

Daily Record

Estimated printed pages: 2

November 18, 2008

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Unfinished business

Fields and a skating rink already have been developed by Morris County on old hospital property at Greystone Park. A new hospital was built, and after a seemingly interminable delay, it finally began taking patients a few months ago. But outstanding issues remain, one of which is the fate of 130 acres of old hospital land. The state is looking to sell the land, and county and local officials fear it may be sold for private development. To thwart that, the county freeholders and the four towns surrounding Greystone – Denville, Morris Township, Morris Plains and Parsippany – have passed resolutions reminding the state of a 1999 law mandating that surplus land at Greystone be preserved as open space or used for recreation.

That law was part of the deal in which a chunk of Greystone land was transferred to the county for the proverbial \$1. That deal – a good one for Morris County – was accomplished when a Republican administration was in Trenton. That is no longer the case and as we know, laws can be interpreted differently, depending on who is doing the interpreting. Hence, the need for the resolution.

We support keeping all surplus land at Greystone undeveloped.

The Treasury Department oversees the sale of state property, and a spokesman says no decision has been made on what to do with it.

Of course, if the state offers the land for sale, the county or towns can buy it and preserve it. The problem with that approach is that the land would need an environmental cleanup that could exceed the cost of the purchase. The freeholders already have spent \$8 million cleaning up the land they previously got from the state. So, purchasing the land would be a last resort. The state should live up to the 1999 law.