

Jets stadium vote delayed

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ALBANY -- The political quarrel that led Friday to the third delay of a vote on the proposed \$2.2 billion West Side stadium has turned from a debate over its merits to horse-trading that has little to do with the stadium itself.

Gov. George Pataki and Mayor Michael Bloomberg -- the two Republicans who are the stadium's chief boosters -- headed into feverish negotiations Friday to persuade Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno to grant final approval from the state.

A meeting of the Public Authorities Control Board, a state panel that Pataki, Silver and Bruno control, was rescheduled for Monday afternoon at Bloomberg's request after talks broke down.

"We are going to postpone that vote until Monday and work through the weekend to see if we can satisfy all of the parties," Bloomberg said during his weekly radio show.

He and Silver were scheduled to meet Sunday. Both men's staffs were also expected to confer throughout the weekend. The centerpiece of those negotiations remained Silver's demands that, in exchange for his support of the stadium, Pataki and Bloomberg must dedicate more resources to Lower Manhattan -- his district -- and slow the pace of commercial development in a redevelopment zone adjacent to the stadium known as the Hudson Yards.

"The issue has been largely narrowed to the timing and nature of the West Side incentives as compared to the Lower Manhattan incentives," said a Pataki administration source.

And Friday, in a sign of strained relations between the Pataki and Bloomberg camps, the governor said he agreed with Silver that the city's primary focus should be Lower Manhattan's rebuilding -- an issue that has become a political albatross for Pataki recently.

"The governor shares the speaker's concern in that regard," said a top Pataki aide.

The source of Silver's opposition is the city's planned redevelopment of a 360-acre neighborhood on the West Side.

The Bloomberg administration intends to offer blanket real estate tax breaks to developers throughout the entire zone.

But the plan has come under scrutiny from Silver, who is concerned it will draw business from other corners of the city, including Ground Zero.

Some independent watchdogs have questioned why the city would offer lucrative tax incentives when it already plans to improve infrastructure to draw developers.

"You're constructing a premium product," said James Parrott, chief economist at the Fiscal Policy Institute, a think tank in Manhattan. "Why are you going to sell it at a discount?"

Silver said the proposal -- conceived by Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff -- would add 24 million square feet of commercial space to the city's office market "at a time when we are all committed to redeveloping downtown." He added that he was troubled by "what kind of competition that would create."

Bruno posed a less complex challenge to the stadium's supporters, people familiar with the situation said. In a posture that has become rote for the upstate Republican, he is asking that, in exchange for a \$300 million subsidy for the stadium, areas outside the city receive an equal amount for economic development projects.

"It's not about the stadium anymore," said a source close to the talks. "It's just about 'what I'm gonna get'."

Staff writers Dan Janison and Deborah S. Morris in New York contributed to this story.

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