

Miracle Mile project has Judge Kelley's full Attention

Mar 16, 2017 Reporter Bill Mardis

"When somebody wants to spend \$100 million in my county, it gets my attention," declared Pulaski County Judge-Executive Steve Kelley.

Kelley said he will meet with Anthony (Tony) Del Spina Friday to discuss the Miracle Mile tourism, retail and entertainment complex Del Spina wants to build in eastern Pulaski County about a mile west of the Rockcastle River.

The project Del Spina touts as a mini Gatlinburg-Pigeon Forge that would create up to 3,000 jobs has had favorable public reaction. The original announcement in the February 15 edition of the Commonwealth Journal was the most-read story that day in the CNHI chain of newspapers in 23 states. De Spina said he has been swamped with interest from potential developers.

Del Spina needs infrastructure entrance to his from Somerset and he has asked the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to build a service road property. The proposed Miracle Mile Complex will be divided into two parcels: Phase One, 300 acres on the north side of Ky. 80, and Phase two, 125 acres on the south side, (intended for future expansion). Each tract contains 2,000 feet of Ky. 80 frontage.

Reaction from government officials has been lukewarm at best. A disappointed Del Spina last week in a news release said the project could be moved if other opportunities are presented to the developer.

Kelley said the meeting Friday will include a representative from the Lake Cumberland Area Development District.

"We want to see if we can apply for a grant or a loan (to extend infrastructure) to the site, 19 miles east of Somerset and 13 miles from the I-75 interchange at London.

Somerset is the most likely source of potable water and wastewater removal. Somerset Mayor Eddie Girdler has turned thumbs down on the project unless an agency other than the city comes up with 100 percent of the money which he says would be \$20 million to build the water and sewer mains.

A Somerset engineering firm working for Del Spina has set infrastructure costs much lower — \$2,205,000 to extend sewer lines to the project and between \$500,000 and \$600,000 for water mains. Natural gas for the project could be

tapped from a nearby Somerset pipeline from Eastern Kentucky, according to Del Spina.

Kelley doesn't seem surprised the Miracle Mile Complex has gotten a cold shoulder from some governmental officials.

"Anytime somebody comes up with something big, there are always those who criticize ... somebody to tell them to get back in their corner," the county judge-executive remarked. "I'm at least willing to sit down and talk with them ... to see how far we can go."

Kelley didn't say where or what time the meeting Friday will be " ... we might go to Russell Springs (Lake Cumberland Area Development District offices) or end up here in my office (at courthouse in Somerset).