

EAGLE SQUARE

Feldco warns applicants of possible lawsuit

BY IAN DONNIS

An official with Feldco Development, the New York company that wants to build a shopping complex in Providence's Eagle Square, has told opponents of the project that they could face a lawsuit for filing an appeal with the Providence Zoning Board of Review.

Feldco spokesman Gene Beaudoin says the appeal of the project's final approval, filed Monday, November 26, on behalf of the four partners of the Monohasset Mill Project, is "disallowed" by state legislation and city ordinances. "If, in fact, the deposition process shows that this [appeal] was used only to abuse the process, then they're open to civil liability," Beaudoin says, referring to the Monohasset partners.

Erik Bright says Beaudoin told him that his partners and he could be hit with a \$100 million lawsuit if they filed the appeal with the Zoning Board of Review. The appeal was filed after five parties, IO Labs, American Printing, Peter Sparling, Christopher Freed, and a Valley Street auto body shop, dropped out of an earlier appeal of Feldco's revised proposal.

Mayor Vincent A. "Buddy" Cianci and other supporters of Feldco's revised \$31 million project for Eagle Square describe it as a compromise that will preserve part of four 19th-century mill buildings at the site while delivering an infusion of economic activity. Critics rap it as a faux preservation project that falls far short of realizing the potential of the site.

Lawyer Timothy More, who is representing the Monohasset partners in the appeal, says it is not known when the zoning board will consider the appeal. "The concerns remain the same," he says, including the traffic that would be generated by the Feldco project and the degree of demolition of existing buildings at the location.

In related news, the coalition that opposed Feldco's initial plan was due to be recognized during the annual meeting of the Providence Preservation Society on Thursday, November 29, at 7 p.m. in the John C.A. Watkins Auditorium at the *Providence Journal*. Catherine Horsey, PPS executive director, says she understands that some people remain troubled by the plan, "but we've certainly come a long way from the original project and we're proud of the role that we played." Opponents, though, see the recognition as highly ironic, and there was talk that they might distribute leaflets at the event.