



# The Progress-Index

## Public gets say on parking at Seward Luggage redevelopment

*By: F.M. Wiggins, Staff Writer 11/17/2004*

PETERSBURG - City Council received public comments last night on the proposed parking for the redevelopment of the Seward Luggage building on Lafayette Street.

Miller and Associates, which is in charge of the redevelopment project, had representatives present at the public hearing. The city and Miller and Associates plan on closing a portion of Commerce Street and turning the remaining portion from Davis Street toward Lafayette Street into a cul-de-sac.

"We've been working on this project for the better part of three years as a historic tax credit project," said Robin Miller, of Miller and Associates. The developer has had to make several concessions regarding the parking situation.

Miller and Associates has been working for the past three years to turn the former industrial building into townhouses and apartments. The representatives said they would like to probably break ground for the first set of five townhouses sometime before the end of the month.

Once contracts for those three are set and tenants have moved in sometime in the spring, the next set of five townhouses would be redeveloped, with

another set of five townhouses and then the apartments to follow.

If the first building proves to be a success, a second Seward Luggage building across Lafayette Street may be the next to be redeveloped by Miller and Associates.

Later in the meeting it was explained following a question as to why the proposed parking area is somewhat curved in shape. The state Department of Historic Resources and the federal Department of the Interior have identified some remnants of railroad tracks as historically contributing to the significance of the structure. As such, those railroad tracks must be preserved.

"We would have preferred to put the parking closer to the building," said Miller.

City Manager B. David Canada said that he appreciated residents who came forward at last week's City Council meeting raising some concerns about the parking for the structure. Many of those concerns were addressed at this meeting, particularly exactly where the parking would be located and where the cul-de-sac would be placed.

"The parking will be mostly limited to behind the building," said Canada.

"There were also some concerns raised about the environmental impact on Brickhouse Run."

Canada said that the city would be more than happy to work with the High Street Neighborhood Association and Friends Of The Lower Appomattox on developing a path system and to enhance and protect the stream. Because the parking extends into the Chesapeake Bay Resource Management Area, there will have to be a separate public hearing Nov. 29.

However, Canada explained some of the restrictions the property will have to meet as far as quality and quantity of runoff into Brickhouse Run.

Miller and fellow representative Ed Simpson explained how the site will meet these requirements through a series of retention ponds, or swales, which will slow the water flow as well as allow sediment to collect at the bottom.

Natural plants and shrubs will be planted along the retention system to help allow it to blend into the environment.

Another issue which was brought forward and answered by Simpson regarding noise at the site during redevelopment and how it might disturb neighbors.

"Most of the noise will be during the demolition part of the project which should be limited to the very beginning of the project," said Simpson. "All of this will be contained to daylight hours and because it will be on the interior of the buildings, it should be minimal."

Simpson did say that neighbors will have to be understanding with regards to increased heavy truck traffic into the neighborhood from vendors and tradesmen.