

Mall Developers Say: No Problems

By BARBARA HEINS
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ALBANY — The managing director of the Crossgates Group, which this week unveiled a three-dimensional scale model of a proposed, new 90-acre shopping mall, said yesterday that his organization "has a lot of sustaining power" to ward off potential court action which might delay the \$85 million project.

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Robert G. Sproul said that he would be "surprised" if the Guilderland planning board and zoning board of appeals withheld approval of the proposal.

He added that he did not anticipate any "court action that would delay construction."

Sproul said the areas researched for an environmental impact statement indicated a market area existed for \$134 million in shoppers' purchases, money which is being spent elsewhere because those goods and services are not readily available.

"We're proposing high fashion, high quality department stores not found in New York State," Sproul added.

A draft of an environmental impact statement reviewing the controversial project in the Pine Bush area of Guilderland, west of the Northway and Route 20, was filed for review and approval with the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) earlier this

week.

According to Sproul, it took one year to complete the draft statement. He said it cost nearly \$800,000.

Sproul said the store - restaurant complex would generate approximately \$714,000 in property taxes annually and an estimated \$2 million in Guilderland sales tax revenues, annually.

Sproul said that the project would "be avoiding the habitat of the Karner Blue butterfly and the blue lupines."

He said a two-acre plot would be reserved expressly for the butterflies, which have been placed on the endangered species list.

He added that studies of the

area "indicated an intense Karner Blue butterfly habitat on about one acre."

None of the six major department stores which would serve as anchor stores have signed lease contracts with the Crossgates Group.

But, said Sproul: "We have commitments."

He also predicted that "25 to 35 ethnic - fast food restaurants, five or six movie theaters, and possibly a disco" will occupy the mall.

It is expected that public hearings on the environmental impact statement will be conducted by DEC in July or August.

Sproul said he would like to see construction begin by December.