

COUNCIL REJECTS SALE OF 650-ACRE PERRYSBURG SITE

By Brian Meyer
Buffalo News Staff Reporter
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The Common Council on Tuesday rejected the state's plan to sell a 650-acre site in Perrysburg to a logging company, prompting Mayor Anthony M. Masiello to say that the vote "makes no sense."

In a 5-4 vote, the Council sent a message to Albany that it wants to see a new deal before giving up the city's reversionary interests in the Cattaraugus County site. Some lawmakers said there were no written guarantees that the campus of the former J.N. Adam Developmental Center would be managed in an environmentally responsible way.

Other lawmakers questioned the terms of a deal that would have given Buffalo 90 percent of the purchase price, or \$333,900. The site was once home to the city's tuberculosis hospital.

Council President David A. Franczyk, who was the first official to raise concerns about the sale, said the vote sends a signal to the state Dormitory Authority.

"We want the state to go back to the drawing board and work with us to do a development that we can all be proud of," he said.

Joining Franczyk in voting to deny the proposal were Dominic J. Bonifacio of Niagara, Richard A. Fontana of Lovejoy, Joseph Golombek Jr. of North and James D. Griffin of South.

Some lawmakers believe the site could be redeveloped in a way that brings even more revenue to the city, a claim that sale advocates have challenged. The plan would have sold the site to Trathen Land Co. of York.

President Thomas S. Trathen, who one week earlier said he would be "shocked" if the Council didn't approve the plan, learned about its defeat from a reporter.

"Obviously I'm very disappointed with the decision," he said, adding that the company will have to study its options.

State control board officials and the Masiello administration supported the deal, claiming the city needs the revenue.

"It's hard to justify keeping a site that's 40 miles from Buffalo with buildings on it that are in disrepair," said Masiello. "It makes no sense."

Some have warned that if the state gives the site to the city, Buffalo would be saddled with potential liability and additional costs.