

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
August 14, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith Presiding

Present: Council Member Patrick J. Hickey
Council Member Clifford G. Olney III
Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero
Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith

Not Present: Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce

Also Present: Kenneth A. Mix, City Manager

City staff present: Michael Lumbis, Jennifer Voss, Logan Eddy

DISCUSSION

Restore NY Grant Program

Mayor Smith introduced Tony D’Arpino of Greenleaf Builders and Scott Burto of WCP Consultants.

Mr. Burto thanked Council for the opportunity to present the grant proposal for “Carriages on the River” at 629 Factory Street. He reminded Council of their support for their previous grant application, which they did not receive. He described the new application as a scaled down proposal and said the potential grant money would be used to stabilize the building at 629 Factory Street. He requested Council support so they could apply for and secure funding.

Mr. D’Arpino noted that their new grant application has been developed due to lessons learned from their first failed application and he described their new application as a pivot from their original plan. He explained that the new plan would find an alternate use for 567 Fairbanks, noting tremendous support had been received for that project.

Mr. Burto suggested that reducing the scope of their original application would give the project a fresh start. He also noted that many developers would take the easy route of knocking down the building and starting over, but his group understands the historical significance of the building to the community. He further noted the reduced scope will not affect the end use, which is for work force housing.

Mr. D’Arpino informed Council that any amount of time the building is not in their possession will result in further deterioration, so they would like to get support and approval as soon as possible.

Council Member Ruggiero asked the developers to explain their request for real estate tax abatement.

Mr. D’Arpino said that it was too early to discuss the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) as it would depend on use. He added that he had spoken to a number of organizations and the focus is on local business.

In response to Council Member Olney's question of whether the developers had looked at the City's Local Waterfront Development plan, Mr. D'Arpino indicated he had not.

Council Member Olney told him they should look at it as it offers attention to historic value as well. He commented that he appreciated that the developers did not want to just tear the building down.

Mr. D'Arpino stated that a Restore NY grant had been the helpful final step in a Buffalo project and noted that a PILOT is nice, but the grant will get other people involved.

Council Member Olney cited the Woolworth building renovation as something that could not have been completed without grants and PILOTs.

Mr. Burto noted that there will be applications for other grants for other portions of the project and mentioned the City of Watertown had great success with their DRI program.

Mr. D'Arpino thanked Planning and Community Development Director Michael Lumbis and Senior Planner Jen Voss for all their assistance throughout this process.

Council Member Olney offered his support in going forward with the grant application.

Council Member Ruggiero asked what the \$675,000 demolition cost would cover.

Mr. D'Arpino explained that was for interior work, such as the removal of the elevator shaft.

Council Member Hickey mentioned that he was familiar with Rochester's College Town development, another Greenleaf project, and thought the buildings were impressive. He then requested an updated housing market study.

Work session ended at 7:21 p.m.

Liss M. Carr

Deputy City Clerk