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Historic beach club must be preserved

Posted by the Asbury Park Press on 06/14/07

A historic icon of the old Jersey Shore — Takanassee Beach Club, which has benefited the citizens of Long Branch and Monmouth County for generations — could be another priceless coastal site lost.

The Peters family, owners of Takanassee for generations, have provided a priceless public benefit to beachgoers and history buffs. The only way Long Branch could afford to acquire this property would be if Gov. Corzine and the Legislature replenish the Green Acres funding mechanism. My bet is they will.

Silence on this public issue enables and emboldens those who support a developer's plan to raze the historic structures of Takanassee and build luxury homes. We have enough luxury development on the Long Branch coastline.

When the developer's lawyers accuse me and other elected officials of using the Takanassee controversy for "political purposes," they intend to stifle debate and intimidate opposition. They resort to the oldest — and most transparent — lawyerly tactic: Instead of arguing the substance of the issue in dispute, accuse your opponent of having nefarious ulterior motives.

But preservation of Takanassee is my badge of honor. The people of Long Branch elected me to pursue public policies that reflect my commitment to environmental preservation, accountability, transparency and fiscal responsibility in city government.

Politics is nothing more or less than debate and compromise on forming public policy. And public policy is a useful tool to preserve Takanassee from yet another private enclave that deprives the public of recreational opportunities.

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So, I hope my colleagues join me to preserve this sliver of history and good old Jersey Shore fun. Should we succeed, we aim to pay an absolutely fair appraisal price to the Peters family, as provided by law.

Brian Unger
LONG BRANCH CITY COUNCILMAN

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