
CITY OF GENEVA IDA
PUBLIC HEARING

July 10, 2025
At approximately 6:00 p.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers
47 Castle Street
Geneva, New York 14456

PRESENT:

ANNE NENNEAU, CHAIR

R.J. PASSALACQUA
IRENE RODRIGUEZ
LOWELL DEWEY
CATHERINE PRICE
JAN REGAN
JOSHUA KAYN

STEPHEN MAIER, ESQ.
Counsel to the City of Geneva IDA

REPORTED BY: KIMBERLY A. BONSIGNORE, Court Reporter
FORBES COURT REPORTING SERVICES, LLC
21 Woodcrest Drive
Batavia, New York 14020

MR. MAIER: All right. Everyone, we're going to begin the public hearing.

So welcome, everyone. This is a public hearing. It's now open. It is now 6:01 p.m. I'm Stephen Maier, from Harris Beach Murtha Cullina, PLLC, counsel to the City of Geneva IDA, and I've been designated by the agency to be the hearing officer to conduct this public hearing.

We're here to hold a public hearing on the Lakeview Community Resources, Inc., project. The transcript of this hearing will be reviewed and considered by the agency in determination of this project. Notice of the hearing appeared in the *Finger Lakes Times* on Saturday, June 28th of 2025.

A little description of the project. Lakeview Community Resources, Inc., for itself or on behalf of an entity formed or to be formed by it or on its behalf, has requested that the agency assist with a certain project consisting of the acquisition by the agency of a leasehold or other interests in approximately 1.04 acres of real property located at 218 Genesee Street in the City of Geneva, Ontario County, New York, and all other lands in the City of Geneva, whereby license or easement or other agreement, the company or its designees are making

improvements to benefit the project, particularly described as Tax Parcel No. 104.42-2-44.110, and the existing improvements located thereon consisting of an approximately 7,000-square-foot building, the demolition of the existing improvements, and the planning, design, construction, and operation of a five-story building comprised of approximately 74 residential rental units, office space, and common areas, along with utility and site improvements, parking lots, access and egress improvements, signage, curbage, landscaping, and stormwater retention improvements, and the acquisition by the company in and around the improvements of certain items of machinery, equipment, and other tangible personal property.

The proposed financial assistance contemplated by the agency includes a partial real tax abatement.

Now to go over some rules for the public hearing tonight. All those in attendance are going to be required to sign in at the sign-in sheet. If you do not, you will not be permitted to speak. So if anybody has not been able to sign the sign-in sheet, please let me know and we'll do so right now.

Okay. If you have a written comment to

submit for the record, you may do so. Written comments may also be delivered to the agency at 47 Castle Street, Geneva, New York 14456, to Adam Blowers' attention.

Please note, the purpose of this hearing is for the agency to hear all persons with views in favor of or opposed to the proposed financial assistance being contemplated by the agency. Therefore, the representatives of the agency will not be responding to comments. As with a lot of public hearings, this will not be a Q-and-A session.

Okay. Those interested in making a comment will be called in order of the sign-in sheet. Prior to making any comments -- again, for our stenographer in the room -- please, for the record, state your name and address, and if you're representing a company, please identify the company.

I request that speakers keep comments to five minutes. As your time is nearing expiration, I'll provide some nonverbal cues to let you know you're nearing your five minutes. Once your five minutes is up, again I'll let you know.

Okay. So first is Gregory Peck.

Not here. Okay.

Bob Stivers.

MR. STIVERS: Hi. My name is Bob Stivers, property owner and business owner here in Geneva, and I would like you to deny this request.

It is my understanding the Geneva Local Development Corporation is focused on economic development and neighborhood revitalization within the City of Geneva.

This project does not promote economic development and neighborhood revitalization. Why not? You're placing too many people on one site. There's not enough green space on that site for the people to enjoy. There's not enough parking for the residents and/or visitors. There's not enough amenities for their needs, such as stores and pharmacies.

It does not meet the character of the neighborhood visually. If you've seen the pictures, that's not Geneva. Not Geneva at all. The problem is, on a nice day, there's nowhere on-site to congregate. Visitors will be parking on the street in front of the businesses. There's nowhere for the residents to get amenities. The visual is ridiculous.

Who have we heard that's in opposition? The property owners, the businesses, the neighbors. Who's in favor? I haven't seen that list yet.

Let's look at the LDC mission. It's

supporting small businesses. The LDC provides resources and programs to help new and existing business thrive in Geneva. This dense project would not hurt -- would hurt the existing businesses of Geneva, especially on Castle Street, because these people will be gathering in front of the stores and on sidewalks. Visitors would also take customer parking.

Neighborhood revitalization. The LDC works to improve the quality of life in Geneva's neighborhoods by addressing issues like market decline and promoting projects. This would increase market decline.

Financial assistance. Financial assistance -- I believe that the 50,000 is low. I don't know the calculation. That's up to you to decide on what the PILOT would be, but that seems to be low.

Real estate development. The LDC aims to facilitate sustainable and aesthetically pleasing developments in key areas in Geneva, including downtown. This building is not aesthetically pleasing.

The partnerships. The LDC actively collaborates with various public, private, not-for-profit partners to achieve goals, and they

have done a good job of that. Let's not ruin the reputation with one that doesn't work for everybody.

Other factors. Addressing neighborhood decline. The LDC analyzes market trends, identifies factors contributing to the decline, and develops projects to improve neighborhood conditions. This is a rough neighborhood, and this development would not help it. It would hinder it and make it worse.

Supporting the financial stability of business. The LDC partners with financial institutions to offer programs and assistance to business, particularly during challenging times. This partner -- or this project will harm many downtown businesses.

A quick story. I did a partnering with Lakeview probably 15 or 20 years ago, where I had a five-unit house, and they gave money for me to renovate the house. I put money in and -- originally, I had one tenant. He fit in great with the neighborhood, it worked out well, so we thought this may work.

So we renovated the other four apartments and filled it full of Lakeview tenants. In just one neighborhood of five apartments, it was too much of a density of Lakeview residents. It turned the

neighborhood into an uproar. There was undue traffic up and down the street that shouldn't have been there. It wasn't a good situation.

And that's a personal experience that we saw and we lived through. And, you know, as time went, you know, the time expired and the residents moved out.

But let's not do that to our downtown. You know, unfortunately, I did it to a small neighborhood, and it was corrected over time. But to do it to downtown Geneva, a city that many of us have put thousands and millions of dollars into growing, to get market-rate tenants downtown, living and spending money in our downtown, with what we have -- to afford to be able -- what we have in our downtown now, I think this would be a real hindrance to us.

So I respectfully request that you decline the application. Thank you.

MR. MAIER: Brian Rhodes.

Again, when you get up, please read out your name and your address and if you're representing a company.

MR. RHODES: Hi. My name is Brian Rhodes. I live on 96 Maxwell Ave. in Geneva.

I'm not representing anyone. I'm not an

LLC. I'm not a property attorney or anything like that, just a resident, a homeowner. So excuse my ignorance on some of this stuff. I'm not -- I'm only as read up on it as I could find in the newspaper and online.

I am opposed to this project from a logistical standpoint, size and all the other things that have been mentioned. I know that's not what's on the table here, but -- I would support a PILOT of this type for residential properties, if we could just make it universal.

Doing some quick math -- and let me know if I'm way off on any figures. A \$38 million project, with 74 units, works out to a half-million dollars a unit. With the PILOT that I've read about, they're required to pay about \$50,000 in the first year. That works out to \$675 per unit.

My own private residence, my house on Maxwell, is assessed at \$220,000. So, proportionally, I would pay about \$297 per year. Sounds pretty good. I would be supportive of that if we could make that universal. That would be great.

And then the taxes could just increase by a marginal percentage over a year, we could drop the capricious assessment process, and then we wouldn't

get penalized for improving our property. It all sounds really good, but it's not going to happen that way.

So I do understand that this is a different type of property than a single-family home and it gets assessed in a different way. But I'm seeing a lot of money involved here, and somewhere there's some developers that are going to be walking away with a bag of money, and I don't see why we need to bend to them to make something work.

Our former planning director, David West, stated that between using a PILOT or the standard 581-a assessment process, he said the amount of revenue would, quote, likely be somewhat of a wash. If that's the case, then just drop the PILOT. We can all go home. We don't need to do it.

So there's obviously a reason why they're applying for a PILOT. And if they can't make this project work without it, then it's time to rethink it. A new location, different size, something is wrong. So there's got to be another way to do it without us giving in to yet another developer.

So I propose that we just use our PILOT powers to encourage positive development; help retain the economic drivers, the engines that keep the --

that build the city up.

Residents like myself, who could technically live anywhere, we're just being driven out with high property taxes. We're really the ones that put everything into the city: improving the property, make it nice, spend money downtown, donate to causes. And I feel like we're, you know, just stepping over the middle in the city, and that's a big problem.

I've seen too many grants and PILOTs for people that have all the money in the world, and some of these things just don't work out like they should. We have, you know, a pile of dirt at Lake's Edge. I've seen grants to fix up a facade of a building, and then the ground floor, where there should be shops and everything, is curtained over and there's nothing there, and we gave all kinds of money to somebody who's walking away with it.

So I would say that, unless we can do this for everybody, I would suggest that you deny this PILOT. And I appreciate you taking the time. Thank you.

MR. MAIER: Walter Adamson.

MR. ADAMSON: I'm Walter Adamson. I live at 4136 High Banks Road, Geneva, New York.

I actually do have a business. It's a bed

and breakfast. It's a registered bed and breakfast, not Airbnb, and I've had it for 15 years. It's really flourished because of the tourism, the wine tours. I couldn't be happier with it. And although they say a bed-and-breakfast owner burns out after seven years -- I taught for 40 years -- this is a snap in comparison.

I did teach also at Hillside. When I retired from public school, they asked me at Hillside here in Romulus to come over and give some of my abilities because they really didn't have licensed teachers.

And I did that for almost three years, and that was a community of handicapped: mentally, psychologically. You know the story. It no longer exists, and it's unfortunate, the old Army base, but that was a contained area and it needed to be. Not that residents that are being suggested here are contained in the exact same way. However, I do want to draw the link to Auburn.

Auburn's Wegmans used to have a wonderful restaurant area. The same as we have here in our restaurant Wegmans. The little seating area, they took that out. And why? They had a situation similar to this, which is being plan -- proposed right next door to Wegmans.

And that became their club because they had nothing else, just their building where they lived, and it became just a seating area. And they finally -- Wegmans felt, "We have to close it down."

Now, think of this. I know there's the parking issue, things like that, but you're talking about this little -- I don't want to say it's congested because it's just the way a city should look. It's a beautiful grid city, not just some straight line like Canandaigua.

This city is beautiful, but in that little area, they're proposing moving a community within the community, and it just can't handle that burden. It's just too many people to begin with, despite clientele. That's not even the issue.

However, let's suppose it is put in. Where will these folks -- and God bless them -- where are they going to go when they come out those doors and want to explore a little bit, walk a little? They're not going to walk in a park. They're going to walk past the businesses. The park is really -- people can say, "They can walk to the water." Not totally.

You're going to have congestion in the library that is -- it's a beautiful library. Dear Lord, phenomenal, but you don't want it to be a

landing spot for a social club because that's all these folks are going to have. Is the institution they're going to be in going to provide that? No. We're talking about five personnel working it I think they were saying.

Anyway, I do want to mention the sign behind you folks -- and thank you for your service here. It takes a lot of time to be part of a group like yours, but that sign with a sailboat in front of the building, that's your beautiful Geneva. It's a tourism city now, and it's blossoming. We've all seen it grow so huge. We don't want to just fill a space because it's empty. We want to fill it with the right thing.

And in the nature of this, it is a city in itself, not to be just impacted because there's nothing there. I urge you to deny it.

MR. MAIER: I have a James and Maureen.

MR. WALLACE: Yeah, my name is James Wallace, and I live at 600 Castle Street. Also own a bed and breakfast, the William Smith Inn, so it's within walking distance.

And we came here in 2019 and -- you know, we send people from our house -- we, you know, tout Geneva, the restaurants, the things to see here,

rather than sending them to Canandaigua, whatever. And just every year it seems to be you don't want them to walk from our house, which is less than a ten-minute walk.

There's a burnt-out building right at the corner of Oak and Castle. It's been abandoned for three years, and it's embarrassing when these people come from Philadelphia, New Jersey -- I mean, there's a lot of things to see -- and you've got to try and make excuses for it.

And we've seen the businesses come and then go, and we don't want to see more go. And we already know another one is leaving. Rooted is leaving. And these are great things for our city. More shopping. There's nothing here for, again, the number of people.

I don't want to go over -- everything is like a red flashing light on this project, so I hope you can deny it as well. We think it's a great thing for people to have, but I don't know -- was there no other location in the city proper that could have gave them more space?

Like people say, "Where are they going to congregate when people visit?" They say they've got a gathering room, but it's what? 20-by-30 feet. I mean, that's not big enough.

So I don't know if there were other proposals where you could have more common areas for activities and that, but it's just not going to fit here. So I hope you take it under consideration and let us know on the vote. Thank you.

MS. WALLACE: My name is Maureen Wallace, and I'm co-owner with James on the William Smith Inn, and I just want to echo everything that everyone said.

My concern is the people gathering or lack of area for them to gather. It's going to be on the sidewalk, outside of the current businesses that are there. And it is intimidating if you're walking down the street and there's a huddle of people standing on the sidewalk. Where are you going to go?

So, again, we came here six years ago. A beautiful area; can't say enough about Geneva. I used to go into every store and say, "You don't know how lucky you are to live here. Appreciate every day. This is beautiful."

And I think this will be a mistake. I respectfully ask you to deny this application as well.

MR. MAIER: Merry Henry.

MS. HENRY: Hi. I'm Merry Henry, 499 Castle Street, and I moved here 25 years ago with the great hope that it would take off and become a city that we

would all be able to be proud of, that it would become a tourist attraction.

We're wine country that has grown in 25 years, and we want to attract those tourists, and right now we attract affordable housing, low income, ARC. I mean, we -- out of the eight properties that the nice pamphlet they put out, which I wish they would do for condos for people like me, who would like to stay in the city and live here and -- I'm unable to do that now as a widow. My taxes are \$10,400 a year. You're going to get 50,300 -- I don't even know. It's under a hundred thousand for this project per year.

And it's a PILOT, so we give these tax credits or -- anyway, I'm just so disgusted that nothing has happened in 25 years. And all they seem to want to attract or go after are these kind of programs. I'm not saying they're not necessary. At the rate I'm going, I probably will need one.

So, you know, it's just disheartening to be here and have that happen. And I still don't even have curbs in front of my house after 25 years. I've been asking. "Oh, seven years." "Oh, in seven years." Recently, I was told three years. I don't believe them anymore.

I don't think you give people enough chance

to come and tell you things before you go as far as having a whole plan architecturally drawn up. It's too late for us to even tell you what we think.

And I think tonight you were supposed to vote, but now it's being put off until tomorrow. And all the people I've tried to get to come here, says, "It's a waste of time. They don't listen. They do what they want. They think this is just wonderful."

So I'm very unhappy about it. And my house is for sale, if anybody would like to buy it. Thank you.

I also have extra pamphlets if you want to -- or don't know.

MR. MAIER: Wendy Marsh.

MS. MARSH: Hi. Good evening. I'm Wendy Marsh. I live at 91 Castle Street in Geneva. Apologies, Anne, you're also on the Planning Board, so you've heard some of our concerns, but for the other members of the board I want to start from the beginning.

I think we can all agree that there's a mental health crisis in the country. To understand the current mental health crisis, it's important to go back a little bit in history. Those who grew up in the area know about the Willard Psychiatric Center on

the other side of the lake. That was a mental health institution that was closed in the 1990s when the country decided to deinstitutionalize the management of health -- mental health disease.

The state now funds smaller community-based facilities. These community-based facilities are called supportive housing. In fact, Governor Hochul's budget bill includes funding specifically for supportive housing.

So exactly what is supportive housing? What does it mean? According to Lakeview, the half -- the 37 beds for supportive housing beds will be part of two different programs: First, the supportive housing single-room occupancy apartment program, which is available for folks with a psychiatric diagnosis and low income; second, the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative Apartment Program is available for folks that are homeless, or at risk for homelessness, and have a diagnosis for serious mental health illness, a substance use disorder, or living with AIDS, HIV. Both programs require formal medical diagnosis before being eligible for half of the beds in the facility.

Why are they called supportive housing beds? The supportive services that will be provided include

assisting the individuals to live independently, including how to clean their apartment, make a grocery list, cooking, grocery shopping, transportation, et cetera.

What about the rest of the beds? The remaining 37 beds are available for community members based upon an income level and they do not need a mental health illness diagnosis. These units are called community apartments. But the individual must follow the same application process with Lakeview Health Services, including a criminal background, et cetera. A copy of the application has been provided to the city.

A Planning Board member indicated that he and his wife would be eligible for the community apartments if they weren't married, and he implied that he would live there. Another Planning Board member called these beds workforce housing.

I hope the Planning Board is correct that our future teachers, nurses, and police members will go through the full application process with Lakeview Health Services in order to live in those beds that are not reserved for supportive housing.

I hope the Planning Board is correct that our workforce will choose to reside at the facility.

I also hope that the Planning Board is correct that only 25 percent of the folks in the facility are going to have cars, including the workforce.

Now let's turn our attention to the enormous scale of the project. The building is massive: five stories high, over 65 feet, nearly the size of a football field that will take over an entire block of our historic downtown with a footprint of nearly 20,000 square feet.

I was shocked to hear a Planning Board member in the construction business say that the community is incorrect in its concerns about the size of the proposed facility. It's taller than any other building in our historic district except with maybe the exception of Seneca Towers.

Let's put the building size in context. The building will be approximately 90,000 square feet. So how big is that? The building we're in is city hall and it's just over 17,000 square feet. A quarter of the size.

How about Seneca Towers, the other tall building that's of similar height, one of the highest structures in downtown? Seneca Towers has over 60,000 -- sorry -- 46,000 square feet. The proposed Lakeview facility is nearly double the size of Seneca

Towers.

Guess what is the only building in downtown of similar size to the proposed building? It's the Ramada. It's the Ramada, which is 97,000 square feet of building. So that is the comparable size for this. Let that sink in. A building the size of the Ramada is proposed to be located in an entire block in the center of our historic downtown.

By way of summary, the proposed facility should not be located in our downtown, our commercial district in the heart of the city.

The Planning Board also stated on Tuesday that the project will spur economic development in downtown. The project will have a positive impact on economic development in downtown. I fundamentally disagree with that conclusion.

Not only is the mass and scale of the facility inconsistent with our historic downtown, the insufficient parking will have a negative impact on our current residences and businesses already in downtown.

Dave and I have literally been in the trenches in downtown for two decades. We live in downtown. We work in downtown. We create spaces for businesses. Dave operated a business in downtown.

I hope the Planning Board members know better than we do, if they're going to grant the waiver that's needed for the enormous size of the project and the insufficient parking for this supposed workforce housing.

David and I have never asked for a tax break and we do not believe this project should be given a tax break. If the project makes sense, then it should be treated like all other residential projects completed to date in downtown.

Thank you for your time tonight.

MR. MAIER: David Linger.

MR. LINGER: Once again, a tough act to follow.

David Linger, 91 Castle Street. Partner of Wendy Marsh. Also we own Castle Street Redevelopment, which owns a variety of properties which we redeveloped, including the Fairfax building, the corner of Linden Street; the Nate Block at 100-110 Castle Street, and our own Odd Fellows building, where we live upstairs.

I again apologize to Anne who has heard a lot of this before but many of you have not. And it's interesting not just the concerns of the citizens but who is speaking.

I think you often hear the "We don't like PILOTS." That's a theme you hear every single time, and you heard a little of that tonight, and I will mention that here. You'll also hear some folks that are frankly NIMBYs, not in my backyard, but you've got folks from all over the community.

This is a concern of all of Geneva. This is, frankly, not my backyard -- well, I live across the street -- it's everybody's front yard. It's in the downtown. It's not like the other facilities they have.

It's bigger; 74 units. Much bigger than they've done ever before. It's not something like they've done in the hinterlands outside of Seneca Falls. It's not like Ithaca, a bigger city, more cosmopolitan, and it's nowhere near, as far as I can tell, the Commons, which is what I consider the heart of Ithaca.

This is proposed in the heart of Geneva. It's the wrong project and the wrong location.

I suppose I should look at my notes now.

The massive issue I think is important. I didn't realize till Wendy looked at those tax records how large this building was. Sure, I saw it. I saw it as 69 feet. I saw it going 29 feet above the Nate

Block. I saw two sides of the building hugging up against the Nathaniel Block and ending in a light coming into three decks out back. No chance of any visual interests there and, frankly, no interests in the building itself.

They're building it with no windows on two sides, but they don't show you that as part of their drawings. They carefully describe it in a certain way to make it look as best as they possibly can under the circumstances of what they're proposing.

This is a concentration of those with poverty and special needs. I have nothing against, as does Wendy, folks that have special needs. They need help. We don't want to have them institutionalized at Willard, and we certainly don't want them homeless like they are, say, in Seattle or San Francisco, et cetera, but to have this number of people in this location will dramatically change and make things even worse.

We have done our part. We have over 1,000 homes that are receiving social services assistance. We have the former YMCA. We have the Seneca Towers. We have the former Pinky's building. We have the Hotel Exchange and numerous other folks there. There's just too many here.

Why Geneva? Did you guys have a feeling in your stomach when you read the paper yesterday, and on the same page that -- Anne, you got some nice ink there -- the same page, they're talking about what? Our neighbors in Canandaigua.

It really is apparent that we are the dumping ground of this county, with a concentration of poverty that's not sustainable. You heard me say it before, Anne, "It's a tipping point."

Many of us heard Matt Horn many years ago say we're at a tipping point. Some people have given up and put their homes for sale because they think we're beyond the tipping point. If we aren't at the tipping point now, this project will put us over the edge.

They want this, what they say, is a wash. It's not really going to be a big deal. It would be the same amount of tax they pay anyways. Again, why bother? They say because their funding sources need the certainty. The 2 percent increase is just super that they know what it's going to be.

Well, do you know what? Wendy and I have put literally scores of new apartments in downtown Geneva that did not exist. Not dozens, scores. And I, frankly, and my funding source, it's called a bank,

would like that certainty too. We don't have that. We don't know what the taxes are going to do, but I think we all have an idea. They're going up.

Anne, I think in the article you mentioned you'd want to hear some new information. So let me give you a couple "freshies," as Wendy and I call them.

Number one, a prominent business owner who is deeply invested in Geneva, when she heard our summary of what happened the other day, Anne, she said, "I feel sick to my stomach." She literally thought she was going to throw up.

When this project was proposed, and I talked to one of my tenants on Linden Street, he told me point blank, "When this goes through, I close my doors. That's it. I'm done. As tough as it is already, this is going to make it even tougher."

What about our tenants over at the Nate Block? When we have the new CFO of Hobart and William Smith Colleges needing on the quick to come in, she came to us, and we happened to have a place for her. We have zero vacancy, but we happened to have a place with one of those aforementioned decks out back.

Do you genuinely believe the CFO is going to come and stay there or now a teacher is in that

apartment? They are not. It is going to have detrimental impact -- I promise, 30 seconds or less. It's going to detrimentally impact the building.

It's detrimentally impacting the building already because Jeremy and his mom are moving out. They're closed. And frankly, Jan, when you asked me, "Chicken or the egg, which came first? Did Jeremy decide to close or did Jeremy learn about this project?" And the answer was, he told us today, he's closing because he saw the handwriting on the wall.

He went to Eastview Mall and he's getting another place. He's leaving our community. One of the few storefronts that actually caters as a boutique, as well as someplace that's going for the folks and the tourism industry, and he's leaving.

He's got a short letter here today. There's more to follow. The bottom line, Jeremy is a loss to the community, and -- I don't know when it's going to be filled. It doesn't matter to me. We'll be okay financially. But as a community, we've lost an important link in what really matters, and other communities, like Corning, that has got strength.

Let me finish up and say this is not hypothetical. This is reality. Things are already happening. People are refusing to do and look at

future projects.

We're not going to do it. We're not looking at those empty buildings that are available. Do you know why? Because we're scared. We're petrified of this. I've never felt this way in the 20 years I've been here and, frankly, I wish I didn't. But I am really questioning why I've spent my career, which could have been still as a trial lawyer at Hancock Estabrook, but -- I frankly grew my hair, having a lot of fun here, but now I really wish I had rethought things and maybe, just maybe, not gone back to Wendy's community, where she grew up in the butt end, and where I went to the Rochester City School, a proud member.

And frankly, we made something of ourselves. We're doing okay, but other folks, this is everything. And they're giving up, they're selling their houses, they're closing their business because this project is already putting a pall over our community.

Thank you. I wish you would respectfully reject the proposal. I hope Jeremy is going to give you something more. There's something he put out here really quick, but it's some idea of what his concerns are.

Thank you. And I'm sorry I went over.

MR. MAIER: Marty Schutt, I see you put your name on here but you didn't check to speak.

MR. SCHUTT: Yeah, I want to speak.

MR. MAIER: Okay.

MR. SCHUTT: I am trying to find my notes here.

All right. I can't find them.

All right. I'm Marty Schutt. I live at 498 Castle with my wife, Kathy. And we moved here two years ago, and I absolutely love it. I can't believe how much activity is around here with the wineries and the breweries and the waterfront. I think you've got an unbelievably beautiful little town here. It's like a hamlet. It's crazy.

And the waterfront, I don't know of any lake that has such a beautiful waterfront. I mean, I haven't been to Skaneateles yet, but I went over to Canandaigua and went, "Wow, it's like" -- it's a pea size compared to what we have here. We've got a gold mine here, and I think this is just sending the wrong message.

I know a lot of people spent a lot of time on the zoning rules for the city, and I believe that was birthed because of all the money we got in grants and things over the years. And the picture of Geneva

was a vital business area, a tourist attraction area, and we were trying to get businesses in.

The fact that Rooted left, they left because there's no foot traffic, and this building is not going to cause more foot traffic buying things. It's going to cause more traffic, just traffic traffic.

The zones were basically a plan for the city, and have somebody -- a 12 apartment maximum. That's what it's supposed to be for multi-tenant. They're asking for 74. So 12 apartments, okay, if they went for 18 or 20, maybe we might entertain that. You know, that -- but 74 apartments, do you realize how many that is?

I don't really care about the people that are going to be there, what kind they are. I don't care if they're millionaires or mentally ill. That's not the point. It is just going to put a damper on the experience in the downtown city area.

I have no problem putting this on the outskirts of town. It could be within four or five blocks of my house. I don't really care. But in the city, it's the wrong spot. It's just really, really bad.

And I think we should follow the zone laws that were put together by people like yourselves over

two, three years ago. And they were put there for a master plan, and I think this is just totally against the master plan of what Geneva is supposed to be.

Again, I mentioned to a friend of ours, I live in this beautiful community. All of the restaurants have closed since I've moved in. Rooted is closing. There's a lot of buildings that are just, like, facades. They're beautiful, but it's like walking through a movie set. There's nothing inside. We need to make the investment in the businesses.

So Rooted, they get an opportunity to move to the mall. No, I'm staying right here. We got a lot of foot traffic. This is a great place to do business. That's what we want. We don't want to chase people away by getting congestion and more crime.

And it's just -- another thing, the library. A beautiful place. A beautiful place. I can see a grandmother go out with her grandchildren and bring them to the library, and she wants to go out and get fresh air. Well, guess what? She can't anymore because the benches have been removed because we have congestion issues already with people hanging out on benches and making it unsafe.

So I just think that area is just really,

really the wrong place. Think of Geneva. Think of what we have. It's beautiful. Let's keep it that way. And again, if they want to put this building somewhere in Geneva, that's fine, but downtown in the city is not the place.

I beg of you. Again, I'm only here for two years. It's a beautiful spot. We've got to invest in bringing businesses in, keeping them here, getting more people with money that are going to use the businesses and keep the businesses here.

I appreciate your time, and I love the city. Thank you.

MR. MAIER: Tom Burrall.

MR. BURRALL: My name is Tom Burrall. I reside at 105 Jay Street and also 50 Linden Street.

I want to just talk about rose-colored glasses for just a minute. Because my mother was a Rose, that's the proper noun, last name, and her family came to Geneva 221 years ago. And that's useless information. Who cares?

It's nice to know how long people have been in Geneva and how long they've run their business that have come to the podium, but let's just talk about why we are really here. It doesn't really matter that you've run your business for X number of years or you

moved here 25 years ago, but I want to talk about rose-colored glasses and thinking about a PILOT for this particular location.

The rose-colored glasses comes into play, I believe, because the applicant is an award-winning entity with a fantastic track record, whose current leader is sitting right here.

The endorsements that have been circulated on the organization, everyone here probably agrees with. Fantastic organization and a platinum trophy holder with a mission statement for housing that every community needs, not just Geneva, New York, and for people that need care and help and assistance and compassion with probably everybody in this room.

Don't let that color the issuance of a PILOT for the location, which is what you are doing tonight. We're talking about a PILOT for the location, not a PILOT for the entity that's the applicant.

There are several places within a three- or four-mile radius of where the applicant's proposed project is where it would be a perfect location and very little opposition would be coming to the podium if it was at that location.

So don't hide behind rose-colored glasses when we're thinking about a PILOT for this location

because a PILOT could very well be the answer for the applicant somewhere else, not on Genesee Street in downtown Geneva. Please put on glasses that aren't colored. Filling an empty space hastily is far worse than wishing an occupied space was empty.

MR. MAIER: I don't have anybody else on my sign-in sheet. I'll give everyone one last opportunity if there's anybody else that hasn't signed in that wants to make a statement.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thanks. My name is Jerry Buckley. I own property in the historic district. I'm the chair of the historic district's commission.

I have a question that might actually solicit one member of this panel to speak. Just in terms of the process, and maybe I'm -- I missed the memo, but the Planning Board, of which Anne also sits, which is interesting, the Planning Board hasn't decided this, the Zoning Board of Appeals hasn't decided this. I'm trying to understand the sequence of this body looking at this project just in terms of how this -- how the sequence should work.

Can somebody -- the chair, can somebody enlighten me on that?

MR. MAIER: As I stated before, this won't be a Q-and-A, but I will tell you IDAs throughout New

York State cannot legally approve a project until SEQR, for example, is approved. That is the only call it planning hindrance or hurdle that would need to be overcome. Once SEQR is done, the IDA legally could approve a project.

Now, you could technically approve a project, but if Planning and Zoning, for example, does not approve it, it doesn't get off the ground. So -- but, again, all that we're talking about here is the actual proposed incentives that are being anticipated.

MR. BUCKLEY: Right. It just seems to me that the sequencing is not a proper sequence, but I'm not going to argue that point.

I guess my -- Tom mentioned rose-colored glasses, which I think is a good metaphor. I think Geneva has a history of -- in the interest of trying to get development, of trying to go forward, too often has made hasty decisions and made poor decisions.

Some is just relatively small, but when you allow, for example, a new building to be built off of the streetscape -- so at the corner of Tilman Street, for example, where there's an accounting firm, you have big green grass in front and you have a building that's way back. Cities that are well-planned and that are attractive, don't do that. They don't say,

"Sure, do what you want. Build however you want."
They don't do that.

A generation ago or more, we tore down a building maybe at the corner of Castle and Main, and we gave Rite Aid the opportunity to build a store, but we didn't insist that they build on the streetscape, on the sidewalk. We let them put a parking lot in one of the most prominent corners of town because we wanted development, we wanted tax revenue, so -- instead of being tough, instead of saying, "Sure, we would love to have you, but we don't want you to turn the corner into a parking lot."

There's been numerous examples of that. I think we all know Urban Renewal, which I'm old enough to remember, and seemed like a good thing at the time, but -- we tore down a whole bunch of buildings on Seneca Street. We erected a building that at one point housed the Department of Motor Vehicles. Okay? Speaking to Dave Linger's point, we don't even have a DMV anymore in Geneva, and we have, perhaps, I would say maybe the ugliest building in New York State in our downtown.

Those are the kind of decisions and the kind of lack of toughness and of discipline and shortsightedness that makes Geneva much less

attractive.

We tore down Gigliotti's gas station because it was said, "Well, we couldn't do remedial work. It's impossible." You can build a 110-story building in this country, and you can't figure out how to do the remedial work right in the middle of Main Street. So what do we have? We have a giant empty lot on a block on Main Street, one of the most visible streets in the city, because we just couldn't figure it out and we let them do that. Those are the kind of decisions that have long-term repercussions.

And to all the discussions and all the good points that have been made about the size of this building and the parking and all those things that have to be taken into consideration, I would urge you to make sure -- and I urge the Planning Board as well -- to do your homework, to understand what the experience is in other places and what the experience could be here.

I think it's too often -- you know, people compare different times in Geneva, and they say, "Oh, Geneva has completely resurrected. Geneva is so much healthier than it was. Downtown is so much better." That's not true. Okay?

I used to serve on the BID Board, I'm a

supporter, but I think you have to be realistic and whether this is a -- this project is going to contribute to the revitalization of downtown.

I've told the people from New York State as well, if you think the Downtown Revitalization Initiative has been a great success, you're wrong. Okay? It's improved things. Okay? The streetscapes are better, the lakefront and the arterial is better, but you are just dreaming if you think that everything has suddenly, or even over the course of ten years, has improved.

And I have concerns about this project and what it's going to do to downtown and whether -- and as other people have raised, have they asked the question, "What other places have they looked at and what's the impact of having this downtown?"

But my bottom line is that too often Geneva has made decisions in a short-term basis to do something. I know the Trinity Church project very well. Reasonable people can disagree on that. Okay? But the weeds are growing through the parish house. They're finally mowing the lawn. They didn't shovel the sidewalk for most of the winter. Okay? And the city was hell-bent on approving that project because they wanted development. It didn't work so far.

Thank you.

MR. MAIER: That's all I have. As there are no further comments, I'm going to hereby close the public hearing at 6:53 p.m.

Thank you, everyone.

(Proceedings concluded at 6:53 p.m.)

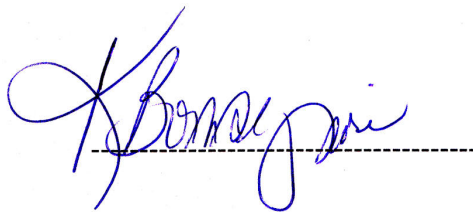
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REPORTER CERTIFICATE

I, Kimberly A. Bonsignore, do hereby certify that I did report the foregoing proceedings, which was taken down by me in a verbatim manner by means of machine shorthand.

Further, that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate transcription of my said stenographic notes taken at the time and place hereinbefore set forth.

Dated this 23rd day of July 2025
at Geneva, New York



KIMBERLY A. BONSIGNORE
Court Reporter and
Notary Public No. 01B06032396
in and for Monroe County, New York