

Planning Commission
City of Jamestown, ss:

Proceedings by Authority

Police Training Room
Fourth Floor, Municipal Building

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Jamestown, New York was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. and was livestreamed.

Members Present: Chairman Mike Laurin, Greg Lindquist, Mark Roetzer, Tom Nelson, Sarah Gilbert

Members Absent: Jeffrey Nelson

Others Present: Jennifer John City Clerk/Treasurer, Councilman Wiliam Reynolds, Deputy Director of Development Kasie Foulk, Corporation Counsel Elliot Raimondo

Chairman Mike Laurin called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Doug Champ, 225 Bowen Street, appeared before the planning commission to explain the meaning of site plan development within the city code. He believes the planning commission should follow all formats of the site plan review in the city code.

William Reynolds, 8 Whitehill Avenue, addressed the planning commission concerning the wetlands program and the effects the New York State DEC will have on the riverside as well as the Chadakoin river. Councilman Reynolds also discussed housing and advocated for small project proposals and asked of the planning commission to understand housing is needed. Many individuals that would like to build small homes are likely not going to wait until public notice is sent out and approved. The planning commission provided information that the funding for the upcoming projects is a combination of public and private investors.

STEL Gateway Lofts Project

Lindsey Haubenreich provided a brief overview and reminded the board that this is not a new project. The project has gone through a lengthy approval process from 2018-2020 and ultimately was approved in the end. A copy of the full site plan was provided during the meeting as well as a copy of the landscape plans, so they can be sent to the Parks and Recreation Department. Ms. Haubenreich reiterated the project is an adaptive reuse project to reuse a portion of the existing Gateway Center for multi-family affordable and supportive housing. The building being used is now a designated structure on the State and National Historic Register which will allow the local landmark to be saved and preserved. Overall, there will be a total of 110 units that will be divided between persons with special needs and lower to middle income residents. Exterior site

improvements are to be made and there will be a demolition of a couple of existing residential structures nearby on Water Street. During the planning review process in 2018 to 2020 the goal was to collect the two residences and demolish them to add in a playground and additional green space. The project itself will be a complement to the city's successful Chadakoin Riverwalk; although it will not be connected right away, it is in talks with the city. The project is also enrolled in the Brownfield cleanup program and there will be an additional three million dollars to help clean up the site. The clean up will help revitalize the property to increase storm water capacity, green space, improve drainage, and remove any potential contaminants.

An overview of the entrance to the property as well as an overlook on what is to come was given. There will be window replacements that will be in line with historical regulations and all units will be completely electric. The project itself will involve solar energy as well as a solar roof will be on the top of the building. The addition of fencing on the site would include three-foot high vinyl fencing transitioning to six-foot high privacy fencing for the playground. The fencing will serve as a barrier of protection to the turtles that live in the river. On the site, there will be a parking lot for the residents but ultimately the goal is to have less pavement and more green space. The project will also include signage and about twenty-one site lights that will be fifteen-foot high and dark-sky compliant. It was noted that the building itself will need exterior brick restoration which will be covered by historical tax credits to get the building to standards.

The GPI office demonstrated the full design plans of the water system, sewer connections, and as well as storm water constraints. Plans have been revamped to eliminate or re-route existing culvert underground piping and site drainage has been re-engineered. The culvert pipe bidding begins in spring of 2026 and construction will begin soon after. Ms. Haubenreich added that the group will be coordinating as best they can with the city and with the DEC regarding work to the site and brownfield cleanup as the city also has a project involving the culvert on the site coinciding with the Gateway Lofts timeline. The office also discussed not meeting the requirements for the number of parking spaces and it will require a couple variances. Based on the size of the building and its square footage, it is required to have two hundred and fifty-one parking spaces. The first-floor square footage may also change based on the number of tenants there. Now the total number of parking spaces is about one hundred and forty-eight but, the process itself with the ZBA should be an easy approval. The second variance is the vehicular parking area, which is supposed to be five feet and is short by half a foot. The GPI office clarified these were the two variances that were required in 2020. The only change in the project is the new culvert alignment and connections. The commission's packet was also outlined briefly as it pertains to demo plans, the landscape plan, etc.

Steven Ald added to the discussion as far as services that will be available in the building. Support services such as care management, employment services, and counseling. The Mental Health Association, Community Helping Hands (which is a fifty-percent owner on the property), St. Susan Center (which has an option on another property), STEL (will provide services to individuals with mental illness), YWCA (will provide services primarily to women and children) all will have support offices on site. There is an interest from a pharmacy and a credit union; however, getting people to commit to taking commercial space that will not be ready for another two to three years is

unlikely. Once construction begins it will become a more desirable space. Ms. Haubenreich touched on an agreement that was drafted in 2020 as part of the approval process for the site plan. The agreement pertains to the future demolition of blighted buildings as part of a mitigation plan. The plan will help STEL as a future project will be to build single/two family infill housing on lots of demoed buildings.

Mr. Lindquist suggested if the project goes forward to utilize an energy system that would tap into the medical building for snow melting removal. Therefore, there are no chemicals and no plowing that could possibly damage or contaminate the green space as well as the river. The application can be submitted through the Board of Public Utilities.

Mr. Roetzer pointed out that there is a generator on the west side of the building where it could potentially be within the easement of the new culvert. He asked if the electrical engineer had taken time to look at the possibility of moving the generator. Steven Ald responded and ensured the generator will be downsized and it will be moved. Mr. Roetzer also noted speaking with Parks Department manager and arborist Dan Stone on the landscaping plans associated with the project and there seems to be no issues with the plans.

Tom Nelson added he has seen the project evolve and the building become better. He believes all the people involved within the project have done a great job with answering questions and addressing issues throughout the process of this project.

Ms. Gilbert asked for an overview of the timeline for the project if. Steven Ald noted the application is due March 21st of this year and this will add an additional two million dollars to the project. He mentioned there is an opportunity to apply for four percent tax credits and if all goes as planned construction will start in the first quarter of 2026. Ms. Gilbert asked for the timeline of the project once construction begins. Mr. Ald confirmed once construction begins it will be about fourteen months and about a six-month rental period. Ms. Gilbert also requested more information on the plans for adding a bus stop or another form of public transportation. Mr. Ald assured CARTS is aware of the site plans and agreed the design appropriately works for them to get in and out access. STEL also provides transportation for all their clients but, as for those who are not clients, they will need to use public transportation. There will also be twenty-four-hour staffing which includes case workers along with support from the County Planning Board. CCIDA has provided three hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars to the environmental portion of the project.

Chairman Mike Laurin asked what the minimum or maximum amount of income allowed to be eligible for the housing is and what is the case when a tenant loses their income. The maximum amount is sixty percent of the area median income while the minimum amount is thirty percent. The occupants do not have to be employed; however, occupants apart of the STEL program will have support but as for the public that is renting it would be no different than a private landlord whose tenant lost their income. Mr. Ald noted a vast majority of cases of eviction are for a violation of the rules. Mr. Laurin also inquired if there will be local contractors involved during the construction process. Mr. Ald noted that Community Helping Hands does offer job training

programs and added that BOCES was a tenant of theirs and may come back. He confirmed bids from local contractors will be accepted but occasionally there is a local labor policy requirement. Mr. Laurin also brought up the population decrease the city has seen and what the future will look like if we continue at this rate. He asked about the PILOT agreement that is currently being drafted and mentioned the assessment of the property and added that the city's expenses are always growing and as a taxpayer, he has concerns that the property will be paying their fair share. Mr. Ald confirmed that the agreement is still being drafted and negotiated, but that they intend to uphold the PILOT agreement. Mr. Laurin also mentioned the housing mitigation plan that was drafted years before and if the organization was still in agreement with that. Mr. Ald confirmed that they are still intending to uphold the mitigation agreement of \$350,000.00 as originally drafted.

Mr. Ald briefly explained the project began well before 2018 that was just the first time it had ever reached the board. He reiterated that the project has been looked over and massaged for several years. Overall, the team feels highly satisfied with the outcome of this project and the potential new possibilities it will bring to the community. He confirmed that the 24-hour staffing would be caseworkers onsite.

Mr. Luring inquired to county support for the project. Ms. Haubenreich clarified that the application had gone before the county planning board and received their support. There is an application in front of the IDA at this point, and they are also contributing funding to the project.

Mr. Lindquist followed up on Mr. Laurin's question on residency. He inquired as to how many residents would be from the Jamestown area as the housing has to go on a statewide website. Mr. Ald stated that there was enough interest and need in the city to fill the project with Jamestown residents. Mr. Lindquist asked about waste removal from the site and if truck routes were established to avoid going through the center of Jamestown. There is currently not a plan in place as it is something that will be decided at the time of building permit application. Mr. Lindquist asked where snow would be stored on the site and it was stated that the increased greenspace would be used to store the snow. Mr. Lindquist inquired to future plans regarding the mitigation plan and whether the North Main Street properties that had been discussed previously were still planned to be a part of the plan. Mr. Ald confirmed that they were. Mr. Lindquist requested that they complete the waterfront assessment form as it pertains to LWRP.

Ms. Gilbert suggested that the organization try to keep the rent affordable for tenants as it can be difficult to fill the spaces. She asked them to create an affordable rental program for the nonprofits that would be beneficial to the project. She mentioned Twan Leenders regarding the turtles that nest in the area and the group mentioned that he had been consulted on that.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.
Jennifer R. John City Clerk/Treasurer