

TODAY'S SUNBEAM

County, P.G. officials discuss Riverwalk plan

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By **BEN SCHNEIDER**
Staff Writer

PENNS GROVE -- The Southern New Jersey Freeholders' Association met for dinner here last week to discuss their respective counties, and Salem County and Penns Grove officials were on hand to comment on the latest Riverwalk project news.

Mayor John Washington gave the invocation for the dinner, and afterward said he is waiting on one more permit from the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the proposed Riverwalk project. Once that permit comes through, Washington said the borough will finally be able to put the project out for a 30-day construction bidding period.

The borough has had to delay bidding on the project for months due to various agencies in New Jersey and Delaware taking longer to give their permits than expected.

George Kearns, managing director for Fenwick Commons LLC, which has helped the borough develop the Riverwalk project, also spoke at the meeting. He said that the Army Corps of Engineers had given its approval for the Riverwalk project earlier in the day.

Washington said they may break ground on the project as early as late this month.

Kearns said the Riverwalk project has needed more permits than any other project he has ever worked on. Part of the issue is that the section of the Delaware River that touches Penns Grove's shores is considered Delaware "soil." Certain parts of the Riverwalk project, including a pier that will stretch out onto the water to a small island, have needed permits from Delaware officials.

Tom Gurick, president of the Southern New Jersey Freeholders' Association and a freeholder for Camden County, also voiced frustration over the complicated process, and said Delaware Governor Ruth Ann Minner had not been helpful moving the process along.

Gurick, who called the law stating that entire section of the Delaware River along the Salem County shore belongs to Delaware "archaic," said Minner has not been helpful enough in promoting Riverwalk construction.

"She needs to go back to Sussex County (Del.) to continue raising chickens," he said.

Greg Patterson, communication director for Gov. Minner's office, said he was not familiar with the Riverwalk project. But he said he believed such statements should not be dignified with a response, as they do nothing to improve relations between the states.

"And, in point, the governor has never raised chickens," Patterson said.

PSEG Nuclear sponsored the dinner, and Senior Vice President and Chief Nuclear Officer Bill Levis spoke, underscoring the company's commitment to safe operations.

"We have to do our business safely," he said. "I worry so you don't have to worry."

Levis said PSEG is committed to sponsoring more such dinners.

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Courtesy of Joseph Scarpa, Sales Associate, Legend Properties, Inc., 856 231 1010 x108
Joseph Scarpa attended the above Southern New Jersey Freeholders Association meeting.