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JEFFERSON COUNTY

STATE



Journal photo by Beth Henry

Plans for the Old Standard Quarry site have drawn much interest, as the County Commission prepares to decide whether to rezone the property to allow commercial use. From left, developer Herb Jonkers, Commissioner Rusty Morgan, attorney J. Michael Cassell and Commissioner Greg Corliss tour the quarry Wednesday.

Quarry decision delayed

■ Commissioners want more discussions before voting on a petition to rezone the site.

By **BETH HENRY**
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

CHARLES TOWN — State leaders weighed in Thursday on controversial plans for an upscale development on the Old Standard Quarry site, as the Jefferson County Commission agreed to postpone a decision on the project for several more weeks to gather more information.

The commission originally intended Thursday afternoon's work session as an in-depth discussion with county staff and the developers of Old Standard LLC's hotel and

office development, but the meeting turned into an extended public comment period that lasted more than an hour and a half.

The quarry project, which would bring about \$4.4 million in tax revenues and could create 6,000 new jobs, received support from Rob Alsop, secretary of the Department of Revenue, and Commerce Secretary Kelley Goes.

Goes said her office has seen a need for upscale commercial office spaces that would be created at the quarry, especially because of Jefferson County's proximity to the Washington and Baltimore areas.

"This project looks to be something ... that would have success," she said, adding that the county's skilled work force is another attraction for companies that might be drawn to the quarry project's commercial space. "If you build it, you have a better chance of them coming."

Alsop said the quarry project "would help

stir the economy" and said Jefferson County needs more business rather than residential development.

In addition to the state leaders, about 10 members of the public spoke out for and against the proposed development, which consists of about 410 acres along Millville Road, south of U.S. 340, where developers hope to build a 150-room hotel and 2 million square feet of upscale commercial buildings.

Those who oppose the project said they are deeply concerned about the potential for increased traffic in the area, as well as effects the commercial buildings could have on the viewshed from nearby Harpers Ferry National Historical Park property and Civil War sites. Supporters said the county needs more jobs and a bigger tax base, and the project is a great way to re-use the old quarry site.

Commissioner Rusty Morgan said he wants

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the commission to continue examining the project before voting on whether to approve a petition to rezone the property and allow commercial uses. Although the County Commission discussed the possibility of making its decision July 12, Morgan said he does not want to vote that soon.

"I'm doing my best to listen to everything," he said, adding that he would like all the parties involved in the quarry project to comb through the proposal's details more during the next several weeks. "I think we need a good bit more time."

The other commissioners agreed that more time is needed to discuss the project during future work sessions and meetings.

President Frances Morgan said it seemed like the work session Thursday afternoon was just the first of many on the quarry plans.

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