

By Christian Schiavone

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## SouthField redevelopment rechristened Union Point

WEYMOUTH – Over the past decade SouthField has been synonymous with economic rejuvenation, bureaucratic logjam and eye-rolling resignation – sometimes all at once.

Now it has a new association: history.

LStar Communities, the North Carolina company in charge of redeveloping the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station, announced Thursday that it's stepping away from the long, tangled past of SouthField by re-christening the property Union Point.

LStar Managing Partner Kyle Corkum said the re-branding was partly to disassociate with the years the project seemed broken beyond repair, mired in in-fighting and an unworkable oversight structure.

But he said it was also to reflect the partnership between Weymouth, Rockland and Abington, each of which has a piece of the 1,400 former base within its borders, and LStar's new ambitious vision for a denser, more urban redevelopment, Corkum said.

"What we inherited was a glorified single-family subdivision in the suburbs," Corkum said. "The new vision is more urban and more like a small city outside of Boston."

The new name is also a nod to the two Union Streets, one in Weymouth and one in Rockland, that dead-end at the edges of the property and LStar's commitment to use union labor for some of the work on the property, Corkum said.

New temporary signs went up Wednesday at the property and LStar redirected the redevelopment's former website to a new one, [www.unionpointma.com](http://www.unionpointma.com).

Mayor Robert Hedlund said LStar had already made strides turning around SouthField's image before changing its name.

"I think that the name means less in the long run than the actual development that will take hold and the benefits we'll see," he said. "If it helps them do a better job of marketing the site and bringing in more commercial activity and more tax revenue for the town, that's great."

Eric Miller, president of the SouthField Neighborhood Association, said even though the name may have officially changed, it's not clear yet whether the new label will stick with residents of the new development and the three towns. He said even after a decade of the property's official naming as SouthField many people still refer to it simply as "the base."

"It's really going to come down to whether the community accepts the new name," he said. "Who knows if Union Point is going to stick any more than SouthField did?"

LStar, which specializes in reviving failed or struggling master planned communities, bought the property from previous master developer Starwood Land Ventures last year.

LNR Development Corp., which preceded Starwood, first dubbed the property SouthField in 2006. New homes and businesses were supposed to start springing up by the following year but a series of delays and false starts pushed back the start of construction by three years. When did begin it was more of a trickle than the flood that the towns had hoped would spur an economic revival through an influx of new tax revenue.

A legislative overhaul in 2014 scrapped the old oversight agency, replaced it with a new one and gave the three towns more control over their portions.

Since taking over, LStar has signed several land deals with developers and won approval from the three towns to add more housing and triple the amount of commercial space around the cluster of homes and apartments already there.

Plans for SouthField now include 3,900 homes and apartments and up to 6 million square feet of commercial space.

Some vestiges of the old name will remain. The 2014 legal rewrite refers to the property created the new oversight agency, the SouthField Redevelopment Authority, and recognized the SouthField Neighborhood Association.

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PHOTO/ GREG DERR/THE PATRIOT LEDGER

SouthField in Weymouth makes a name change to Union Point. John Perkins of Sign Design in Brockton changes signs along Delahunt Parkway from Rockland into the development.