seems like history is not so important."