

LOOKING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Goal is cleaning, reusing polluted factory sites

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BY DESTINY LOPEZ

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WATERBURY — Robert Klee was all smiles as he toured a series of local projects with Mayor Neil M. O’Leary on Wednesday.

Klee, commissioner of the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, was impressed with the work being done with funds provided through his agency.

“Waterbury is one of our key cities where we are doing a whole lot of great projects,” said Klee, “There are so many exciting things going on that can serve as examples for other cities.”

Klee and O’Leary visited several brownfield sites to discuss the progress of statefunded efforts to clean up and redevelop them.

State Sen. Joan V. Hartley, D-15th District, said the buildings at 777 and 835 South Main St. were being assessed in hopes of transforming the lot into an agricultural center. It would have washing facilities to “provide a venue for Connecticut growers to prepare their produce before it goes to the market,” she said.

The former Anamet metal hose factory on Washington Street, also part of O’Leary’s “Waterbury Next” plan, has completed the first three phases of remediation and has caught the interest of some private industries.

Cleanup of the old Nova Dye Factory began in June and has been going “fairly well with no major issues” according to Todd Montello, chief executive officer of Waterbury Development Corp.

The lot has been deserted for decades, but did not gain attention until it was the site of a devastating fire in 2012.

O’Leary is looking forward to the brownfield’s future. “The uses for the site are endless,” he said. The Waterbury Industrial Commons on Thomaston Avenue is 600,000 square feet, of which 200,000 square feet has been demolished and 400,000 square feet is undergoing remediation. Luvata Inc., a metal manufacturer that creates superconductors distributed worldwide, is the site’s anchor tenant. King Industries, an industrial chemical firm based in Norwalk, is expected to purchase 10 acres of the site in a \$50 million deal, bringing more high paying jobs to Waterbury.

A public works facility will be built on the 41-acre site of the former MacDermid factory on East Aurora Street that was purchased for \$2 in May. Part of the site, which has been vacant for more than 10 years, will be demolished and a portion of the main building will be renovated.

Klee’s final stop was at Fulton Park, where the park conservancy and the Historic Overlook Community Club have been working to clean up the area. Michael Salvio, the conservancy’s vice president, shared his concerns about the park’s drainage system. “No matter how much we work ... We don’t have the money to drain the ponds,” said Salvio.

Klee walked through the park with Salvio and encountered paths covered in pond water and mud as a result of improper drainage. “We have some homework on our end for Fulton Park,” said the commissioner.



Michael Salvio, far left, president of the Historic Overlook Community Club in Waterbury, shows area dignitaries some of the issues facing Fulton Park. Local leaders also went on a bus tour of brownfield sites through the city Wednesday.

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Michael Salvio of the Historic Overlook Community Club in Waterbury explains to state energy and environmental protection commissioner Robert Klee some of the issues facing Fulton Park in Waterbury. Behind them are State Rep. Jeffrey Berger and State Sen. Joan V. Hartley. Area dignitaries took a bus tour of brownfield sites in Waterbury on Wednesday.

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