

10/20/98

# Prospective Laurelton Center buyer meets with public

## LAURELTON

Representatives of a company that wants to redevelop the former Laurelton Center into a senior citizens residential facility presented their plans to the public Monday evening at a meeting at the Hartley Township building.

The company is one of two prospective buyers the state is considering for the former institution for the mentally retarded, which closed in July. Hickernell Springs Resort of Union County is the other candidate.

Richard N. Chakejian and Mark E. Glatz, president and chief financial officer, respectively, of Hampton Laurelton Associates, Allentown, gave an overview of their development and answered questions from the crowd of about 40 people who attended the meeting.

Not all were receptive to the idea.

Members of the West End Ambulance Service raised concerns about the increase in ambulance transportation for medical visits because of the new senior facility. The service said it did not provide

transportation for doctor visits.

Steve Davis, administrator of personal care at Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village, Lewisburg, said not enough research was done for the new facility.

"While we don't claim to be experts in long-term health care delivery, the limited amount of preliminary marketing and demographic research that has been done is suspect, in the least," Davis said.

Frank Dunon, administrator of Rolling Hills Manor, RR1 Millmont, about 3 miles from the Laurelton Center, said there hadn't been enough residents in the past year to fill up his facility.

He said the 20-30 facilities in a 50-mile radius of the Laurelton Center were all having problems filling their beds.

When asked if the company had contacted the Area Agency on Aging, Glatz said it hadn't, but he believed an AAA rep may have been at one of their meetings.

Hampton plans to establish a senior care facility for a minimum of 300 residential units, encompassing independent living, assist-

ed living and skilled nursing and/or specialised care areas.

The residents sought would be 55 years old and healthy when they moved into the independent living area.

Chakejian said no buildings that were part of the former Laurelton Center for the mentally retarded would be torn down unless they were environmentally impaired.

He said, as he has in the past, there was no intent to close the senior center on the grounds.

He said it would take about 30 months to complete the two phases of the project.

Chakejian said his company wanted community involvement in the project, and he said a representative community association would be formed to review and provide input on all proposed uses, plans and architecture. Formation of the association would be a condition of the agreement of sale.

He said the residential facility would provide 125 permanent jobs and 140 construction jobs.