

Martin Tower — one year later

The Bethlehem Gadfly Martin Tower May 19, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on Martin Tower* 

It was just recently that a follower remarked to Gadfly that a year ago some of us were worried about pernicious fall-out from demolition silica.

And now . . . pandemic.

from Christina Tatu, “One year later: Martin Tower implosion drew cheers and tears as iconic skyscraper came crashing down.” May 19, 2020.

It was one year ago when thousands of spectators from around the Lehigh Valley gathered to watch the implosion of Martin Tower, Bethlehem Steel’s world headquarters, which for 47 years reigned as the Lehigh Valley’s tallest building. The 21-story, cruciform building came crashing down at 7:04 a.m. May 19, 2019.

“At the end of the day it was a successful demolition and was a symbol of Bethlehem’s past. We are certainly very appreciative of everything Bethlehem Steel has done for the city and now it’s time to move forward and develop that tract of land,” Mayor Robert Donchez said Monday. A year later, the site at 1170 Eighth Ave. continues to be cleared.

At 53 acres, it’s the largest developable tract of land in the city, Donchez said. It’s also in the City Revitalization and Improvement Zone, which allows developers to use certain state and local taxes to pay off construction loans.

The developer, HRP Management, received a waiver from the state to continue work at the site despite the statewide shutdown, Bethlehem Director of Community and Economic Development Alicia Miller Karner said.

City planners [narrowly approved a master plan in April 2019](#) that calls for the 53-acre site to be developed into a trio of office buildings, a gas station and convenience store, a 132-room hotel, a restaurant, and up to

two retail stores. There would be another 528 garden-style apartments rising three stories on the other end of the property.

It's not clear when construction might start, though Donchez said city officials are in regular contact with the developer. The city has yet to receive any land development plans, Karner said. Phone calls to HRP Management were not returned.

So, yes, there will be another go-round about specific plans for the site.

Gird you loins, so to speak.