

## SWATARA TWP. DEVELOPMENT

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# Marketplace plan far from being out of the woods

BY MARY KLAUS  
Of The Patriot-News

Five months ago, some Chambers Hill residents told Powell Arms that Swatara Twp. didn't need another shopping center, and that he should go back to Florida.

Arms, the developer who wants to build a shopping center along Route 322, told residents attending a March meeting that "we didn't expect people to love this" and called the proposal "a complicated project."

It still is.

Swatara Marketplace, proposed for a wooded area between Penhar Drive and Mushroom Hill Road, remains in the planning stage, but talks continue.

Regency Centers of Jacksonville, Fla., is working on a deal to buy the land from Smith Land and Im-

provements Corp. of Camp Hill. Regency officials also have met with state transportation officials concerning traffic patterns and flow.

"We still own the property," said Richard E. Jordan III, vice president of Smith Land and Improvements Corp. "The property remains under contract to be sold."

Arms, vice president of investments at Regency, said the firm would spend about \$90 million to build the center and millions more on roads and to improve traffic.

He did not return calls last week.

Arms has said Swatara Marketplace would have 600,000 square feet of retail space with two or three anchor stores. It would be larger than the 500,000-square-foot Silver Spring Square shopping cen-

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SEAN SIMMERS, The Patriot-News, 2008

A proposed \$90 million shopping center called Swatara Marketplace could be built on the wooded area near the intersection of Route 322 and Mushroom Hill Road.

## MARKETPLACE: Shopping center proposal remains 'complicated'

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ter that Regency Centers built on the West Shore.

Arms declined to specify possible tenants, including whether Wegmans was interested.

"At this point, we are only planning two future Wegmans in Pennsylvania, one in Collegeville and the other in Malvern in Chester County," said Jean Colleluori, a Wegmans spokeswoman. Wegmans has 72 supermarkets in

five states, including one in the Silver Spring Square shopping center.

Richard Bazdar, Swatara Twp. code enforcement officer, said Regency has not filed shopping center plans with the municipality.

Regency officials have said Swatara Marketplace would necessitate traffic improvements, including a wider Route 322 and a new road adjacent to Chambers Hill Elementary School between Strites Road and Route 322.

"We received the Swatara Marketplace traffic impact study in February," said Michael Crochunis, a PennDOT spokesman. "We responded in April with our concerns and questions. Now, the ball is in their court."

Larry Bekelja, president of the Swatara Twp. Board of Commissioners, said "we can't stop them and shouldn't try" if Regency follows township ordinances and does what PennDOT and the county call for.

Bob Gorland, a retail vice president for consultants with the Harrisburg office of Matthew P. Casey & Associates, expressed doubt that Swatara Marketplace will be built in the next five years.

"People have been talking about a shopping center there for 10 or 15 years but it hasn't happened," he said. "That area is a topographical challenge. There's already traffic gridlock at Route 322 and Mushroom Hill Road."

Bill Gladstone, a commer-

cial real estate broker who leads the Bill Gladstone Group of NAI/CIR, disagreed.

"Regency wouldn't look to have a shopping center there without there being a need for it," he said. "If the center included an upscale grocery store, it would draw people from Swatara, Lower Swatara and Susquehanna townships and from Middletown."

MARY KLAUS: 255-8113  
or mklau@patriot-news.com

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