

SOLON SUN



Rubin hoped to make Solon a destination

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Peter L. Rubin, president and CEO of The Coral Co. in University Heights, doesn't live in Solon, but his impact here was monumental in 2008. Even though his grand plans for Central Park were killed by the economy, he, more than anyone else, affected Solon deeply last year.

The city poured most of its energy in 2008, and thousands of dollars, into the Coral project, which was to go before voters Nov. 4.

Rubin's plan for the retail, housing and office project wasn't the city's favorite. Initially, council seemed to favor a competing plan by Bob Stark, but when Stark abruptly pulled out, Rubin gradually won over six of the seven council members. Four even joined him in Las Vegas to help woo tenants to Central Park at an international shopping center convention.

Rubin got an entire subdivision behind his project because he offered them generous sums for their properties.

Rubin brought former politicians and others out of the woodwork. These included former mayor Robert Paulson, former mayoral candidate Stan Gordon and former councilman Rick Mendelsohn.

Mendelsohn made arguably largest public records request in Solon's history because of the Coral project.

Rubin also stirred up the public. Paulson, who was mayor from 1987-97, said he's never seen so many Solon residents respond to an issue like they did to Central Park.

Rubin even caused furniture retailer John Sedlak to become politically active. Sedlak vehemently opposed the Coral project and said so liberally.

Rubin got the city to spend thousands of dollars on traffic studies, sewer studies and other infrastructure issues. Even though Coral backed out, city officials said they benefited from those studies and will address critical issues.

Rubin was a class act. In public meetings, no matter how much he was criticized or questioned, he never lost his temper. He treated residents, media and public officials with respect. His demeanor made the difference.