

Public Hearing for Arthouse WP Developments, LLC

Date: 01/10/2022

Transcript:

Michael Curti: Hi Rosa, it's Mike Curti, can you hear me?

Rosa Ramon: Hi Michael, Rosa here, can you hear me?

Michael Curti: I am going to start the hearing, is that ok?

Rosa Ramon: Please, I am sorry for the delay.

Michael Curti: no problem at all. Ok.

Michael Curti: Good afternoon, my apologies to everybody who is joining us at the public hearing, the time now is 4:17pm, my name is Michael Curti, I am an attorney at Harris Beach and co agency council to the County of Westchester Industrial Development Agency. This matter is a public hearing regarding a proposed project consisting of the agency providing financial assistance and taking title possession or control, by deed, lease, license or otherwise of the land and improvement located at the Project site which is 1 Lyon Place and 10 Lyon Place, White Plains, NY. The lease, sublease, or installment sale of the property back to Arthouse WP Development, LLC which is the company, and the construction, renovation, improving, maintaining and equipping upon the Project Property of 212 multifamily, residential rental units in 2 existing buildings, 149 units will be located in the 1 Lyons Place, 63 units will be located at 10 Lyon Place building, of which 6% of the units shall be affordable at 60% AMI, and associated resident amenities all is more fully described in the application. The application and cost benefit analysis that was prepared by Camoin Associates is located on the agency website and also a copy is available in person at the public hearing site. Ms. Ramon has anyone registered to speak or is anyone present at the public hearing?

Rosa Ramon: There is 1 person who is Mr. Benjamin Brown.

Michael Curti: Great, at this point if Mr. Brown wishes to put comments on the record, he is more than welcome to.

Benjamin Brown: Yes, hello, this is Benjamin Brown, can I confirm that the people here can hear me?

Michael Curti: Yes, we can hear you.

Benjamin Brown: Yes, I am sorry I had some technical issues, I can actually see you on the webex platform, but couldn't hear anyone, so I just called in on my telephone so that is how I am handling this.

Michael Curti: That works.

Benjamin Brown: If you are ready I will proceed with my comments on the development.

Michael Curti: Yes. Please do.

Benjamin Brown: I also want to note that I think when the meeting opened, you made some remarks and unfortunately I missed them. I could see you on the screen speaking, but I wasn't able to hear what was being said, if there is anything I should know, please let me know.

Michael Curti: I basically gave a synopsis of the project, but is the same as what is presently in the application in the Comoin report.

Benjamin Brown: Ok, yes, and I am sure I can look at that later. To introduce myself, I lived in White Plains, I lived in Westchester County for the majority of my life, and moved to White Plains in 2018. I live in a cooperative building that's pretty close to the downtown, I wouldn't say is in downtown core, but it's nearby. Like a lot of citizens in White Plains, the scale and rapid pace of real estate development has certainly drawn gotten my attention and caused me to become more involved and to try to learn more about these processes. I've been in some meeting to see White Plains common council regarding developer's applications. My comments, I'll break into two main parts, I've also submitted written comments, which go more detail, but for these comments, I'll focus first on the general issue of the amounts of development pressure in the city of White Plains, and then secondly on the specific issue of White Plains affordable housing requirements. White Plains is facing a great amount of development pressure and we have developments going up all over the city which are very apparent to the citizens at a visceral level and there is a fair amount disruption from construction, from construction vehicles, closures of sidewalks, traffic that has to do with construction and construction vehicles the parts and right away and things like that. I was able to watch a continuing legal education program of the state bar association that came out in March of this year called "Land Use Comprehensive Plan". One of the presenters of the program was White Plains Commissioner of Planning, Commissioner Gomez. The moderator introduced him by saying, quote, "our next speaker is the Commissioner planning for the City of White Plains Christopher Gomez and in White Plains he is overseeing a building boom with over 6000 multifamily dwelling units approved for construction along the pipeline" and then Mr. Gomez did comment in one way or another and the program went on, but those comments to me show that White Plains is subject to intense real estate development and development pressure, which is consistent with the experience I have as a citizen walking around the City and driving around it. In my neighborhood there's the Hamilton green development which is under, I guess they haven't broken ground yet, but they are going to soon, and they are emptying out the much smaller existing building on the site and make way for it. That is a plan for 860 units, 956 parking space development, also in my neighborhood One Water Street is 301 units and 307 parking spaces, they begun construction on that, and then a little further north also in my neighborhood just South of the North White Plains train station 20 Harland avenue, 7-11 Holland Avenue and 27 Holland Avenue involved 296 dwelling units and 380 parking spaces. There are more developments detailed in my written comments, which are closer to the proposed Lyon Place Development and some others that I haven't mentioned. The point that I wish to make is a great deal of development pressure. There are a great many of developers who are interested in commencing large scale projects in the city and who are applying to do so, and I believe the city's planning staff and the building department and other involved, persons are really doing, you know, under quite large workloads due to the amount of development. To me this context indicates that there's not very much of a need in White Plains to use tax incentive to forego public revenues in order to incentivize real estate developers to do what they do, which is to propose projects and great ground in projects. It seems to me, there is plenty of appetite in the development community for that already. And so that is the first section of my comment, the second section has to do with the affordable housing requirements that White Plains has, certainly even the affordability of market rate housing is an issue to me, but particularly when developers are receiving tax incentives to do development activity the affordable housing requirement comes front and center, because that's a real social benefit from development. This development has been proposed with the inclusion of 6% affordable units. So, 6% of the units in development would be affordable units

this contrasts with the current requirements in the city, simply because this development was approved before the current requirements came into effect, but the current requirements is a minimum of 8% affordable units and the comment I would make is that theirs is a lot of development application being considered by White Plains, a lot of projects that may come before the industrial development agency, it would be better to use tax incentives in the case of the minimum 8% affordable housing building, rather than this one just 6% affordable units. I also have some questions detailed in my written comments about the nature of the affordable housing in many of these highly amenitized buildings I wonder whether the amenities in the buildings will be accessible to the residents of the affordable units and I've also wondered about the relative square footage of affordable units in the market rate which I think are things worth considering. That's the overall tenor of my comments, I appreciate the chance to come before you, and be heard. Someone who is really just not involved in the real estate industry in any way, I really just live in the city and you know I have noticed what's going on and wanting to give you that on the ground perspective. So thank you.

Michael Curti: Thank you very much for providing those comments. Ms. Ramon are there any other speakers?

Rosa Ramon: No.

Michael Curti: There are no other speakers, the time is now 4:27 and we did keep room open beginning at 4 o'clock, but since we had a little difficulty with regard to computer system will leave it open for another 5 minutes. So, if there is any other speaker, just notify Ms. Ramon or myself and we'll let you speak, but we will keep this open for about another 5 minutes.

Michael Curti: Ok. The time is now 4:38, I don't believe anybody has joined us since that time, we have kept the room open since 4 o'clock and the live feed has been functioning since 4:17pm, I'll just have one last call if there is any other participants that would like to comment please let me know now, I will note that the comments provided earlier and also those comments that were emailed will be part of the record and will be provided to the Board of Directors prior to any final approval. There being no one else that wishes to comment, I'll deem the public hearing closed. Thank you very much for those that join this afternoon. Thank you again.