

PUBLIC HEARING – ROUND 7 RESTORE NEW YORK
COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE MUNICIPAL GRANT

Tuesday, January 17, 2023 - 11:30 AM

Shaun Gilliland, Chairman
James Monty, Vice-Chairman

Vice-Chairman Monty called this Public Hearing to order at 11:30 am with the following Supervisors in attendance: Clayton Barber, Robin DeLoria, Stephanie DeZalia, Derek Doty, Charlie Harrington, Roy Holzer, Ken Hughes, Steve McNally, Noel Merrihew, James Monty, Tom Scozzafava, Matt Stanley, Ike Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson, Davina Winemiller, Margaret Wood and Mark Wright. Shaun Gilliland was excused.

Department Heads present: Michael Diskin, James Dougan, Judy Garrison, David Wainwright, Anna Reynolds and Michael Mascarenas.

Also present: Jessica Deslauriers, Chelsea Merrihew and William Tansey

News media – Alana Penny, Sun News.

MONTY: All right, it's 11:30; I will call this public hearing to order. This is for the Round 7 Restore New York communities' initiative municipal grant. Judy, would you read the notice.

GARRISON: Notice of public hearing. Please take notice that the Essex County Board of Supervisors will hold and conduct a public hearing at the Supervisor's Chambers at the Essex County Government Center, 7551 Court Street, Elizabethtown, New York on the 17th day of January, 2023 at 11:30 a.m., on Round 7 Restore New York Communities Initiative.

New York State Empire State Development has announced the availability of Round 7 Restore New York's Communities Initiative for the purposes of revitalizing and restoring urban and rural areas. Essex County plans to apply for funding to restore a vacant and surplus property to plan commercial reuse. The Restore NY Property Assessment List is attached. The Application is due January 27th, 2023.

Application Materials are available at the Office of Community Resources or by visiting the Empire State Development Website. <https://esd.ny.gov/restore-new-york>

Judith A. Garrison, Clerk

Essex County Board of Supervisors

Dated: January 4, 2023

MONTY: Thank you Judy. We have Jessica and Anna, if you would like to come forward and answer any questions or explain the project for us. Thank you.

REYNOLDS: Hi, sorry I realized that the public hearing notice didn't mention the project cost but that's okay. So, this year, this round, we're going to apply for the Frontier Town property that we've owned for a few years. It's eligible due to its commercial usage and we did get it on the back taxes, I don't know what year but that's how it qualified. So, the proposed project is to demolish a building and restore three buildings. The ones to be demolished is the Main Street section and then three of the, one of the gristmill restoration, the carousel building and the train station and the old church there we go. So, we will be working with CPL our Architect on contract to give us those proposed cost estimates so we've been working on the application. Are there

any specific questions?

McNALLY: Dollar amount of the application?

REYNOLDS: Jess, do you know the max amount we are applying for?

DESLAURIERS: \$1.9 million

McNALLY: Perfect, thank you.

REYNOLDS: \$1.9 million.

MONTY: Anything else from the board?

DEZALIA: I may be misunderstood but I thought the sawmill was one of the restoration ones?

REYNOLDS: It is on the list but it's too expensive for the application maximum so we –

DEZALIA: But we're still planning on that as part of this?

REYNOLDS: Yes, so that will be like a phase two, phase three and that's kind of our plan at the property. We can only apply for so much with the money. With that, we are trying to get this done, make it a sellable property and/or apply for another round of restoration.

McNALLY: Does that application is it going to include letters of support from different organizations?

REYNOLDS: Yes.

McNALLY: So, you're going to use ROOST and IDA and some others?

REYNOLDS: If we can. I think we already have some in house.

HUGHES: Good morning Anna. I just want to understand, so demoing a building which is dilapidated beyond repair, reconstructing three or four of these buildings and these are the old Frontier Town property buildings, the old theme park so let's we get that money in, let's say we are successful and we develop what's the plan? I mean, I haven't seen anything in front of the board about approval of a plan to sell it, to do anything with it? Are we keeping it? Are we selling it? I mean, these are iconic buildings, great that we are refurbishing them and getting them back to the way they used to be but what then? Is it still going to be a theme park? You might not have the answer for this but is that what we're trying to sell it for?

REYNOLDS: I think it would be in conjunction with the new State campground, so like connecting equestrian trail usage and the Adirondack Gateway commercial business that's come up so, we are trying to plan them altogether to be successful. The purpose of this application would be to prepare it for the commercial use now whether that's a lease or a sale or something like that, those can be determined as we move forward.

HUGHES: Okay.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, I think ultimately Ken that's going to be a decision for the board moving forward in how that goes. Our goal is just what Anna has said, our goal is also to limit our liability there so we have a lot of derelict properties that are there that are, that could create a potential hazard for those that are encroaching on the property and trying to do –

HUGHES: Trespassing.

MASCARENAS: Yes, exactly but order to perform recreational opportunities in around that area that it's known for, so I think, years ago when I was in the Planning Department Chasen worked on a plan with us that came up with some of this restoration of this area and I think moving forward with it makes a lot of sense this is a really good opportunity for us to get some of that work done that we traditionally, never could have. So, we'll decide going forward but I think the intent is some of those things. I know the five towns have worked a lot. I know Stephanie and Shaun have been working a lot on this project on the side with the Community Resources Department.

HUGHES: I just want to be clear, very quickly, to follow up, excuse me, I'm sorry. I have no problem with rehabbing or demoing for a better purpose I just wanted to make sure that we have an end game and that action makes sense for the taxpayers and for the county so, thank you.

DEZALIA: I think more recently than the Chasen we had CPL do a plan and we presented it to the board for the phase one of the arena and we did apply for a grant on that and it is pending so this is sort of all in conjunction with that plan so everything is kind of together but this fell in line with what we needed to do with some of the older buildings also I think it was going to be some site preparation too for all of that so the timing of this grant would work in doing some of the other work separate from that phase one arena.

REYNOLDS: That's a good point. We did, so the Town of North Hudson received a state allocation for DASNY years ago when they first, when the State first was going to build the equestrian trails, the campground and Stephanie was able to allocate that funding to the county, if we can propose to rehab the arena specific to equestrian arena so when we went to the site, we had our architect come in that's when we noticed you know, we can't make this an arena right away without getting rid of these falling down buildings that wouldn't be safe overall. So, that's kind of, where the motion started earlier this spring.

HUGHES: May I ask one more question, so we failed to be successful in the last round for the Springfield property in Jay, if I am correct. Have we received any feedback on why we failed that application that may help us be more educated about how to potentially makes this more of a successful application?

REYNOLDS: I don't think I requested a comment but if you look at the list of awards, we really didn't compete. It seems like it was multi-use. All the awards were based on multi-use so the commercial with housing or new commercial businesses that were on the large scale, like fifteen apartments or a new brewery in Ogdensburg so, unfortunately the State kind of gave us the feeling that one small project in our county was a big impact but that last round was sort of disappointment for multiple towns.

HUGHES: Understood, thank you.

MONTY: Anything else for the board?

McNALLY: This project has been going on for ten years now even before the campsite was built. You know the DEC was on board and did a lot of the leg work on this, this was all pre planned before the purchase of the campsite in there so you know, this has some traction with the state I believe, this project and it goes along with their new campsite. It's not just something that we are coming up with a plan and going forward, this is based on a plan that was created ten years ago, nine years ago and the State was a big factor in that plan and DEC was a big contributor to that plan of what to do with that Frontier Town property.

DELORIA: There's no crystal ball here Ken of what this is going to become but if we do nothing and not seek grant funding to restore, it's going to be lost and then we don't have anything with the value of the property. As Steve said, this has been going on for a long time, the five-town initiative was part at least part of Governor Cuomo's plan, I'm not sure where Ms. Hochul stands on that but I certainly support it. Let's see what happens in Phase one and see what Phase two looks like.

MONTY: Anything else from the board? Anyone from the public have a comment or wish to say anything? Nothing else, public hearing is adjourned.

As there was no further discussion to come before this public hearing, it was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk
Board of Supervisors