

Housing Committee
March 24th, 2025
6:30 p.m.
Police Training Room
Municipal Building, Jamestown, New York

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Sheldon, Councilwoman Brackman

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Kimberly Ecklund, City Clerk Jennifer R. John, Deputy Director of Development Kasie Foulk, Council President Dolce, Councilman Daversa, Councilman Russell, Councilman Bonfiglio

Councilman Reynolds called the meeting to order.

STEL Presentation

Steven Ald of 8036 Dennis Road, Angola, New York spoke before the Housing Committee to provide a brief overview of the Gateway Lofts project, and provide updates on where the project currently stands. The project began in 2017 with construction originally planned to begin in April of 2020, however in January of 2020, the investor pulled out due to the COVID crisis. Low-income housing investors are hard to find. In December of 2023 a new investor was identified and the project began to move forward again, following the site suitability approval. Mr. Ald highlighted the current funding sources for the project as it stands today. In order to qualify for funding sources, the project team was tasked with working under new requirements such as all electric utilities, etc. They hope to submit the formal application in July, 2025, with the State Agency closing in January or February.

Mr. Ald provided a high-level overview of the makeup of the project and reviewed the full scope of the project as it is currently and will be in the future. Community Helping Hands is the current owner of the building which consists of a lot of vacant space. St. Susan's Center is in talks to move out of the building, but may stay. The Mental Health Association and Community Helping Hands will still house their offices in the space. STEL will manage the apartment portion of the project. There will be 110 apartments in the building, consisting of one, two, and three bedroom units. The two and three bedroom units are reserved for the YWCA clientele, to help support homeless families, primarily mothers with children. Forty apartments have been reserved for individuals with mental illness.

In 2020, STEL released a FAQ sheet that is still relevant to the project in its current iteration. Crystal Surdyk will make copies of the informational sheet to distribute to council members. The only things that have changed are the requirements for the building to be more energy efficient and for them to be all electric. The increase in project cost is attributed to the greater need for energy efficiency and the increase in price of construction materials.

Environmental cleanup costs are not expected to rise. All of the apartments will be ADA compliant and residents can choose which apartment they would like to rent.

Mr. Ald provided an overview of the income guidelines. Those who are at 60% of the area median income, which equates to \$44,700 for a four-person family, are eligible to apply for an apartment. Ms. Foulk noted that the rough estimate would be a single person, making \$15.50 at a full-time job. If there are dependent children in the household, you now greatly decrease the income so those individuals would fall into the 40 – 50% threshold. Ms. Foulk handed out the HUD income limit sheet for the committee to review.

Councilman Bonfiglio asked if inspections would be done on the building once complete. Mr. Ald noted that the City of Jamestown will inspect the building in order to be granted the certificate of occupancy. Inspectors generally meet monthly at the construction site to see the progress of the project. STEL will inspect the property and apartments quarterly. Additionally, investors visit the property yearly to ensure that the buildings are kept as close to new as possible. State inspectors visit every two years.

Councilman Sheldon asked Mr. Ald to talk about the Zoning Board of Appeals variances that are needed. Mr. Ald noted that there were two existing non-conforming issues. The first is that the building was built too close to Water Street, and the second was the parking. The current parking is one foot from the neighboring lot. The variance was approved to move that back to 4 and a half feet, even though the zoning code requires five feet. They also sought a variance for the number of parking spaces. A parking study was done and it was determined that fewer parking spaces are required in the parking lot. It was decided that more greenspace would be preferable to additional parking spaces. A playground will also be added to the space. Efforts have been made to stabilize the Chadakoin River and make it so the endangered soft shell spiny turtles cannot enter the parking lot.

Councilman Reynolds mentioned the \$350,000.00 in funds appropriated to demolition of properties. If no other funding becomes available, that will be funded through STEL. A PILOT program has been put in place and agreed to by all parties.

Opportunities for Public Comment

No one from the public appeared to speak before the Housing Committee.

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