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Lawmakers hear from opponents to sale of Greystone land

*BY ROB JENNINGS
DAILY RECORD*

A state panel heard testimony this morning in Trenton from several Morris County residents and officials opposed to the possible sale of land at Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital to developers.

Maureen Murray of Morris Plains, who joined about 35 others on a 7 a.m. bus ride to the hearing, was among those who testified before the State House Commission.

She said afterward that the commission, which oversees the sale and leasing of state land, deferred making a decision and would await additional discussions between local mayors and county freeholders and a more definitive estimate of the potential cleanup cost for the 130-acre parcel.

"They reassured us that the sale of the land is not imminent," Murray said.

The commission voted earlier this year to sell the parcel, including Greystone's main building, which closed last summer when the new building opened. That vote prompted objections from Morris County lawmakers and others who argued that a state law required using the land for open space or recreation, and that development could worsen traffic and cause other problems.

In response, the commission agreed to reconsider its decision — prompting today's hearing. It began at 9:15 a.m. and lasted for more than two hours, said Murray, who lives on Cutler Road in Morris Plains near the wooded portion of the Greystone tract.

At the hearing, she presented petitions with 385 signatures from residents opposed to the sale of the land.

"We basically discussed the impact this could potentially have on Morris County residents," Murray said.