

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

FEBRUARY 25, 2025 – 5:30 PM

City Hall – 2nd Floor Conference Room
47 Castle Street
Geneva, NY 14456

Presiding – Steve Valentino, Mayor

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Clr. Whitfield, Clr Petropoulos, Clr. Gillotte, Clr. Grimaldi, Clr. Lavin, Clr. Brennan

Absent: Clr. Moracco, Clr. Pealer

2. PRESENTATION – 595 South Exchange Street Redevelopment

Director West began by welcoming the development team, introductions followed. Tony D’Arpino was present representing Greenleaf Builders, Trey Barbour representing Pivotal, Karl Schuler representing Taylor The Builders, and Michael Trapanovski, of Hunt EAS. Director West then explained the preferred developer model, and explained that the team will work to develop a timeline, cost for the project, and structure development with the City. At the end of the project, closing will occur. He explained that the team is highly qualified, and together can bring a project together that the City can be proud of.

Property history and a past development attempt that was sidelined by Covid were reviewed. It was noted that Mr. Schuler of Taylor The Builders is very familiar with the property. The Ontario County Housing Study was briefly discussed. One goal of this project is to move retirees who are “stuck” in their homes into these apartments, thus creating home inventory.

Mr. Barbour explained how Pivotal Housing Partners model works, and includes on site management of everything they build. Discussion followed around architecture and of the finished product, noting that it would fit in with existing buildings, and include an invigorating ground floor with resident amenities and perhaps a community room. Discussion followed around the proximity of the daycare center and land leases. It was noted that the daycare is a benefit for the site, as workforce housing. Councilor Lavin wondered what would make the City a good partner in this project. The development team explained that listening and working together, as well as acknowledging financial realities will benefit the project goals. Benefits of PILOT were discussed. Councilor Brennan wondered if soil samples had been taken of the site, the team explained that a Phase I environmental evaluation will occur for financing. Councilor Brennan wondered about a rendering of the project, which the team explained will occur, and noted that business modeling needs to take place first. It was noted that the project will be fully funded, as stalled project concerns were discussed. Director West explained that with the partnership model used between the development team and City, the City won’t be releasing the land until the project is complete. This structured partnership ensures that the project will happen, as the city and development team work together. City Manager Hendrix further explained the benefit to the City with the preferred developer partnership with the City, which will include regular meetings and full transparency from day one. It was also noted that this template could be used as a model for other projects moving forward.

Councilor Petropoulos wondered about a project timetable. Mr. Barbour explained that 2-4 years is a very

reasonable timeline, dependent on financing. Grant opportunities were discussed, which the City can partner with the development team on to add to the capitol stack. City Manager Hendrix added that the project will also be time consuming for City staff, noting that projects will need additional staff support. Mayor Valentino inquired about on-site staff. The project team explained that there will be staff in the building including management, maintenance, and supportive services for residents that can be coordinated with the City. Mayor Valentino explained that the 60-90 apartments will carry the building, which won't need storefronts, and applauded the opportunity to put more people downtown, which will benefit existing businesses. Mayor Valentino then noted that the parcel is suited for vertical construction, and wondered how water will be handled on this type of property. Mr. Trapanovski of Hunt EAS explained that it's tough to strategize until the project reaches design stages, and imagines retention of some sort. He noted that there may be grant opportunities to explore once the project is in the design phase. He went on to note that the team will look at infrastructure that can be improved during the course of the project, and will look for grant funding to make those improvements during the project. Mr. Barbour wondered if there would be a sub committee working with the development team over the course of the project, or if the committee of the whole would be involved. Director West explained that a working committee with staff and a few councilmembers would be established. Partners will include Planning, Code and Engineering from day one, and expected the IDA to also be involved. Councilor Gillotte shared that he likes the team concept, noting that their expertise is quite valuable, noting that he looks forward to seeing steady forward movement, which will make residents feel good about the project. The team explained that they welcome resident engagement, and the opportunity for residents to vet their concerns. City Manager Hendrix explained the importance of regular updates to Council and the community, with public front focus. Grant funding was explored again, and Mr. Schuler shared his recommendation not to over ask on grants, rather ask for manageable chunks of funding. City Manger Hendrix added that manageable chunks of funding will lend itself to show the work to justify the grant funding. Director West concluded by reminding Council that this is a good chance for the City to show it's ability to take on a project of this scale, demonstrate that we can accomplish the work, and thus unlock more development.

3. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Gillotte; seconded by Clr. Lavin
MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 6:47pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nicole Tillotson
City Clerk