

CITY OPERATIONS

Tuesday, October 3, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Gonzalez, Alderman Dougherty, Alderman Andreano, and Alderman George. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Nicholas DiCerbo, Jr., City Attorney; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Ed Jennings, Code Enforcement Supervisor; Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary; Dan DeRose, Kehoe & DeRose; Raquel Biscaro and Eric Biscaro, Forest Hills Corp. of WNY.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Smith called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, September 5, 2017)

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman George. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Presentation – Forest Hills Corp. of WNY – Forest Hills Subdivision

Mr. Biscaro stated that he would like to redraw the lot lines for the Forest Hills Subdivision. He presented a handout to the Council that details the existing lot lines, as well as the proposed new lot lines. There are currently 41 lots, and he would like to create 53. He stated that in the R1 zoning district, there is a 60 foot minimum frontage requirement, and the lots must be at least 9,000 square feet. Both of these requirements are met.

He continued in stating that he wishes to put in 1200 square feet, two bedroom senior patio homes. These would be totally non subsidized rentals. Since 2004, only one home has been built in the development, showing that the development, as is, has really failed. The Olean area is growing older, and his desire is to provide high quality, smaller homes for people to move into. This development will also benefit the City because of the tax base it creates.

He stated that he has experience in this sort of project, as he currently has a development such as this in Batavia.

Alderman Andreano questioned the average cost of the homes, and Mr. Biscaro replied approximately \$90,000. He will build all of the homes, own them, and rent them out. If the property was to ever sell, it would be under the conditions that the entire lot of homes goes as a group and are not sold individually. They will be quality homes with handicapped accessible bathrooms, one car attached garages, and two car wide driveways. There are 58 of these homes at the Batavia site.

Mr. DeRose stated that they are all stick built homes. Mr. Biscaro stated that, as the owner of a building supply company, he is able to work with contractors to have the homes built rather economically.

He stated that the rent on the homes would be \$1,200, and would include snow plowing and lawn care. There are no maintenance costs, which is beneficial to the residents, as home maintenance for larger homes can be difficult later in life.

Alderman Crawford questioned if there was a feasibility study done. Mr. Biscaro stated that he has only compared the project to what he did in Batavia. There is a huge market for these types of homes here. People aren't downsizing in Olean later in life because they cannot find rentals that are satisfactory and higher in quality. Alderman Gonzalez added that the housing market could improve when people move into these rentals and downsize, as more quality homes will be available for those who desire to move into the area.

Alderman Witte questioned how this compares to the project in Allegany. Alderman Andreano stated that it really doesn't, as the facility proposed for Allegany is an assisted living facility. Mr. Biscaro stated that the residents of his homes will move into facilities such as the one proposed in Allegany later in their lives, but this is a step that they could take before that time comes.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that the street does not appear to be finished on part of the proposed map. He questioned if there is a plan in place for this part of the street. Mr. Biscaro stated that they do not plan to dedicate the street to the City, and would rather maintain it themselves. They will also not be opening the end of the street to Genesee Street, as they would like to prevent through traffic. He stated that the roadway is already there, but not paved. He does not plan to have sidewalks.

Mr. Ring stated that he is not comfortable planning on having people walking in the streets. He feels that there should be sidewalks in the development. Mr. Biscaro replied that the whole neighborhood is without sidewalks. There would be extremely few people walking outdoors. The average age, they believe, of residents would be 70 to 75. Mr. Ring responded by stating that he just wants to make sure that this is a discussion point.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that he would also like sidewalks to be considered. He then questioned when the development in Batavia was finished. Mr. Biscaro replied that it began in 2006, and was completed in 2014.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned if this decision is going to put the future Council and residents into a position where they believe this development was a waste of time and money. Mr. Biscaro replied that he can't say in perpetuity that everything will always be impeccable and brand new, but as long as he owns it, the properties will be.

Mr. Crawford questioned the occupancy rate, and Mr. Biscaro replied that it is 100%. His plan is to build six homes this year and fill them, six next year and fill them, and so on and so forth. Eventually, he will no longer need to advertise or have open houses, as the units, he expects, will always be full and will have a waiting list of interested residents.

Alderman Andreano stated that she compares these \$90,000 homes with ones in the area that are close to \$1 million. She questions if the building of the homes will lower taxes for other area residents and decrease their home values. Mr. Biscaro stated that the nature of the beast in Western New York is that you can buy a house in most areas for less than half of the cost to build. Additionally, the homes in Batavia did not lower surrounding home values.

Alderman Andreano questioned if the properties are assessed together, or as separate homes. Mr. Biscaro replied that they will be assessed together, and since he is a private entity, he is not eligible for a PILOT or STAR program tax breaks. He will also not be asking the City to plow or fix potholes on the roadway, as that will be their responsibility.

Alderman Witte questioned if the \$1,200 a month included utilities, to which Mr. Biscaro replied that it does not. She stated that she feels that the cost is too expensive for local seniors. Mr. Biscaro replied by stating that he is confident that they will have full occupancy. Credit checks will be done on residents prior to their renting of a home, and they will need approximately \$4,000 a month in income to live there. The homes are also built very energy efficient, and he expects that many times utility bills will be half of those that the residents had in their previous home.

Alderman Crawford questioned if there was an age requirement. Mr. Biscaro replied that 50 is the minimum age, but they expect ages to average around 75.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned what they need from the Council. Mr. DiCerbo stated that since they are creating new lots, the Council needs to go through the subdivision procedure. At this time, the Council should consider the materials they have been given to share comments before they submit a final plat plan for approval.

Alderman Gonzalez implored them to consider sidewalks. Alderman Witte stated that, on the other hand, she can see where seniors would not want sidewalks, as they would not want to be responsible to clear them of snow and ice in the winter. Mr. Biscaro stated that if it was an issue and came down to it, they would put sidewalks in. However, in Batavia, there are no sidewalks and he has received no concern or complaints regarding this. Alderman Gonzalez stated that he feels that sidewalks are an amenity that have come to be expected.

Mr. and Mrs. Mark and Barb Langenhan of Woodview Court stated that they don't see how this is any different from what the Zoning Board previously turned down. Residents in the neighborhood are not favorable regarding this proposed project. The lots are small to begin with, and they can't see them becoming smaller. They feel that there will be a lot of pushback in the neighborhood on this. It is a very expensive neighborhood and they don't want to see properties devalued.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned if this would have to go back to the Zoning Board. Mr. DiCerbo stated that it does not. It can be referred to the Planning Board for comment, but it is ultimately a Council decision. Alderman Gonzalez questioned if the construction of the homes required Planning or Zoning approval, and Mr. DiCerbo replied that it does not.

Alderman Crawford stated that there is really not something like this in the City of Olean. The population is getting older. His own parents are in a situation where they would like to downsize, but they cannot find something that is to their expectations. These homes would solve that issue.

Mr. Biscaro stated that the development in Batavia backs up to high value homes, but it has not affected the value. In fact, he has never received any complaints from neighbors regarding the issue.

Alderman Andreano stated that Social Security is \$1938 a month. We are a blue collar city, and she doesn't want to see these homes be built, just for them to sit empty. Mr. Biscaro stated that he feels that there are way more than enough people in the county to fill the homes. He added that the property will always be in tip top shape and will not be substandard whatsoever.

Alderman Smith stated that the Council received a lot of information tonight, and they will take some time to mull over it. Mr. DeRose stated that he looks forward to following up with the Council regarding this in the future.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman George. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 p.m.