

# N.J. DEP delays Crossing Park plan

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lem — the bicentennial and the crowds that will visit the park next in 1976. We must address ourselves to that problem and get a minimum program, using public input."

With DEP's postponement of park plans there is only \$50,000 of bicentennial money going into the park for additional facilities to handle crowds, he said.

"Two, once we get past the bicentennial, I think we have to take a look at some long-range plans — taking our time and listening to as much local input as possible," he added.

Following the hearings, DEP will contract with engineers and architects to design new plans, Bardin said.

Bannister, who revealed DEP's earlier plans on May 6 and had been DEP's most antagonist critic, was excited about DEP's change in spirit.

"I'm amazed, and relieved. Our attempt to preserve due process for township residents has seemed to run its proper course. At least now, due to Bardin's sensible actions, I have a small bit of faith in our state government. Before I had none."

**A new beginning?**  
Township residents were happy about Bardin's decision but maintained a skeptical wait-and-see attitude.

"It'd be nice if we could trust DEP" one resident said. "I hope Bardin's actions signal the beginning of new cooperation between DEP and township folks."

The residents have plenty of reasons to remain skeptical.

The DEP has had an overall master plan for Washington Crossing since the mid-60's, according to sources, and yet has failed to reveal any of the designs to citizens or obtain local input.

In 1971 DEP wanted to install an expensive amphitheatre in the park but settled for the present, open-air theatre which cost far less, according to Arcieri.

No sooner had the theatre been

built than "some people from Princeton decided that it would be nice to have a railroad put into the park," Arcieri said.

That DEP-endorsed plan upset township residents.

And when Bannister dropped his "bomb" at the May 6 meeting, the township was up in arms again for several reasons.

"For two years we tried to get a sewage plant in the township. DEP said no. Now we find out DEP wants to put a sewage plant in the park to handle the tourists. That's unreal," Arcieri said at a recent committee meeting.

Other park plans which angered residents including one which reportedly called for a golf course, a proposal for a Treadway Inn, land purchases and an apparent attempt by the state to turn the park into a huge tourist attraction, all made without consulting local or county government and without any major plans for improving the already inadequate Route 29.

**Something for everyone**  
"Hopefully those wild, secretive plans are history," Bannister said.

Apparently they are, according to Bardin.

"We want to come out of this with our heads held high. We want to make the park something that everyone in the state and the country can be proud of and make it available to them," Bardin said.

"When this is all finished, I don't want to find myself reporting to the governor like Lord Germaine did to King George. I hope we can work with township residents and make a positive contribution to that park," Bardin added.

Bardin was referring to a speech Lord George Germaine, the British Colonial Secretary of State, made to King George III and the House of Commons reporting on the rebel uprising here.

"All our hopes were blasted by that unhappy affair at Trenton," the Lord said.

Bardin has taken the first big step to avoid such a situation.

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