

Sayreville Economic & Redevelopment Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Joseph P. Ambrosio, Executive Director/Secretary
Sayreville Economic & Redevelopment Agency
Telephone: 732-390-7010
Email: SER@sayreville.com

Sayreville Economic & Redevelopment Agency Advises Residents About Mysterious Survey Related to the Riverton Redevelopment Plan

Borough Agency Expresses Concerns About Questionable Poll Mailed to Residents over Holiday Break

SAYREVILLE – January 8, 2019 – The Sayreville Economic & Redevelopment Agency (SERA) today expressed concerns about a questionable poll mailed to Borough households in the waning days of 2018.

The poll was mailed from an unknown third party describing itself as the “National Community Based Development Initiative.” This group, which is apparently seeking residents’ opinions about the proposed Riverton development off Chevalier Avenue, has no affiliation with SERA, the borough of Sayreville, or the Riverton project.

SERA officials are concerned about the nature of this poll, which appears designed to position the project in a negative light and create local opposition. Known as a “push poll,” as it is intentionally designed to mislead, the questions appear created to incite fear and spread rumor.

SERA officials, who are overseeing the project, are demanding to know what entity is behind this survey, why it was distributed throughout Sayreville, how it is funded and why. Upon learning about the survey, they attempted to reach this group through an email address in the survey’s cover letter. To date, there has been no response.

This organization purports to be “national,” but is focused solely on one project: the Sayreville survey. The organization’s domain name was registered on September 4, 2018 through a proxy, thus ensuring the website’s owner remains private.

“The Riverton redevelopment has been undertaken in an open and transparent process,” said Sayreville Mayor Kennedy O’Brien, who has been involved with the revitalization of the former National Lead site since his service as a Council Member in 1999, when the

Sayreville Waterfront Redevelopment Plan was originally passed into law. “This poll is highly suspect, and we can only assume it is the work of some competitor who is looking to stir public opposition for its own financial gain. When the findings of this poll are released, we hope that Sayreville residents consider the source and disregard what is reported.”

SERA officials note that the Waterfront Redevelopment Plan and the Master Redevelopment Agreement between SERA and the redeveloper, originally executed in 2008, impose certain standards and numerous requirements on the redevelopment project, addressing issues such as:

- State-approved cleanup of environmental contamination
- Analysis of traffic impacts and required roadway improvements
- Format of new housing to mitigate impacts on school enrollment
- Direct payments in support of Borough schools
- Various other public amenities

The Waterfront Redevelopment Plan and Master Redevelopment Agreement also impose specific processes by which SERA, the Mayor and Council, and the Planning Board represent the interests of the Borough and its citizens through review and approval of the redevelopment project as it moves from concept to implementation.

SERA officials note the redevelopment process is designed to engage and inform Borough residents at each stage. SERA has hosted numerous public meetings over the years; meetings have also been held by the Borough Council and the Planning Board. Moreover, the redeveloper has hosted public information forums and has initiated an ongoing campaign to update and solicit input from the community through its social media channels.

“For the past two decades, Sayreville leaders have been working to remediate this site and create an amenity that will generate revenue for the Borough,” said Sayreville Councilwoman Vicky Kilpatrick, who also serves as a SERA commissioner. “When we saw this survey mailed to our homes, and believed that it was designed to damage the credibility of this project, we were compelled to reach out to residents.

“Everyone needs to understand that some outsiders, for their own personal reasons, are trying to dismantle years of work to create the type of project that would enhance Sayreville,” she added. “That is why we are speaking up and urging residents to disregard this dubious survey.”

- End -