

# **Planning & Development Committee**

## **Minutes**

**City of Batavia**

**Tuesday, May 20, 2014**

**6:00 P.M.**

**Council BoardRoom**

**City Hall, One Batavia City Centre, Batavia NY**

**Attendance:** Edward Jones, Duane Preston, David Difante

**Absent:** Paul Viele, Jeffrey Scott

**Also in Attendance:** Zoning Board of Appeals members Jeffrey Gillard, Lee Hyatt, Paul McCarthy; Historic Preservation Commission members Paul Schulte, Teresa Siverling, Sharon Burkel, Ashley Bateman, Joan Barton

Edward Jones called for the roll.

Edward Jones declared a quorum at 6:10 PM.

### **1. Approval of Minutes – March 18, 2014**

**Motion by:** Duane Preston

I move the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee on March 18, 2014 to be approved as submitted.

**Seconded by:** David Difante

Vote for: 3 (Edward Jones, Duane Preston, David Difante)

Vote against: 0

Vote Abstain: 0

Results of motion: Approval of April 8, 2014 meeting minutes.

(SEE MINUTES ON FILE IN CITY CLERKS OFFICE)

### **2. Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Plan Presentation: Comprehensive Draft Nomination Study**

Chairman Jones turned the meeting over to City Manager Jason Molino, who explained that this meeting was an informative one about the process for developing the comprehensive draft Nomination Study. He said the presentation would go through the steps that were taken in the planning process and describe how the sites were chosen for the Strategic Plan. He then introduced Edward Flynn of LaBella Associates. What followed was a review of the comprehensive draft Nomination Study, made primarily by Edward Flynn with assistance by steering committee members Jason Molino, and Julie Pacatte, Economic Development Coordinator for the Batavia Development Corporation.

Mr. Flynn presented the five Strategic Sites targeted by the study: City Centre, the Downtown Medical Corridor, the Harvester Center, the former Della Penna Site, and the Creek Park Area and described how and why they were chosen. He explained that they were identified as having the greatest potential to stimulate area-wide redevelopment. There is a high percentage of public ownership among the properties which offers greater flexibility in terms of redevelopment. The sites also have excellent transportation and infrastructure.

The BOA Steering Committee focused on developing plans for each Strategic Site. The committee was guided in their development of concept plans and recommendations by the Vision Statement they had previously formulated: "The Batavia Opportunity Area will strive to be a sustainable, mixed use urban center that will embrace and celebrate its history and natural resources by creatively revitalizing properties for new uses in a new economy."

The target uses for the Della Pena Site include medical offices, some housing, and recreation. The Ellicott Trail will run on the south side of the property which will extend to the Industrial Center on Pearl Street. The Creek Park Area will also include office space, housing, and recreational possibilities. Target uses for the City Centre Site

involve office space, housing, retail, and possibly an upscale hotel. The Downtown Medical Corridor will allow for more office space and along with the City Centre Cite, will be redesigned to be more pedestrian friendly. Rather than being used primarily as an industrial site, the Harvester Center will continue to be developed for mixed uses. The artisan development already occurring there will be continued, with the possible addition of some loft housing and some retail on the lower floors.

Some of the properties have environmental issues and problems from being abandoned or underutilized for extended periods of time. The idea is to make the properties market ready. Mr. Flynn explained what the market analysis showed for the sites, and then described the plans for revitalizing each of the five sites according to the target uses for the property. The market analysis did not exactly match the proposed usage of all of the properties so Mr. Flynn explained the differences and the justification for them. For example, the market analysis did not include a boutique hotel, but the plan includes one because it is projected that with an increase in professional offices a place for business people to stay will be needed.

Mr. Flynn stated that redevelopment in Batavia requires an approach with a different kind of mentality than Batavia has seen in 30 or 40 years. He pointed out that the strength of Batavia's downtown is a non-traditional one, that of service businesses. He said that though it is non-traditional, it is nevertheless an asset already in place and Batavia needs to build on what it has.

There were several questions raised during the presentation. One question raised was about the traffic on Ellicott Street. Paul Schulte of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) asked if there was a plan for dealing with heavy truck traffic volume. Mr. Flynn said that it probably will not be possible to eliminate truck traffic on Route 63 so it will be necessary to look at alternative modes of transportation, such as bike paths.

Another question addressed the Science, Technology, and Advanced Manufacturing Park (STAMP) in Alabama, New York, and if it is developed how it will affect the City. Mr. Flynn noted that he believes the question is not whether or not it will be developed, but rather a matter of when. He believes that the project will become a reality and that Batavia should be poised to capture some of the benefit from it. Ms. Pacatte indicated that some developers have showed interest in Batavia with the expectation that STAMP is inevitable.

Teresa Siverling, also of the HPC, asked a question about the tenant base and the market being targeted for housing in the downtown area. Mr. Flynn responded that the housing target is higher end/ professional. She wanted to know if the plan is showing a demand that she is not seeing and if there is an anticipated need for upscale apartments. Mr. Molino pointed out that there is an undersupply of modern housing and a demand for new housing. Ms. Pacatte explained that there is a market for young professionals looking for housing downtown and also for active seniors.

Sharon Burkel, another HPC member, wanted to know how they are prepared to deal with a developer who wants to demolish the Della Penna building since it is an historic building but has not been designated. Mr. Molino indicated that they would encourage as much restoration and maintaining of the historic character as possible while allowing the project to go forward at the same time. He said that when an opportunity for redevelopment comes along it will be a matter for the Planning and Development Committee, and as such there will be a meeting and an opportunity for discussion and review.

PDC Chairperson Ed Jones asked the final question: What are the next steps to advance the project? Mr. Flynn replied that there are a couple of industrial/residential zoning issues that could be handled right away. He said the City should also aggressively continue to apply for grants.

According to Mr. Molino the BOA Development Plan comes before the City Council in June. After that time, the actions required to complete the final step of the BOA process will need to be addressed. Even though the funding for BOA redevelopment has been discontinued, if the steps are completed the Plan can be certified or designated. This status yields bonus tax credits. Another part of the final step is the Environmental Impact Statement. Mr. Molino explained that though it is not something that can be done immediately, once that is accomplished then anything that is done within the plan does not need separate approval from SEQR.

(See attached for detailed outline of presentation.) (For the complete Draft Nomination Study go to [www.bataviaopportunity.com](http://www.bataviaopportunity.com) and click on Batavia BOA Plan Final Draft.)

### **3. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be June 17, 2014 at 6:00 PM.

**Motion by:** Edward Jones

**Seconded by:** David Difante

Vote 3-0 in favor of adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meg Chilano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Meg Chilano**