

New Yorkers support the extension of the No. 7 line and the long-awaited rebuilding of the Jacob Javits Convention Center, according to the poll, which has a margin of error of 3 percent.

Voters were generally warmer to the idea of developer Bruce Ratner's plan to move the National Basketball Association's New Jersey

Nets to Brooklyn, although they also opposed, 59 percent to 35 percent, using tax dollars for construction of an arena on Atlantic Avenue.

Jets' spokesman Matt Higgins dismissed the poll, saying it was too vaguely worded and failed to include the fact that Jets' owner Robert Wood "Woody" Johnson

plans to spend \$800 million of his own money to pay for the 75,000-seat stadium.

Bloomberg, speaking to reporters yesterday, said the poll also failed to emphasize the economic benefits of a West Side stadium.

"I know everybody wants to talk about it in terms of sports," he said. "But don't

think of it that way... Think of this as jobs, jobs, jobs."

The survey also found that while voters applauded Bloomberg's plan to end social promotions in the third grade, 63 percent to 30 percent, they didn't approve of his 11th-hour replacement of two education panel members who wanted to delay the poli-

cy. "By a hefty 2-to-1 margin, New Yorkers back Mayor Bloomberg in the showdown over social promotions," Maurice Carroll, director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute, said yesterday. "They don't like seeing the mayor fire people who don't agree with him."

GIRLFRIEND'S DEATH

Lawyer: Gotti grieves for his 'angel'

BY ANTHONY M. DESTEFANO
STAFF WRITER

An anguished Peter Gotti exclaimed yesterday that his dead girlfriend was an "angel" who had been abruptly snatched, according to the reputed mob boss's attorney.

"He felt as though an angel was taken from him," said attorney Joseph DiBenedetto, who visited Gotti, 64, yesterday in jail to tell the reputed Gambino family crime boss of Marjorie Alexander's alleged suicide.

The 43-year-old Rockville Centre divorcee apparently committed suicide after she went public with her years-long relationship with Gotti.

"He described her as a beautiful person with many talents," DiBenedetto said about his meeting with Gotti. "Like anybody, he was upset."



Peter Gotti

Gotti is being held at the Brooklyn Metropolitan Detention Center awaiting sentencing for his conviction last year on federal racketeering charges.

Meanwhile, federal investiga-

tors are trying to determine whether Gotti had an angry telephone conversation with Alexander just before she was seen leaving her home shortly after 4 p.m. Monday, according to law enforcement sources.

She had checked into the Westbury Red Roof Inn about 5:30 p.m. Monday, according to police. Her family reported her missing Tuesday afternoon, and she was found dead in a motel room Wednesday, police said.

By analyzing jail telephone tapes, investigators are trying to determine whether Gotti and Alexander had an argument that might have prompted her to take her life, said the sources.

At a news conference yesterday, Nassau police said Alexander swallowed prescription pills and placed a plastic bag over her head.

Det. Sgt. Richard Laursen

of Nassau County's homicide squad said Alexander was found on a bed in the motel room after housekeeping tried unsuccessfully to enter the room. Laursen said there was an empty pill container in the room for a prescribed sedative.

A note apologizing to the maid was found in the room, as well as another note addressed to law enforcement explaining her death as a suicide. She also left a \$100 tip, one official said.

Two other handwritten notes — one to a friend and another to her family — were received through the mail, Laursen said. He described them as "typical of suicide."

While the investigation was continuing, Laursen said all indications are that Alexander committed suicide.

Alexander and Gotti's relationship had been largely a se-

cret until last week, when it was revealed in court that she was the author of letters to the judge pleading for leniency for him. She also began to speak to the media.

Gotti's estranged wife, Catherine, also wrote to the court, but attacked him, saying "his self-serving greed and philandering has put him where he is and deserves to be."

At the Alexander home yesterday, a man who said he is the dead woman's son said he was angry and that the press crucified her.

"She was such a beautiful human being," he said. "She gave money to charity. She was going to start a business selling jewelry. She was one of the sweetest human beings."

Staff writers Keiko Morris and Denise Bonilla contributed to this story.