

**\$100 million bid wins City View  
Grocer from N.Y. becomes new owner of Garfield Hts. center**

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A New York grocer has submitted a winning \$100 million bid to buy City View Center, a big-box shopping complex that opened atop an abandoned landfill in Garfield Heights this year.

Original developer and owner John McGill, weary of repeated scrutiny from environmental regulators, put the property up for sale in September. He had sought \$100.5 million.

"He loves it and wishes he didn't have to sell it," said Mark Luttner of the Sekulovski & Luttner Group, a Chicago-based real estate brokerage firm that marketed City View on McGill's behalf.

"But he's had to spend a lot of money to get this center to where it is today."

The purchase is the first in Northeast Ohio for Thomas Klein, who Luttner said primarily invests in New York apartments. Klein also owns the popular Rockland Kosher Supermarket in Monsey, N.Y., a small town outside New York City that has a large Jewish population.

Klein, who was in Greater Cleveland to close the deal on Thursday, could not be reached for comment. Luttner said the "old-fashioned" businessman does not carry a cell phone.

"I think he's doing some estate planning," said Luttner, who estimated Klein is in his late 50s and interested in "looking out for his children, who are not in the real estate business."

Klein initially coveted Highland Plaza, a Highland Heights power center that Sekulovski & Luttner sold last week to Cincinnati-based Hauck Holdings for \$40 million.

After Klein lost out on Highland, the brokers turned his attention to City View, a suburban center anchored by a Wal-Mart that will cost more than double what he would have paid for Highland.

Klein could minimize his investment by approaching City View as a tenancy-in-common. Such a move would allow him to sell ownership stakes to others. But Luttner insisted that Klein is "buying it all for himself."

Alec Pacella, a vice president at the Cleveland office of commercial real estate services firm Grubb & Ellis, was impressed that McGill received all but \$500,000 of the list price. "It's probably the biggest deal this year in terms of dollars" for a property in Northeast Ohio, he said.

That's not bad for a shopping center where last month, amid the holiday rush, Wal-Mart closed for more than 24 hours because of what McGill identified as a sewer gas leak.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency closely monitors City View because of the site's history. EPA officials have expressed concern about methane gas levels there, as well as water that seeps from the side of the hill on which the shopping center sits.

But David Snider, a Garfield Heights developer who considered a bid for City View, said "it's still a great property and a great location," on Transportation Boulevard near Interstate 480.

Snider's firm plans to build Bridgeview Crossing, another big-box retail center, nearby.

"The City View sale shows that real estate is certainly desirable by people who obviously think the center has a good future," Snider said.

"That's encouraging to all of us who are here."

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