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County to hear controversial project pitch

CHARLES TOWN, W.VA.

■ The 638-acre project is surrounded by land owned by the Harpers Ferry (W.Va.) National Historical Park.

By **DAVE McMILLION**
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An attorney representing developers of a controversial office project that was proposed next to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park is scheduled to discuss the project with the Jefferson County Commission

this morning.

The developers' first attempt in developing the project failed April 2 when the Charles Town City Council rejected a proposal to annex 638 acres where the project would be built.

The annexation was rejected after more than 100 people showed up at a council meeting and many criticized the idea.

Charles Town attorney J. Michael Cassell, who is representing the developers, said after the annexation was rejected that his clients would continue pursuing the project.

Opponents have speculated that about the only alternative the developers have is going to the county commission to ask for a rezoning of

Watch it live

An attorney representing developers of a controversial office project that was proposed next to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park will discuss the project at the Jefferson County Commission meeting today at approximately 11:30 a.m. J. Michael Cassell's presentation to the commission can be viewed through a live Web cast of the meeting at www.jeffersoncountywv.org.

the property to allow the project.

The area is zoned for agricultural purposes, Commissioner Greg

Corliss said.

Cassell would not comment in detail Wednesday about what he plans to say to the county commission. Cassell did say the proposal to the commission will be different than the one presented to the City of Charles Town.

"We want them to at least see what we're planning to do with it," Cassell said.

Although Corliss said he did not know what Cassell will be requesting, Corliss said he thinks the commissioners should give consideration to the project, especially if it has been altered.

County Commission President Frances Morgan said she would like to see the commissioners be open-

minded about any proposals before them.

But Morgan said she prefers a growth plan that looks at the county as a whole rather than developers asking for special consideration for various projects.

Developers Gene Capriotti, Herb Jonkers and Jim Gibson initially proposed a \$200 million development project that would have created about one million square feet of office space and a 150-room hotel off Millville Road.

Don Campbell, superintendent of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and an opponent of the project, said that the development would be directly in the line of sight of Civil War battlefields.