



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Planing Board 4/27/20 public comment

1 message

Kim Ford <klmousseau@aol.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 12:05 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com, mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov, rick@fesetterealty.com, derek.rosenbaum@gmail.com, TamerM@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov, MarbutS@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

Kim Ford (City tax payer, local real estate developer)

This is an updated comment for the Planning Board meeting tonight.
I have included my previous comments below from the previous planning board meeting.

My new comment is in regards to residential units on the first floor. This is not allowed by current City Zoning and I don't think it should be allowed for this project. By allowing Prime to have 1st floor (ground level) residential units, it could potentially set a precedence for other downtown district property owners to be allowed the same. As a multi-family developer, this is a good economic opportunity for the downtown property owners to convert empty retail space into income producing residential units - HOWEVER - this could also take away 1st level storefronts from our downtown, thusly affecting the CHARACTER and AESTHETIC OF OUR DOWNTOWN CORE.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Kim Ford

-----Original Message-----

From: Kim Ford <klmousseau@aol.com>

To: cityinfo <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>; mcmahonj <mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov>; TamerM <TamerM@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov>; MarbutS <MarbutS@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov>; derek.rosenbaum <derek.rosenbaum@gmail.com>; rick <rick@fesetterealty.com>; cgerov001 <cgerov001@plattsburgh.edu>; wrietsema <wrietsema@msn.com>; jaa <jaa@aedapc.com>

Sent: Tue, Apr 7, 2020 1:20 pm

Subject: Planing Board 4/7/20 public comment

Hello,

I would like to submit public comments for the City Planning Board for April 7, 2020; specifically in regards to the Prime Company application.

I would like to have made more comments, but lacked enough notice and time to make a well composed response. (I continue to work and am a parent of 2)
it is a shame that this project is still on the agenda without the public being able to attend this highly impactful project.

To save some reading, **THIS PROJECT IS TOO BIG FOR THIS SITE & DOES NOT CONNECT WITH OUR DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY.**

As a new construction project, a "blank slate", it should adhere to all City Zoning and Codes. If they need a variance or reduction in parking, setbacks, height, size or any other criteria, then they should make the project smaller.

Below is a list of my objections to this project based on the criteria for the Special Use Permit request:

On page 15 of the "Site Plan Narrative March PB meeting.pdf" Response #8d (architecture) – Prime claims that their building is similar to that of the Ashley's building, citing that "*The Ashley Building at the corner of Durkee and Bridge Streets is nearly five stories in height, similar to the height of the corner elements of the new development.*"

Ashley's is 4 stories, and the Prime building is actually 6 stories (one underground). This is not a good comparison; the proposed Prime building is actually LARGER than any other downtown City Block.

The **snow storage** area proposed is not nearly adequate size for the amount of snow that will be generated from the parking area; also this snow storage area has the potential to cover the public walkway.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY: The exit for the underground parking is right on the sidewalk of Bridge St. Prime has responded with striping and mirrors, still not adequate. To alleviate this potential pedestrian danger, the building should be stepped back to the required setback.

DUMPSTER LOCATION: It is UNACCEPTABLE to have the dumpster location next to the Community walk-way. They may have proposed a screening around the dumpster, but that doesn't deal with the ODOR and chance of stray litter around the area. Even saying that it would be picked up more often, still does not deal with the inevitable odor that will permeate the adjacent community space. *Could the dumpster area be located within the courtyard parking area?*

LOADING AREA: The loading area is also adjacent to the Community walk-way. This is unacceptable because the transfer of goods will be over the Community walkway. Though it is nice to see they have considered their own loading area, because the loading areas of the EXISTING BUSINESSES along Durkee (and some on Margaret) will potentially be losing their convenient loading areas on Durkee St. I realize they may be allowed at certain times, but consider Ashley's who makes multiple deliveries throughout the day.

With the locations of both the Loading Area and the Dumpster Area, it seems as though the project is downplaying the importance and the potential beauty of the Community walkway.

FORMER PLATTSBURGH FARMER MARKET: This entire building should be retained for Civic use. The tax paying citizens paid for this building and should be able to retain this building. This item alone would sway me to accept the massive building, if the citizens could at the very least retain the building (if not for the market, for events and activities). The City could retain the portion of land and rent the space. Or if Prime indeed needs to gain ownership, please leave it as Civic space and they could rent it for a nominal fee to community organizations.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,
Kim Ford
Concerned Tax payer, resident, and local developer



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Planning Board Meeting Comments 4/28/20

2 messages

Kristine Lutters <klutters@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 8:30 PM

To: "cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com" <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Planning Board Member:

There are risks and possibilities in everything we do, in every step we take, both collectively and individually. And there are certainly both risks and possibilities in the proposed project for the development of the Durkee St. parking lot. But I would suggest that at this point in this long process of grant application, community input, planning, revision, discussion, collaboration and conflict that the positive possibilities outweigh the risks. There are differences of opinion, there are perceived strengths and perceived weaknesses but this is a time to come together, work together and go forward together.

We have the opportunity to replace an unattractive parking lot with housing that will bring residents to downtown who will provide the energy to a downtown that has great potential. Downtown Plattsburgh needs additional residents to support businesses, counter student rowdiness and advocate for the good of the center city. They will join the coalition of Plattsburgh business owners and current residents to strengthen the city we all care for.

As we move forward with this project we should remember that we must work for the good of all city residents, businesses and enterprises. Let's not forget or neglect the needs of established downtown businesses or current residents. I trust that this can be accomplished.

Let's put aside disagreements and take the steps to support this project. Let's not reject the opportunity that is in front of us. We can't go back so let's go forward.

Kristine Lutters
Resident of Plattsburgh New York

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 9:08 AM

To: Matthew <MillerMa@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov>

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City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Planning Board Comment 04/27/2020

2 messages

Jeff Moore <jmoore1748@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 24, 2020 at 11:24 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I would like to go on record as being heartily in favor of the latest proposed city project. I am not native to this area but have lived and worked in Plattsburgh since the 80's and have watched the steady improvements here.

I remember in days gone by all of the rather raucous bars on City Hall Place—and recall the then bemoaned city efforts to curb the proliferation of “college” bars downtown. But no sooner did the those bars disappear than the likes of Irises and, later, the Pepper, etc. shot up—then Sawatdee, now the Bistro, and Sip and the Twisted Carrot and the Himalaya, and Aleka's—and there were the improvements of the buildings—and let's not forget the ensuing art projects around town.

I remember that folks got cranky about the city trying to curb the prevalence of one kind of downtown drinking, but it has proven a boon—still lots of bars or restaurants where one can buy alcoholic beverages but a wider variety of places and ages of patrons. The result: the city is more generally appealing and widely appreciated.

I hear each season the gripes about “lost parking” when many of the local restaurants create outdoor seating out of parking spaces—but can anyone deny the palpable energy that exists when each day the seats are full with delighted diners?

I remember when there was a new mayor in Burlington who took abuse for just the sort of issue before you—changing where cars could be parked. Mr. Sanders closed 4 blocks of Church Street—and created the shopping area that exists today. I was at several of the Burlington zoning board meetings during which many were arguing to retain the parking spaces in front of their stores—and I mean shouting. But does anyone today think that the conversion of those few blocks of Church Street was a dumb idea? That move created a center of commerce and theater and public assembly upon which more was built—thus the aquarium location, the mall, the parking garage, and the connection to the city parks and docks.

Change is hard—and change in and of itself is certainly not automatically good—but Plattsburgh has over the years quietly progressed, and has in my opinion become a more diverse and interesting and welcoming city as the result.

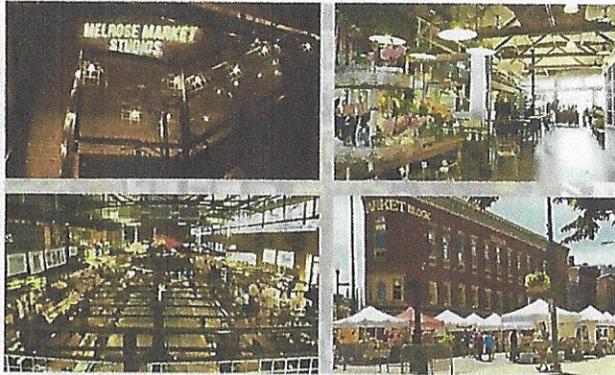
Making the river and lake part of the city center by redirecting the focus of downtown with new housing and shops and restaurants just seems to me to make sense.

Pat Hoffmann, [62 Clinton Street, Plattsburgh, NY 1290](#)

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>
To: Matthew <MillerMa@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov>

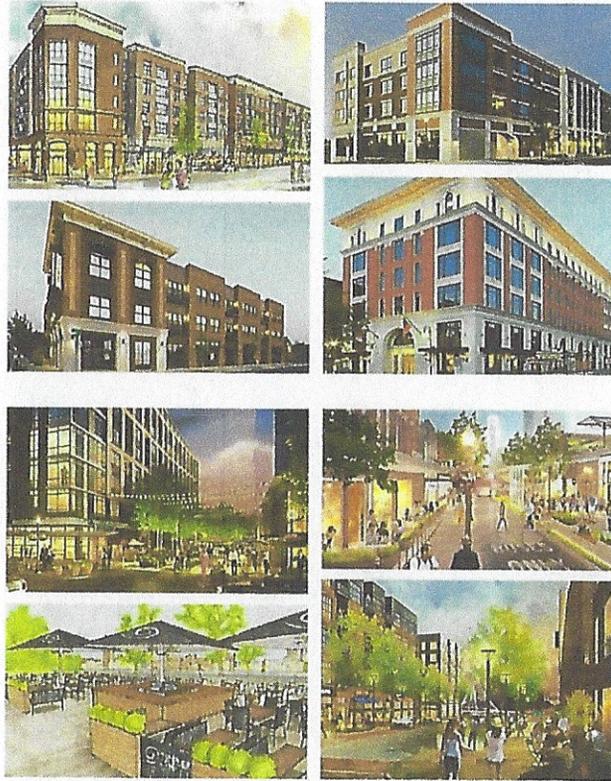
Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:32 AM

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MARKET / POP-UP RETAIL

Competitive price points in the City of Plattsburgh compared to other larger cities in the northeast allow for young entrepreneurs to start up small businesses and shops using shared space, often under the umbrella of a Market Retail Co-Op. Under this model, successful businesses will evolve into their own space, furthering economic growth while allowing opportunities for new market trends.



HIGH-END RESIDENTIAL

A growing demand for an urban experience is increasing the potential growth for modern, urban rental units and experiences offered in a downtown urban core. Downtown rental units are an attractive option to young professionals, empty nesters seeking to downsize, including seniors and retirees, and families of all income levels as the trend back to urban centers continues.

MARKET ANALYSIS

SITE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The market analysis identifies trends that are currently impacting real estate development at the regional and local level and suggests a simple yet informed setting of existing and future investment opportunities for the Durkee Street site.

Relying in part on proprietary data (EMSI and ESRI Tapestry), at the core of the analysis was a thorough evaluation of socio economic data, residential, retail and office market data, as well as insight into other future city projects. In-person and telephone-based interviews were conducted with representatives of the Plattsburgh real estate market, commercial developers, economic development professionals, municipal officials, and licensed real estate professionals to inform the project consultants with "on-the-ground" data about the opportunities that likely exist, where demand lies, and how this project might seek to fill these voids in the market supply.

All of this data supports the notion of a "sharing economy" that prioritizes flexibility in design to accommodate multiple uses. This dynamic trend is popular in competitive real estate markets and could be employed in Plattsburgh. Examples include the following:

- Co-work space where users temporarily lease office space and share conference rooms and additional resources
- Shared kitchen(s) where multiple users can share equipment at different times for varying purposes
- Flexible market space that can serve various retail opportunities
- Short-term destination rental units for visitors - such as AirBnB

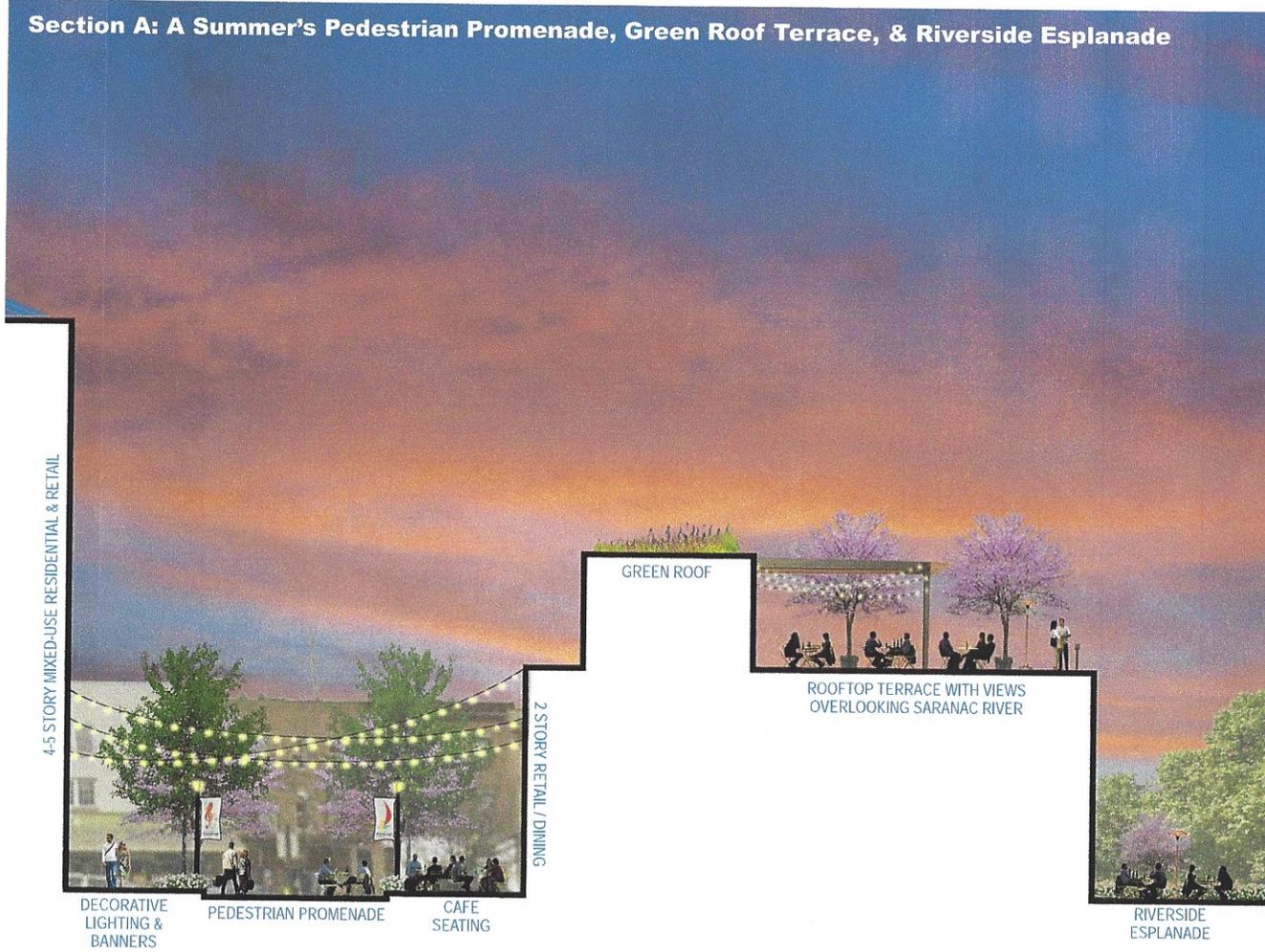
In conjunction with strategic site design, this analysis plays a large role in defining the size and form of proposed development allotments.

SITE DESIGN

A RESIDENTIAL HUB & MARKET DISTRICT

The site design is unified by a theme that includes a new residential hub & market district that speaks back to an era of post-industrial development. To achieve the activity and vitality of a lively downtown core, this district is envisioned to include the following site & building elements:

Section A: A Summer's Pedestrian Promenade, Green Roof Terrace, & Riverside Esplanade



- ① 4-5 story Residential Hub with activated retail & office space throughout the first story. The overall architectural aesthetic should compliment the surrounding architecture
- ② Flexible Retail & Market Space for various uses including an indoor farmer's market, pop-up retail, and event space
- ③ 2 Story Mixed-use Development allows for attractive views from the nearby residential building while also providing rooftop dining overlooking the Saranac River
- ④ Activated Pedestrian Promenade with numerous amenities including: decorative pavements, planting, lighting, banners, & cafe seating
- ⑤ Active Great Lawn & Outdoor Market Space
- ⑥ Concert & Event Pavilion with a subtle lawn amphitheater
- ⑦ Riverside Access with natural stone seating stairs & fishing dock
- ⑧ Meandering riverside esplanade with selectively cleared views of the river

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & FUTURE INVESTMENT



A financial feasibility analysis was completed to inform decision-making around the redevelopment of the site and to help the advisory committee understand how different uses and phasing may affect the expected profitability for a perspective developer. This analysis provides information regarding the funding gaps that may exist and what is required to attract private investment related to the current redevelopment scenario.

The financial development pro forma analysis uses key assumptions for lease rates, land acquisition costs, site construction costs, construction phasing, and market conditions.

The results of the pro forma analysis demonstrate that the project is feasible from a lending institution's perspective, but not necessarily from the developer's standpoint. The internal rate of return (IRR), which measures the developer's return on investment for implementing the project, may not be attractive enough to be considered feasible by the private sector. There are several options to bridge this funding gap, including public sector involvement in the form of grants, loan guarantees, incentives or other tax breaks. Pursuing public sector assistance by utilizing Downtown Revitalization Initiative funds could bridge the funding gap. When public support of \$1 million is included in the pro forma calculations, the IRR is boosted to a level that may be more attractive to the private sector.

A shared public/private investment may be just what is needed to reimagine Durkee Street, it's historic connection to the Saranac river, and it's future impact on the revitalization of downtown Plattsburgh.



Tearing down old walls

Editorial aired July 11, 2014 on WPTZ



Updated: 2:05 PM EDT Jul 11, 2014

Kyle Grimes

President and General Manager

There's a debate going on in the City of Plattsburgh that has people hot on both sides.

At issue: whether or not to close down a small stretch of road for a regularly scheduled community gathering.

Close the road or keep it open -- we don't much care about that.

What we are concerned about is the continued force against progressive ideas in the city.

Any mention of progress is met with an all too predictable outcry of parking problems or confusion over shifting traffic patterns.

The worst kind of parking problem a city can have is not having a parking problem.

Downtowns -- once written off as dead -- now have the unique opportunity to win businesses back. Key to winning that business back is foot traffic. Yes, foot traffic. People who actually will walk from store to store without having to park right in front of them.

There are some great ideas being floated in the city. The elected leaders would be best served spending their time figuring out how to make them work instead of putting up old walls.

I came upon this article and thought it was appropriate to the current situation. Six years have passed and at that time we couldn't get behind a very small idea. This time it's not the elected officials resistant to tearing down old walls.



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Planning Board Comment April27,2020

2 messages

Jeff Moore <jmoore1748@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 8:37 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I would like to state my strong support for the Durkee Street development by Prime LLC. The people opposed to this project consistently and falsely state that Prime is getting a "sweetheart deal". They are going to invest over 20 million dollars to construct this building and are going to pay more in property taxes or payments in lieu of taxes than is currently generated by that lot. On page 15 of "Durkee Street Reimagined Project Implementation" (attached), it stated that incentives must be offered to attract a developer for this project, because even though there is a market for higher-end apartments and retail/office space, the costs associated with investing in such a project would not yield an attractive-enough rate of return for a developer. It is unrealistic to think otherwise. If it were a "corporate giveaway" as PCC has stated, one would think there would have been more bidders. The people that are the leaders of the PCC want to keep repeating the same falsehoods in hopes of convincing people it is true. Like many of their claims, they are trying to scare people and promote doubt. They think more funding should go to existing building owners. The idea of using a large portion of the DRI funds to have owners of present buildings revamp their properties was an idea tried years ago and it did not revitalize the downtown as they had hoped.

This project, a mixed-use development on the Durkee Street Parking lot, is consistent with the concept that was submitted to the State "Durkee Street Reimagined, Market Analysis, and Site Design" (attached) pages 7,8, and 11. There is a vision of a multistory vertical building. Further, this building as envisioned was 5 stories tall. Imagine that! The details of the concept, whether 50,000square feet of commercial space vs. 10,000, or 45 apartments vs. 114, does not change the character of the proposal vs. the proposed Prime project. The volume of residential or commercial space was not what anyone was promised. If there had been 5 bids on the project, they all could have been different from the concept. The proposal submitted by Prime is a very worthy project, which was vetted through the PAC committee, made up of various professionals and citizens including someone in opposition, and it was unanimously approved sending the project to the City Council for public review.

As far as adding a gathering space, we already have Monument Park (where there is a great view of the river) Trinity Park, Harborside all of which are underutilized. In addition to all the aforementioned, the space colloquially known as "Westelcom Park" right across the street from the Durkee Street Parking Lot, that is scheduled to be revamped, is similar in size as the gathering space the opposition continues to promote. While I don't claim to speak for anyone else in writing this letter, I am sure that some would agree with me that it would be excessive and redundant to have two gathering spaces right across the street from each other.

Presently there is little access to the river because of its layout: a steep bank made up of riprap leading to rapids. There's no way it could safely be made accessible. The trees can be trimmed but cannot be removed. The development of the Riverwalk will be a great improvement and look very nice, and create a scenic pedestrian walking opportunity that does not presently exist. I don't see how the downtown will look better by keeping the existing parking lot rather than a brand-new building. I can't imagine that I'm the only person who thinks spaces for people to live, work, and visit are more attractive than an at grade parking lot.

In my opinion, the proposed development is very attractive. "Durkee Street Revisited" paints a picture of a new building as a mix of the styles of the present buildings with new and modern architecture. I think this building accomplishes that very nicely. Prime Plattsburgh LLC has listened to and been very receptive to the concerns of the public and various boards, and have made many substantial changes in response to these concerns.

This is a great project for our downtown and for the surrounding area. To have this once in a generation opportunity slip through our fingers would be a travesty. We'll never get another opportunity like this. It would be good for the whole area. The DRI projects as a whole are going to transform our downtown in a positive way, attract other developers, (a project like this gets other developers attention) and gives hope and confidence to the small businesses downtown that may be unsure about reopening after the Pandemic passes as they will have more potential customers. The Farmer's Market decision to move to Harborside is a great idea. They will have more space, parking, and will have more flexibility in managing their market as they see fit. I wish them well.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with a quote from an article in the Press Republican from Mark Dame, former Clinton County Legislator: "Look at the issues and, whenever you make a decision, don't think of the people you're looking at that are sitting in the gallery who have... immediate vested interest in that decision. Think of...who aren't there, who haven't said anything and trusted you with making the right decisions."

Thank you for your time and service to your community.

Sue Moore

City of Plattsburgh



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City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

planning board comments

2 messages

Timothy Palkovic <palkovtj@plattsburgh.edu>
To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 7:24 PM

Durkee Street Drama and Covid 19

Why is the 10 million dollar state grant to Plattsburgh mired in controversy when other communities are easily moving ahead with redevelopment?

The answer may partly lay in the grant application itself. Many people have seen the Durkee Street Lot (DSL) as an empty stage on which something could be built. The Plattsburgh grant applicants were, no doubt, dreaming of possibilities.

They must have thought: "Wouldn't it be nice to have a mixed use development? We could add a green space, garden islands, perhaps even a 45 unit apartment building. How about a water feature and a skating rink? In my opinion the 3.1 acre lot is not large enough to adequately accommodate all of these features.

The DSL now is a community asset. Downtown landlords and businesses in the special assessment district (SAD) pay a portion of their taxes for the upkeep of the lot. As it stands now it does not require the depth of city services as would stores or residences.

Currently, the DSL is an indirect, though indispensable, asset to the central City. It provides long term parking for visitors, employees and residents. The lot has also evolved into a civic meeting space. The Farmers and Crafters Pavilion attracts visitors on Saturdays in the summer months with spillover effect as patrons visit restaurants and shops before or after visiting the market. Civic events are staged there on Saturdays and Sundays.

The DSL also serves as snow emergency parking for residents who must park on the street. Residents know where to take their cars when the flashing lights are on. They do not have to search various lots to find a parking space.

The open nature of the grant application made possible the hijacking of the grant application by the Prime LLC, taking over the entire DSL.

The Prime building is contentious for several reasons. Diminishing parking spaces is one of the most pressing. The City Parking Committee has not been able to find sufficient replacement parking spaces. They are using clumsy and ill advised schemes to replace the parking spaces lost by the proposed 114 unit apartment building.

Turning Durkee Street into a one way with diagonal parking is one scheme. It is both dangerous for oncoming traffic and for delivery trucks. The parking committee, additionally, has not been able to find equivalent long term off street parking to replace the spaces lost in the DSL. Tearing down the former Glens Falls Bank Building on Margaret Street is another desperate move to gain spaces. This building could be rehabbed into living space or into a hotel.

Most outrageous of all is the reintroduction of parking meters. This was tried in the early 70's but removed when the mall went up in the town of Plattsburgh. Proposed parking kiosks, similar to those in Lake Placid will discourage visitors to the City.

Many citizens have hoped to put a building on the Durkee Lot to increase the tax base. This building will actually be a drain on the city for 20 years. The project will be excused land and school taxes using a formula. In one instance, Superintendent of Schools, Jay Labrun, says that the potential influx of students in the Prime building may cost the City more than 1/3 of a million per year.

What do we get in return for losing the Durkee Street Lot? The Farmers Market, an attraction for both tourists and community, gets moved to Green Street next to the sewage treatment pools. While the citizens get burdened with a private enclave in the historic downtown core.

The situation downtown will certainly continue changing as the Covid 19 pandemic grows and businesses downtown become more and more desperate for rejuvenation. A large apartment building in the City core is not the way to bring about recovery from a Covid 19 disaster. The City needs to rethink how it can best use the State Grant funds.

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>
To: Matthew <MillerMa@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:51 AM

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City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Prime project

2 messages

Daniela, Kevin and Misha Gitlin <kdmnexus@gmail.com>

Sat, Apr 25, 2020 at 5:03 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Please note my total opposition to this project.

It's a disaster on so many levels, the most troubling of which is the lack of transparency of the public servants involved and their many conflicts of interest. The 20 year loss of tax revenue will result in our public schools being underfunded, and they are already struggling. We don't need high end retail space when we have so much unrented retail and mall space currently available. Plattsburgh is not thriving economically. This project will gut downtown and turn it into a slum. No thank you.

Daniela Gitlin, MD
3 Cumberland Avenue
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:47 AM

To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov, Matthew <MillerMa@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov>

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City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning board comment

2 messages

Mary Ward <mward@perucsd.org>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 8:04 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Dear members of the Zoning Board,

I am a long time resident of Plattsburgh, N.Y. I grew up here, and knew downtown in the fifties, and sixties. I have lived in other states but returned here in 1980, but am a frequent traveler in the United States and other continents as well.

Plattsburgh is my hometown, but as I travel I am often thinking of the wonderful quality of life here. I do sometimes wish our city was a bit more vibrant and alive with opportunities.

I have watched the progress of the downtown development closely and participated in some of the first public feedback opportunities. I was especially interested in downtown offering young families places to bring their children to learn about our special location, our history and to relax and play. I was especially hoping for a small splash/ice skating park like I have seen in some other small cities. I myself lived in the city center and loved walking with my children to restaurants, the YMCA and the library. When I needed to downsize there was little available in the center city.

I also began to think about my grandparents, and about how walkable our city was and how we depended on downtown for supplies, recreation and our sense of community. One of my grandmothers needed to live an easy walk from downtown. She never drove and walked to do her banking, buy her groceries and to meet friends. She continued to walk downtown for almost all she needed from her apartment in the city center until she was ninety in 1990.

Although the new development doesn't include all I wanted in a project, I believe it does offer a way forward in the direction of positive change. We will get rid of an ugly parking lot, which encourages us to be healthier and to walk a bit more. Most importantly, it brings families and perhaps older people into the center of town to live in community. It brings the hope of more residents using the services that are offered downtown, and encouraging more spending in the city, rather than always running uptown to get what they need. I also may want the option to live in nice housing, in my city center, with all the services I need within a walkable distance, available to me in my future!

I also trust my city representatives. I think there are alot of us out here who have not spoken publicly, because we trust that the state officials who have chosen this project and the city that has worked for four years to obtain this grant, have

done their job, with the best interest of our city at heart. It is not perfect, but is an opportunity we should not waste. Due diligence has been done! Naysayers have been heard.

Please move forward now.

Mary Ward

[21 Kansas Ave.](#)

[Plattsburgh, NY 12903](#)

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:57 AM

To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

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15 Massachusetts St.
Plattsburgh, NY
April 26, 2020

Dear Chairman Nolland and Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

During my time on the Plattsburgh Common Council, I have supported the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) from grant application to the selection of a developer. I enthusiastically support the PRIME's proposed project and urge the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve it.

The project's need and character are supported by some 18 planning documents. Consider *A Plan for the Future, City of Plattsburgh, NY, May 1999 Comprehensive Plan*. It states: "This plan proposes intense development in the central business district portion of the city as a necessary element in revitalizing the City's downtown area." It further suggests the need to retain downtown as the primary social and business center of the City, and to actively support intensified development in the area to the greatest extent feasible. The plan identifies the benefit of allowing residential uses in the upper levels of structures to provide for intensive development and use of the area. It also suggests that the types and costs of upper level residences should be broadened. The plan recognizes the need to develop innovative parking controls to allow maximum use of limited available parking and to support intensified development.

With both the \$1million dollars that was made available for downtown property owners to expand and improve upper level residences in their buildings, as well as the \$3.5 million that will build infrastructure in preparation for the PRIME LLC development, we will finally fulfill the goal of downtown development as envisioned in the 1999 plan. This development will "broaden" "the types and costs of upper level residences." PRIME's residential units will be filled with a new demographic who will enjoy the central city location and patronize existing businesses. The question of how the development will affect parking has been investigated through a study and the work of the Parking Committee. As a result, "innovative parking controls" have been planned, and alternative spaces around the city are designed to compensate for those that are lost with the lot's development.

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)—revised in 2016 with assistance from Saratoga Associates—specifically identified the Durkee St. Lot as a prime location for a "mixed-use development, parking, and river access." PRIME's proposal fits well into what the LWRP imagines, as the project will offer a mix of 115 residential units, 10,000 feet of commercial space, and parking for residents and businesses. River access along the lot is another asset LWRP identifies, one that PRIME's proposal accommodates, as a riverwalk (where there is currently none), will border the project and connect with the

Saranac River Trail. The former Farmers Market is slated to be part public space, part commercial space, both amenities that fit nicely into LWRP's recommendations.

The Durkee Street Real Estate Market Analysis, 2016, describes the type of development that PRIME has proposed. It states that the lot presents "a unique opportunity for new construction, as most others in the downtown area would entail rehabilitation of existing buildings." The study adds, ". . . people (are) moving back into urban centers, which is changing the housing market landscape," a trend away from single-family homes. The analysis cites a market for empty nesters, young professionals and seniors who want to "live, work, and play" in a scenic, central location. Because project opponents frequently characterize the project as lacking adequate green space, it is important to note that the study did not advise constructing a park on this site because: one, it would generate no tax revenue; and two, "ample public space exists." However, with the PRIME development, the city will wind up with more green space and scenic views along the river than we have currently. Fortunately, because of a DRI Streetscape grant, WestelCom Park will be enhanced and PRIME's project will connect this park to a beautiful, new riverwalk. Clearly, PRIME's proposal reflects the type of development that professionals concluded would best fit the location.

The Downtown Revitalization Grant awarded to develop the Durkee St. Lot is the culmination and logical result of years' planning. The proposal comes before this board in part because of the grant's careful administration under supervision by the Department of State. This agency has posed neither objections to the process, nor questions about the developer's suitability. Along with White and Burke—the state mandated consultant the City hired to shepherd the RFP process and negotiations with the eventual developer—the City has, in good faith, gone forward with PRIME LLC. Each party has fulfilled its responsibilities to bring this project to fruition. Now it is up to the city boards to evaluate whether this project conforms to their respective specific standards. I have seen what PRIME and the City have submitted to your board: the GEIS, the various technical documents, answers to comments, and testimony; and I am satisfied with level of professionalism behind their preparation. As I see it, the matter before you is straightforward. Does this proposal meet your standards?

I am grateful to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the time and research it has devoted to evaluating PRIME's proposal, especially now as we endure a pandemic. During an

unprecedented time, you are considering a decision that holds enormous weight for our city's future. I encourage you to stick to the facts and matters pertaining to code when reviewing this project. Now is not the time to re-litigate the case for developing the Durkee Street Lot. This is just the kind of development sanctioned by the State of New York through its \$3.5 million grant for that purpose. As you evaluate the project according to your standards, I urge you to reject all arguments that attempt to muddy the waters. Plattsburgh's future depends upon growing, revitalizing and fulfilling our DRI grant. Failure to follow through would be a waste of many years' planning, and further, would kill Plattsburgh's eligibility for grants in the future.

Sincerely,

Rachelle Armstrong
Former Councilor
Ward 1, Plattsburgh Common Council
January, 2014—December 2019



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Comment 5/4/2020

2 messages

Carl King <carl.king41@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 2:20 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I wish to express my support for the city government and for the Durkee Street redevelopment project. I feel it would be a major step forward to improve the downtown area and subsequently lead to higher tax revenues. The parking issues have been addressed adequately and I personally like the idea of more parking on Margaret Street making visits to restaurants there more convenient. The opposition arguments, in some cases, do not appear logical to me. Furthermore, their bias toward certain government officials seem too obvious.

I am a city resident at 20 Haley Drive.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl King

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:49 AM

To: mcMahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

[Quoted text hidden]

Mr. Ronald Nolland, Chairman
City of Plattsburgh Zoning Board of Appeals
cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Re: April 20, 2020 ZBA comments: Appeal 2232-Durkee St-SUP-amend boundaries + 1st floor Apts

April 27, 2020

Dear Zoning Board members and Chairperson:

Words can NOT express my extreme frustration and sheer disgust with the manner in which the Zoning Board conducted April 20, 2020's meeting and **last minute decision NOT to read all written Public comments into the minutes and failure to permit all residents their right to actively participate in this process.** Not only is this highly irregular and illegal, but it is contrary to the procedures stated in April 14, 2020 letter to the public, whereby ZBA promised to *"read aloud at least three (3) minutes of all written comments during the public hearing."* As of April 27, 2020, I have yet to see mine or any letter posted on line in its entirety. **ZOOM meetings are NOT the way to conduct public hearings of this importance!** This is quite evident given the fact that only a few people were able to actually participate remotely at 11:30 PM during this ZOOM meeting due to technical difficulties, time constraints and the fact that most residents lack the technical resources or are consumed with both financial, emotional and medical problems created by the Covid 19 pandemic.

Prime should be held to the same time limits as the Public. It is one-sided to permit any applicant to have endless time to speak. Furthermore, it is biased to allow city employees such as Matt Miller to comment on any aspect of Prime's project. Furthermore, it is also inappropriate and presents a conflict of interest to allow Prime's legal counsel to speak during any meeting without objective legal counsel present to protect the rights of the public.

Limiting any individual to speak for only three short minutes once at a prescribed time during the entire meeting, prevents people sufficient time to comment on Prime's requested variances and proposed boundary changes to the Durkee Street parking lot and NOT enough time or opportunity to respond to false statements made by the applicants.

The fact that Prime's legal counsel, team of experts and city representatives had access to Public written comment prior to 7 PM on April 20, 2020 ZBA meeting and unlimited time to offer their rebuttal and arguments as to why the Board should vote in favor of granting all of their requests is criminal. Even Prime acknowledged the fact that there have been continued opposition to their project and proposed takeover of the Durkee Street public parking lot. Please refer to my April 20, 2020 letter and attachments offering written documentation that the majority of downtown business owners and over 6,151 petitioners have asked the Board NOT to approve Prime's current site plan and the Mayor's attempt to gift our entire Durkee Street free off street parking Lot to Prime.

62 proposed layoffs of city employees is evidence that Plattsburgh along with all cities throughout our state and nation are faced with significant loss in revenue. Now is NOT the time to vote on future residential & commercial development in downtown Plattsburgh. **The Zoning Board's decision to continue to move forward with voting on any variance requested by Prime and the City is ludicrous given the state of our economy and is unfair & unjust to all city residents and people who work, live and visit downtown.** Concerned citizens have repeatedly asked both ZBA and PB members to postpone any decisions regarding Prime's proposal to take over ownership of Plattsburgh's most valuable asset in the center of our downtown business district until everyone can attend all meetings in person.

The Board has a duty to our community to guarantee that the Public's right to freely & fully participate in all meetings is honored! **As members of Plattsburgh City Zoning Board you have a responsibility to ensure that any variance you grant Prime Development does NOT have any adverse effect to our downtown, city and county and that it meets all 5 SUP criteria and zoning code requirements, which it clearly does NOT!** Prime's project and the loss of 289 free off street public parking spaces in the center of our downtown will most definitely have a negative impact on our downtown, city and county for years to come. The Covid 19 pandemic is having a profound effect on everyone. Downtown business owners and property owners like myself are especially struggling to survive this economic crisis, which is expected to last into 2022. Voting on any aspect of Prime's project and change in boundary lines at 22 Durkee Street should wait until everyone can participate in all meetings in person.

I plead with the Board to deny collapsing the Durkee Street parking Lot into one 3.3 acre lot, but rather suggest that the City subdivide it into at least two lots, whereby the city will retain ownership of at least .5 acres for public use to provide at least 150 off-street parking spots that remain deficient in the city's replacement parking plan, which fails to provide the required 1 to 1 ratio of compensatory parking off street in the center of our downtown business district. Once ownership of the Durkee Street Parking lot is transferred to a private developer, the public will not only permanently lose all 289 free long-term, year round parking spaces in the center of downtown, but everyone working, living & visiting downtown will lose at least 275 of these 289 parking spots, while the proposed 102 spaces in the Pavone lot + 22 spaces in the Broad Street lot are constructed. Given the state of the economy throughout the nation and especially in NYS, it is suicide to the future of our downtown to give all 3.3 acres to Prime without the city retaining sufficient ownership to provide at least 150 free public compensatory parking off-street in the center of our business district. It is detrimental to Plattsburgh's economy to gift such a valuable asset to Prime development.

The Zoning Board should require that Prime provide at least 317 parking spaces required and a detailed diagram of all surface, courtyard and underground parking for its residential tenants plus additional parking for all commercial space, including the 10,000 sq. feet proposed along with outlining definite plans for commercializing the former farmers Market prior to hearing any request for permission to build any apartments on the first floor of any building. I ask the Zoning Board to deny Prime's request to put any apartments on the first floor of any building. If the ZBA approves such a request it will set an undue & negative precedent throughout the city, because it will open the door for other property owners to convert commercial space into first floor apts. Granting such a variance will result in increased density & exacerbate the shortage of long-term year round parking downtown. Street level apartments are problematic due to safety concerns and their un-attractiveness to long term tenants. I can attest to this fact first hand, as someone who has both owned and lived in first floor rentals. This is especially true in the center of downtown. Merely look at street level or first floor apartments in any downtown and you will notice security systems such as steel bars or small windows to prevent access from intruders, which is hardly inviting to prospective tenants. It is extremely difficult to retain tenants in street level or first floor apartments due to safety and marketability, contrary to Prime's comments.

Landlords and business owners in Plattsburgh and especially downtown are faced with the reality that they may never be able to reopen. Economists forecast that high unemployment and business closures may continue for years. Most builders have put projects on hold and the majority of lenders have retracted their financial commitments to developers. Given the fact that Plattsburgh and NYS are faced with billions of dollars in deficits and that many people will remain unemployed, while others have lost their life savings, it is unlikely that Prime will be able to complete construction and fill all 115 residential units

& 10,000 square feet of commercial space by September 1, 2021. Prime's current project will most definitely have an adverse effect on adjacent properties and surrounding neighborhoods for years to come. The future of our downtown and economic survival rests in your hands.

Hopeful that ZBA board members vote with the best interest of everyone who lives and works downtown Plattsburgh and its surrounding neighborhoods and communities. The future of our fellow neighbors livelihood rests in your hands.

Sincerely,



Carol J. Klepper

Long-time resident of Plattsburgh

17 Couch Street, Plattsburgh, NY 12901

Mr. Ronald Nolland, Chairman
City of Plattsburgh Zoning Board of Appeals
cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Re: April 20, 2020 ZBA: Appeal 2232-Durkee Street-SUP comments

April 20, 2020

Dear Zoning Board members and Chairperson:

Once again, I ask that members of ZBA postpone all decisions regarding the Durkee Street parking lot and Prime development until everyone can attend all meetings in person. It is both irresponsible and unethical to hold any ZBA or PB meetings without all city residents and stakeholders being able to comment on Prime's project, especially those who own property adjacent to the Durkee Street Parking lot.

I, along with 42 downtown business owners and over 6,151 petitioners (see attached signatures) ask that you deny all current appeals, special use permits and variances requested by the city of Plattsburgh and Prime Development LLC on grounds that all such requests regarding the development of the Durkee Street Lot have NOT been reviewed as part of the entire DRI project but rather in isolation. And, Prime's current proposal fails to meet both zoning code & all criteria found in zoning ordinance section 360-31 B for standards of such special use permits, in which all 5 criteria for ZBA SUP must be satisfied.

I ask that the Board deny the proposed boundary changes for the Durkee Street parking Lot into one 3.3 acre lot, but rather suggest that the City subdivide it into at least two lots, whereby the city will retain ownership of at least .5 acres for public use to provide at least 150 off-street parking spots that remain deficient in the city's replacement parking plan, which fails to provide the required 1 to 1 ratio of compensatory parking off street in the center of our downtown business district. Once ownership of the Durkee Street Parking lot is transferred to a private developer, the public will not only permanently lose all 289 free long-term, year round parking spaces in the center of downtown, but everyone working, living & visiting downtown will lose at least 275 of these 289 parking spots, while the proposed 102 spaces in the Pavone lot + 22 spaces in the Broad Street lot are constructed. Given the state of the economy throughout the nation and especially in NYS, it is suicide to the future of our downtown to give all 3.3 acres to Prime without the city retaining any ownership. It is detrimental to Plattsburgh's economy to gift such a valuable asset to Prime development.

I also implore the members of the ZBA to deny Prime's request to put any apartments on the first floor of any building. If the ZBA approves such a request it will set an undue and negative precedent throughout the city, because it will open the door for other property owners to convert commercial space into first floor apts. Granting such a variance will result in increased density and exacerbate the shortage of long-term year round parking for all tenants living downtown. Street level apartments are problematic due to safety concerns and their un-attractiveness to long term tenants. I can attest to this fact first hand, as someone who has both owned and lived in first floor rentals. This is especially true in the center of downtown. Merely look at street level or first floor apartments in any downtown and you will notice security systems such as steel bars or small windows to prevent access from intruders, which is hardly inviting to prospective tenants. It is extremely difficult to retain tenants in street level or first floor apartments due to safety and marketability, contrary to Prime's comments.

Landlords and business owners in Plattsburgh and especially downtown are faced with the reality that they may never be able to reopen. Economists forecast that high unemployment and business closures

may continue for years. Most builders have put projects on hold and the majority of lenders have retracted their financial commitments to developers. Given the fact that Plattsburgh and NYS are faced with billions of dollars in deficits and that many people will remain unemployed, while others have lost their life savings, it is unlikely that Prime will be able to complete construction and fill all 115 units & 10,000 square feet of commercial space by September 1, 2021. Prime's current project will most definitely have an adverse effect on adjacent properties and surrounding neighbor-hoods for years to come. The future of our downtown and economic survival rests in your hands.

I beseech all ZBA members to include all comments made by everyone into any decision you make, even if their comments exceed the 3-minute recording threshold you have set as a board. As members of Plattsburgh City Zoning Board you have a duty to ensure that any variance you grant Prime Development does NOT have any adverse effect to our downtown, city and county and that it meets all 5 SUP criteria and zoning code requirements. The following points outlined within explains why Prime's project should be denied.

1. **General Character, height and use of the structure.** Prime's current design is not in keeping with our historic downtown due to its mammoth size, building design and use of metal and clapboard. The majority of the buildings downtown are made of brick or sandstone and are less than 4 stories in height. I ask that the board deny Prime's request to build a 5-story 115-apartment complex with 10,000 square feet of commercial space in the center of downtown, which is in actuality 6 stories above ground along the river and is 2-3 stories above any other building adjacent to the Durkee Street Lot. Prime's building will tower 65 feet above ground on the North side and will be 180 feet high along Bridge Street spanning more than 200 feet along the riverside. Prime's colossal complex will consume the entire North and East corners of the Durkee Street Lot, which will block off sunlight and discourage pedestrian circulation. Even members of the Clinton County Planning Board expressed their concern with having such a massive structure on top of the Saranac River Walk and right against the sidewalk on Bridge Street. The intent of the DRI is to revitalize our downtown by inviting people to recreate, shop and eat in our downtown business district. Granting such a height variance would detract rather than invite people from visiting our downtown.

2. **Provision of surrounding open space and the treatment of grounds.** Prime's current plan fails to provide any green space for its tenants and therefore does NOT meet criteria 2 of SUP. And in fact, if Prime is given all 3.3 acres of 22 Durkee Street there will be NO guaranteed open green space for public use on site. Access is not ownership and therefore public use will be controlled at the whim of the developer. It is a slap in our face to have Prime merely offer public access to the Saranac River with a walk way through the center of its project. Prime needs to downscale its project and the city needs to retain at least 25 feet along Bridge Street and 50 feet rather than 14 feet along the East side of Durkee Street parking lot in order to provide a green buffer zone between Prime's tenants and city residents and visitors. Prime's current Durkee Street project fails to provide any dedicated green space for its tenants, unlike Prime's Saratoga project and lacks sufficient green space for guaranteed public use. 3.

Prime's current project also fails to meet **"general fitness of the structure or use to its proposed location."** Prime's current proposal to build one contiguous structure for up to 293 residential tenants and 10,000 square feet of commercial space not to mention the future transformation of the former farmers market into additional commercial space is NOT a good fit for this site or viable at this time. I suggest rather that Prime rework its design to build a smaller size project in multi-phases that has a better chance of surviving our current economy.

Prime's current plan adds up to 293 tenants living at the northeast corner of Durkee Street Parking lot, which is right on the Saranac River Trail. Cramming such a large population next to the Saranac River trail hardly promotes visitors and city residents from enjoying the river. Members of Clinton County Planning Board have also expressed their concern of the proximity of Primes 5 story 115

unit apartment complex being built right against the Saranac River Trail and only 14 feet away from the river bank. Prime's current plan fails to provide even it tenants any green space adjacent to the river or any green buffer zone next to any city sidewalk. Even Prime's Saratoga project provides open green space on site. 4.

Provision for automobile and parking or storage. I ask the board to deny Prime's request to only provide 226 parking spaces rather than the 317 required by Plattsburgh's zoning code, because Prime cannot compare its Saratoga Springs project, known as "the Hamlet," to its proposed Plattsburgh development, because "the Hamlet" is several miles from the center of downtown Saratoga Springs and is therefore not equivalent to Prime's Plattsburgh project, which will be built in the center of our business district. Permitting Prime to build a 115 apartment complex with more than 10,000 square feet of commercial space will most definitely create a hardship to our downtown, because Prime's tenants and city residents and patrons will be competing for the 100 parking spots that Prime is failing to provide for its tenants and the 150 deficient parking spaces off street that the city has failed to provide the public. Prime should be required to provide at least 317 parking spaces on site, given the fact that Plattsburgh's zoning parking requirements are antiquated, and Plattsburgh does not have public transportation and everyone owns a car. The reality is that Prime should provide 441 parking spaces on site to accommodate full occupancy of both Prime's residential and commercial usage, which doesn't even account for the additional parking needed for Prime's future conversion of the former's farmers market to commercial space. As someone who owns an apartment building near downtown, I am well aware of how important onsite year round parking is to my tenants. What is even more problematic is that Prime has yet to present detailed parking plans that are current and up to date.

Prime has also failed to provide any concealed storage for its tenants' bicycles, outdoor equipment, etc. Plattsburgh zoning and Planning boards have insisted that developers provide such storage on site and adjacent to their units for security, convenience and esthetic purposes. As an apartment owner, I know how important adequate on-site storage is in attracting long-term tenants. Most importantly, ZBA members need to insure that Prime's project is reviewed as part of the entire DRI. Equally important is that all 289 parking spaces currently provided for free to the public off street in the Durkee Street parking lot is replaced with compensatory parking, which the city has failed to do. One of the most critical points to be considered by ZBA regarding parking is that the Durkee Street parking lot provides free and convenient parking for everyone working, living and visiting downtown. Businesses such as; Social Services, JCEO, doctors, counselors, chiropractors, etc. all need convenient and handicap accessible parking close by. Unfortunately, the city's replacement parking plan only provides 125 public parking spaces off street in the center of downtown, which results in 165 deficient off street compensatory parking spots. Even the city notes that they are unable to replace all 289 off street public parking spaces. Furthermore, the city's plan to convert all free downtown street parking to paid parking will create an additional hardship to downtown businesses and property owners struggling to survive. I remind the board that you can NOT count the off street parking that was created by the county at the Government center, because these parking spaces are primarily used by government employees and is not adjacent to the center of downtown businesses. The 15 angled parking spaces that the city anticipates providing on Durkee Street is not off-street and therefore is not considered compensatory replacement parking. DEIS states that parking lots should have less than 85% of the spaces filled and that the Durkee street lot often has 87% usage, thereby showing its importance to downtown. Over 200 employees who work at Social services, JCEO & other offices currently park in the Durkee Street Lot, which would quickly fill the Pavone Parking lot once built, because street parking would be metered. According to Carl Walker Plattsburgh needs to replace "equal" amount of year round off street parking to its community.

5. **Street capacity and use.** Prime's proposed mixed use development will bring close to over 300 additional vehicles to the Northwest corner of Bridge and Durkee Street. This increased vehicular

traffic along with the poor redesign of Durkee Street will result in increased pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic accidents, congestion and bottlenecks, especially during peak delivery times. The city has failed to provide any designated pull offs or tested the viability of such a drastic change to one of downtown's major arteries and unloading zones for local businesses. The City's plan to make Durkee Street one-way along with angled parking on the east side of the street will prevent contiguous flow of traffic and impede delivery trucks from servicing downtown businesses and restaurants. Angled parking that requires drivers to back up into traffic is extremely dangerous and almost impossible during winter months and in climate weather due to poor visibility and limited turning ability.

I remind the Board that Bridge Street is a continuation of US route 9, which is to provide safe travel for all delivery trucks, automobiles, motorcycles and bicycles. According to Ken Bibbins, Regional Traffic Engineer (DOT) analysis of the city's proposed changes to Durkee Street, Mr. Bibbins states the following: it *"does not appear to me that the right of way that Bridge Street falls within has sufficient width to allow angled parking without severely impacting its lane widths."* And *"multiple studies" ... have shown that "angled parking causes an increase in accidents."* *Backing-up maneuverability is "particularly dangerous if the roadway in question has a significant volume of bicycle traffic, such as this one. There is also an increase in accidents due to the stop-go nature of drivers searching for an open space, which is more difficult with angled parking because the empty spaces are harder to see."* ... *"based on the concept and its traffic safety implications, I would use the strongest language possible to discourage the institution of this change."*

Furthermore, Prime has failed to include any parking plans for its 10,000 square feet of commercial space, future conversion of former farmers market for commercial use, designated loading and unloading areas and a detailed diagram with site elevations and dimensions of all surface and underground parking for its 115 apartment complex.

In conclusion, Primes current proposal fails to meet city zoning code parking, height and building requirements, along with its failure to satisfy all 5 Special Use Permit (SUP) criteria and the objectives of the DRI plan set forth by NYS. Primes project is deficient in providing onsite parking for its tenants, visitors and patrons, lacks designated green space for its tenants, fails to provide guaranteed sufficient onsite public parking, and will result in increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic accidents, traffic congestion and additional hardships to our downtown businesses who are struggling to survive the economic crisis that is anticipated to continue for years. Governor Cuomo's DRI grants were intended to revitalize downtowns throughout upstate New York by providing recreation, services and joint business opportunities in the center of downtown. Converting our entire 3.3 acres of 289 public parking spaces into privately owned apartments and over 10,000 square feet of commercial space is not in the best interest of Plattsburgh and will most definitely have a negative impact on our community and Plattsburgh's downtown business district.

Sincerely,


Carol J. Klepper, 17 Couch Street, Plattsburgh, NY

Mr. Ronald Nolland, Chairman
City of Plattsburgh Zoning Board of Appeals
cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Re: April 20, 2020 ZBA comments: Appeal 2232-Durkee St-SUP-amend boundaries + 1st floor Apts

April 27, 2020

Dear Zoning Board members and Chairperson:

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The fact that Prime's legal counsel, team of experts and city representatives had access to Public written comment prior to 7 PM on April 20, 2020 ZBA meeting and unlimited time to offer their rebuttal and arguments as to why the Board should vote in favor of granting all of their requests is criminal. Even Prime acknowledged the fact that there have been continued opposition to their project and proposed takeover of the Durkee Street public parking lot. Please refer to my April 20, 2020 letter and attachments offering written documentation that the majority of downtown business owners and over 6,151 petitioners have asked the Board NOT to approve Prime's current site plan and the Mayor's attempt to gift our entire Durkee Street free off street parking Lot to Prime.

62 proposed layoffs of city employees is evidence that Plattsburgh along with all cities throughout our state and nation are faced with significant loss in revenue. Now is NOT the time to vote on future residential & commercial development in downtown Plattsburgh. **The Zoning Board's decision to continue to move forward with voting on any variance requested by Prime and the City is ludicrous given the state of our economy and is unfair & unjust to all city residents and people who work, live and visit downtown.** Concerned citizens have repeatedly asked both ZBA and PB members to postpone any decisions regarding Prime's proposal to take over ownership of Plattsburgh's most valuable asset in the center of our downtown business district until everyone can attend all meetings in person.

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Hopeful that ZBA board members vote with the best interest of everyone who lives and works downtown Plattsburgh and its surrounding neighborhoods and communities. The future of our fellow neighbors livelihood rests in your hands.

Sincerely,



Carol J. Klepper

Long-time resident of Plattsburgh

17 Couch Street, Plattsburgh, NY 12901



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Comment 5-4-2020-Appeal 2232-SUP Durkee St. to amend boundaries & 1st floor apts of PUD

2 messages

Carol CJK <carolcjk@gmail.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 11:28 AM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I have attached my letter asking Zoning Board members to deny appeal 2232 application for both a special use permit to amend the boundaries of an existing planned unit development and a special use permit for the use of apartments on the first floor of a multi-story building within a planned unit development.

As of 11:23 Am on April 27, 2020, I have yet to see my April 20, 2020 letter in its entirety posted on the city website, which I emailed on 3 separate occasions along with supporting documents and petition signatures to the city and board prior to noon on April 20, 2020. I have tried on several occasions to have my objections to both of these SUP requests and variances made known to the public.

I ask Zoning Board members and Chairperson to make sure that both my attached April 20, 2020 and April 27, 2020 letters that I submitted in accordance with guidelines put forth by the city for public comment be posted in their entirety on the city website in a format that is easy to access and easily read by all interested parties.

I have given detailed and factual information in both of the above referenced letters as to why the ZBA should deny the city and Prime Developers request to amend boundary lines at [22 Durkee Street](#), known as the Durkee Street parking lot into one 3.3 acre parcel and Prime's request to build a 5 story 115 unit apartment building with apartments on the first floor at [22 Durkee Street](#).

As both a landlord, long time city resident and someone who lives adjacent to downtown I plead with all members of ZBA to think about the negative impact that both of these SUP requests will have on our downtown business district and center city.

Sincerely, Carol J. Klepper
resident at [17 Couch Street, Plattsburgh, NY](#) 129021

2 attachments**Klepper-ZBA April 20, 2020 appeal 2232-Durkee Street-SUP_000073.pdf**

2770K

**Klepper-4-27-2020-ZBA comments-Durkee Street SUP to ammend boundary + 1st floor Apts.pdf**

1606K

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 1:22 PM

To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov, "Beebie, Lisa" <BeebieL@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov>

[Quoted text hidden]

2 attachments**Klepper-ZBA April 20, 2020 appeal 2232-Durkee Street-SUP_000073.pdf**

2770K

**Klepper-4-27-2020-ZBA comments-Durkee Street SUP to ammend boundary + 1st floor Apts.pdf**

1606K

Mr. Ronald Nolland, Chairman
City of Plattsburgh Zoning Board of Appeals
cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Re: April 20, 2020 ZBA comments: Appeal 2232-Durkee St-SUP-amend boundaries + 1st floor Apts

April 27, 2020

Dear Zoning Board members and Chairperson:

Words can NOT express my extreme frustration and sheer disgust with the manner in which the Zoning Board conducted April 20, 2020's meeting and **last minute decision NOT to read all written Public comments into the minutes and failure to permit all residents their right to actively participate in this process.** Not only is this highly irregular and illegal, but it is contrary to the procedures stated in April 14, 2020 letter to the public, whereby ZBA promised to *"read aloud at least three (3) minutes of all written comments during the public hearing."* As of April 27, 2020. I have yet to see mine or any letter posted on line in its entirety. **ZOOM meetings are NOT the way to conduct public hearings of this importance!** This is quite evident given the fact that only a few people were able to actually participate remotely at 11:30 PM during this ZOOM meeting due to technical difficulties, time constraints and the fact that most residents lack the technical resources or are consumed with both financial, emotional and medical problems created by the Covid 19 pandemic.

Prime should be held to the same time limits as the Public. It is one-sided to permit any applicant to have endless time to speak. Furthermore, it is biased to allow city employees such as Matt Miller to comment on any aspect of Prime's project. Furthermore, it is also inappropriate and presents a conflict of interest to allow Prime's legal counsel to speak during any meeting without objective legal counsel present to protect the rights of the public.

Limiting any individual to speak for only three short minutes once at a prescribed time during the entire meeting, prevents people sufficient time to comment on Prime's requested variances and proposed boundary changes to the Durkee Street parking lot and NOT enough time or opportunity to respond to false statements made by the applicants.

The fact that Prime's legal counsel, team of experts and city representatives had access to Public written comment prior to 7 PM on April 20, 2020 ZBA meeting and unlimited time to offer their rebuttal and arguments as to why the Board should vote in favor of granting all of their requests is criminal. Even Prime acknowledged the fact that there have been continued opposition to their project and proposed takeover of the Durkee Street public parking lot. Please refer to my April 20, 2020 letter and attachments offering written documentation that the majority of downtown business owners and over 6,151 petitioners have asked the Board NOT to approve Prime's current site plan and the Mayor's attempt to gift our entire Durkee Street free off street parking Lot to Prime.

62 proposed layoffs of city employees is evidence that Plattsburgh along with all cities throughout our state and nation are faced with significant loss in revenue. Now is NOT the time to vote on future residential & commercial development in downtown Plattsburgh. **The Zoning Board's decision to continue to move forward with voting on any variance requested by Prime and the City is ludicrous given the state of our economy and is unfair & unjust to all city residents and people who work, live and visit downtown.** Concerned citizens have repeatedly asked both ZBA and PB members to postpone any decisions regarding Prime's proposal to take over ownership of Plattsburgh's most valuable asset in the center of our downtown business district until everyone can attend all meetings in person.

The Board has a duty to our community to guarantee that the Public's right to freely & fully participate in all meetings is honored! **As members of Plattsburgh City Zoning Board you have a responsibility to ensure that any variance you grant Prime Development does NOT have any adverse effect to our downtown, city and county and that it meets all 5 SUP criteria and zoning code requirements, which it clearly does NOT!** Prime's project and the loss of 289 free off street public parking spaces in the center of our downtown will most definitely have a negative impact on our downtown, city and county for years to come. The Covid 19 pandemic is having a profound effect on everyone. Downtown business owners and property owners like myself are especially struggling to survive this economic crisis, which is expected to last into 2022. Voting on any aspect of Prime's project and change in boundary lines at 22 Durkee Street should wait until everyone can participate in all meetings in person.

I plead with the Board to deny collapsing the Durkee Street parking Lot into one 3.3 acre lot, but rather suggest that the City subdivide it into at least two lots, whereby the city will retain ownership of at least .5 acres for public use to provide at least 150 off-street parking spots that remain deficient in the city's replacement parking plan, which fails to provide the required 1 to 1 ratio of compensatory parking off street in the center of our downtown business district. Once ownership of the Durkee Street Parking lot is transferred to a private developer, the public will not only permanently lose all 289 free long-term, year round parking spaces in the center of downtown, but everyone working, living & visiting downtown will lose at least 275 of these 289 parking spots, while the proposed 102 spaces in the Pavone lot + 22 spaces in the Broad Street lot are constructed. Given the state of the economy throughout the nation and especially in NYS, it is suicide to the future of our downtown to give all 3.3 acres to Prime without the city retaining sufficient ownership to provide at least 150 free public compensatory parking off-street in the center of our business district. It is detrimental to Plattsburgh's economy to gift such a valuable asset to Prime development.

The Zoning Board should require that Prime provide at least 317 parking spaces required and a detailed diagram of all surface, courtyard and underground parking for its residential tenants plus additional parking for all commercial space, including the 10,000 sq. feet proposed along with outlining definite plans for commercializing the former farmers Market prior to hearing any request for permission to build any apartments on the first floor of any building. I ask the Zoning Board to deny Prime's request to put any apartments on the first floor of any building. If the ZBA approves such a request it will set an undue & negative precedent throughout the city, because it will open the door for other property owners to convert commercial space into first floor apts. Granting such a variance will result in increased density & exacerbate the shortage of long-term year round parking downtown. Street level apartments are problematic due to safety concerns and their un-attractiveness to long term tenants. I can attest to this fact first hand, as someone who has both owned and lived in first floor rentals. This is especially true in the center of downtown. Merely look at street level or first floor apartments in any downtown and you will notice security systems such as steel bars or small windows to prevent access from intruders, which is hardly inviting to prospective tenants. It is extremely difficult to retain tenants in street level or first floor apartments due to safety and marketability, contrary to Prime's comments.

Landlords and business owners in Plattsburgh and especially downtown are faced with the reality that they may never be able to reopen. Economists forecast that high unemployment and business closures may continue for years. Most builders have put projects on hold and the majority of lenders have retracted their financial commitments to developers. Given the fact that Plattsburgh and NYS are faced with billions of dollars in deficits and that many people will remain unemployed, while others have lost their life savings, it is unlikely that Prime will be able to complete construction and fill all 115 residential units

& 10,000 square feet of commercial space by September 1, 2021. Prime's current project will most definitely have an adverse effect on adjacent properties and surrounding neighborhoods for years to come. The future of our downtown and economic survival rests in your hands.

Hopeful that ZBA board members vote with the best interest of everyone who lives and works downtown Plattsburgh and its surrounding neighborhoods and communities. The future of our fellow neighbors livelihood rests in your hands.

Sincerely,



Carol J. Klepper

Long-time resident of Plattsburgh

17 Couch Street, Plattsburgh, NY 12901



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Comment 5-4-2020-Appeal 2232-SUP Durkee St. to amend boundaries & 1st floor apts of PUD

1 message

Carol CJK <carolcjk@gmail.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 11:45 AM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

To all Zoning Board members and Chairperson

Please see attached April 27, 2020 letter asking the ZBA to deny both of the special use permits listed under appeal no. 2232: city of Plattsburgh-Durkee Street application for a special use permit to amend the boundaries of an existing planned unit development and a special use permit for the use of apartments on the first floor of a multi-story building within a PUD.

I plead with the members of ZBA to carefully read all public comments in their entirety and to review oral comments prior to making any decision. Furthermore, it does not seem reasonable to vote on either of these SUP requests until the city has provided compensatory 1-to-1 replacement for all 289 free parking spots currently available to the public off street in Durkee Street parking lot. City residents and downtown property owners and employers still are missing 150 free off street parking spaces adjacent to the center of downtown.

Prime has also failed to provide sufficient parking for all its 300 residential tenants on its PUD site at [22 Durkee street](#) lot. it is ludicrous to even consider Prime's request for first floor apartments in its 5 story 115 apartment complex without having detailed parking diagrams for all 317 parking spaces required by city zoning code. if the ZBA grants this request it will further exasperate the shortage of off street parking downtown and open up the door for other property owners in the city to convert 1st floor commercial space into residential apartments which will lead to crime and additional vacant store fronts.

City residents and people who work, live and recreate downtown hope that ZBA members think about the long term negative impact that such a decision will have on our community and downtown.

Respectfully, Carol Klepper

[17 couch Street, Plattsburgh, NY](#)

**Klepper-4-27-2020-ZBA comments-Durkee Street SUP to ammend boundary + 1st floor Apts.pdf**

1606K



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

May 4th, 2020 ZBA Special Durkee Street Meeting

2 messages

Carol Shuttleworth <specmtn25@gmail.com>

Sat, Apr 25, 2020 at 11:50 AM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

To Whom it May Concern,

I have lived in Plattsburgh since 1992. My current address is 25 Kansas Avenue, and I have lived at this address since 2006.

I am totally opposed to the Durkee Street Project — for many reasons, including the loss of off-street parking (on street is much less safe), the size of the building, and the potential disastrous effect this would have on downtown businesses such as the North Country Co-op. I also have numerous logistics and safety concerns, such as the parking plan for Durkee Street, entrance/exit plan for the building etc. The building sounds like it would be a monstrosity — way out of scale with the rest of the buildings downtown.

To be honest, I cannot believe this terrible idea is still even being considered. I predict very few will want to live in the building, and the lack of parking will destroy the downtown. Older people especially will stay away.

Besides, why is such a frivolous and disastrous use of money even being considered at a time like this? In most places, coronavirus is causing fiscal disaster, and I'm sure Plattsburgh is no exception. Money need to be saved for necessities!

In summary, with this message, I am registering my total opposition to the Prime plan for replacing parking with the proposed apartment building and retail space. In fact I have yet to meet ONE PERSON who is in favor of it!!!!

Please, NO NO NO to the Durkee Street project.

Respectfully,

Carol Shuttleworth
25 Kansas Avenue
Plattsburgh, NY 12903

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:34 AM

To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

[Quoted text hidden]

**Janson's Zoning Board comment 5/4/2020-appeal 2232-SUP-Durkee st. + 1st floor apts PUD**

1 message

Carol CJK <carolcjk@gmail.com>
To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 11:48 AM

J.M. JANSON
to cityinfo, bcc: me

11:18 AM (29 minutes ago)

Dear ZBA,

Had you asked me one week ago if I thought the Board should postpone any meetings dealing with the Durkee Street Project, I would have said, "no, I'm fine with a Zoom meeting." But after the overly long and absolutely unfair meeting of April 20th, I can now firmly state, **THIS PROCESS IS NOT FAIR, AND MEETINGS SHOULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL YOU CAN CONDUCT THEM WITH ALL INTERESTED PARTIES PRESENT.**

Chairman Noland, I know you tried to preside over a fair meeting, but you asked Board members if they were ok with process and procedures, and you asked Applicants if they were ok with process and procedures, but the system would not allow you to ask US, the public.

Furthermore, the Applicants can hold the floor for as long as they wish to speak. And when they wish to speak, they are recognized. The public can speak only during one segment of the meeting, and for only three short minutes. This is barely enough time to make two points, and not enough time to counter the multitude of false statements being made by the Applicants.

In addition, the Applicants and the Board have the ability to toggle back and forth to put graphics and images on the screen. If we, the public, wish to show the Board something, we have to hold it up to the camera on the computer. It certainly does not put us on equal footing with the City and Prime.

Another reason Zoom meetings do not work for the public is because not all members of the public who will be impacted by this project have adequate tech resources to participate. I know of one person who was not able to join because he does not have internet service, and I know another whose computer is so outdated, that she could not participate. Not everyone is tech savvy, not everyone can afford internet service, and some of us still have dumb phones and not smart phones. This creates a built-in bias which acts to discourage public participation.

When the board finally was able to get to live comments, there were only six of us who spoke. What happened to the other 11 people who had raised their hand when the meeting started? Well, we don't know. What I do know is that the Board heard from fewer than half of the people who wanted to speak. Is this fair? I think not.

The Board decided there was not adequate time to read everyone's comments into the record. (The fact that you had an overwhelming number should tell you how people feel about both the process and the project.) Although I see the efficiency of doing it this way, there is also a problem involved. You have left it up to the City to post these, and as of Thursday night, April 23rd, 2020, they are either not posted, or have been buried so deeply, that I can't find them. The City has no incentive to post these in a timely and forthright manner, quite the opposite.

On Friday, April 24th the City provided details, (to me) as to how to find the letters. Yes, they were buried. But perhaps even worse, some people submitted their comments via a link to a document, and the link did not get activated when posted to the City's website. This renders their comments unreadable.

IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED, THAT, no matter how hard you try,
THIS MANNER OF MEETING IS INHERENTLY UNFAIR.

Now, on to concerns about this project.

One of the first requests is to change the boundaries of the lot so that Prime becomes the sole owner of a 3.3 acre parcel in the middle of downtown. My concern here is that by allowing them to own the parking space adjacent to their building, it will allow them to act in their own best interests. The City and Prime have not met the need for off-street parking in downtown Plattsburgh, therefore creating high demand for the spaces that exist. When Prime discovers their formula of 1.3 parking spaces per apartment is inadequate, and there is no accommodation for the commercial space, there is nothing to prohibit Prime from issuing special permits to allow tenants to park in the "south lot." That, in combination with setting the price of parking above the rates the City is planning to charge, will enable Prime to assure tenants there will always be an open parking space for them in this area. Another option for Prime may be to have gated parking, with tenants issued a passcard. In that case, there will be zero public parking, and it is likely that the parking area will be fenced off. How will this add to the open space and green space that Prime is supposed to provide? At this point, it's their land, and they can proceed as they wish. If we are trying to attract visitors to downtown, if we are trying to promote the businesses that already exist, why would we make parking increasingly difficult? Why would we put Prime in charge of a portion of that parking, which should be for the good of the whole City, not just for the good of Prime? Please vote no for the consolidation of the Durkee Street parcel. Do not relinquish this space, as we will lose any control, no matter the assurances Prime gives the City regarding their future behavior.

There is also a request by Prime to allow residential space on the first floor of the building. Zoning in Plattsburgh denies ground-level residential space in the downtown for very good reasons. With residential space on the ground level, security becomes an issue. No tenant will pay "luxury" pricing for an apartment in which they do not feel secure. The apartments on the ground floor become the least attractive to potential renters, and could end up as "un-rentable." Also, my main concern is that Prime will "enhance" security with bars on windows and lots of cameras. Although they may be able to make their cameras fairly discrete, there is no way to create aesthetically pleasing bars on windows. You do not see these depicted in any of the renderings Prime has provided, but just imagine that you did. Someone I know looked at the drawing of the south wing of the proposed building and commented, "looks a lot like Dannamora." Great, all we need are bars on the windows of the north wing... Please vote no for residential space being allowed on the first floor of the Prime building.

The proposed building is not in keeping with the general character of the downtown. The height of the building is substantially above other roof lines in the downtown. The suggested building materials are not appropriate given the neighboring buildings. The building itself is massive, and will create canyons of Bridge Street and Durkee Street. Open space is minimal, at best. The project has not taken either commercial deliveries nor snow removal into account. The need for a high retaining wall right next to the river walkway makes it unsuitable for its proposed location. There is inadequate provision for automobile parking. Street capacity is already strained at the corner of Bridge Street and Peru Street. Traffic and parking for Spectrum and G&G is currently difficult. Adding additional residents, and a new traffic pattern will simply worsen the problems at this corner. Street capacity there, in particular, is already strained.

In the drawings/renderings submitted, both Prime and Saratoga Associates have done an outstanding job of distorting the perspective, and the truth, of what is to be built. Kevin Farrington saw it, and so do I. What you see is not what we will get. But that is a discussion for another time. Will there be another time?

Finally, I ask that you consider the project as a "post-COVID" building. That said, where will Prime find either commercial or residential tenants? This is a very important question to the success of the project. The economy is shrinking. If this is built, the likelihood of failure is very high, and the costs of failure for the City are even higher. A huge empty, building in the center of our downtown is likely to sound the death knell for a small city with charm and potential.

It is for these reasons that the Zoning Board of Appeals should say no to both Prime LLC and The City of Plattsburgh. This project is not in the best interests of resident, downtown businesses, or

visitors to The Lake City.

Joan Janson, city resident and taxpayer
[29 Cogan Ave.](#)
[Plattsburgh, NY 12901](#)



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Meeting Comments 4/27/20

2 messages

Kristine Lutters <klutters@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 8:27 PM

To: "cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com" <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Members:

There are risks and possibilities in everything we do, in every step we take, both collectively and individually. And there are certainly both risks and possibilities in the proposed project for the development of the Durkee St. parking lot. But I would suggest that at this point in this long process of grant application, community input, planning, revision, discussion, collaboration and conflict that the positive possibilities outweigh the risks. There are differences of opinion, there are perceived strengths and perceived weaknesses but this is a time to come together, work together and go forward together.

We have the opportunity to replace an unattractive parking lot with housing that will bring residents to downtown who will provide the energy to a downtown that has great potential. Downtown Plattsburgh needs additional residents to support businesses, counter student rowdiness and advocate for the good of the center city. They will join the coalition of Plattsburgh business owners and current residents to strengthen the city we all care for.

As we move forward with this project we should remember that we must work for the good of all city residents, businesses and enterprises. Let's not forget or neglect the needs of established downtown businesses or current residents. I trust that this can be accomplished.

Let's put aside disagreements and take the steps to support this project. Let's not reject the opportunity that is in front of us. We can't go back so let's go forward.

Kristine Lutters
Resident of Plattsburgh New York

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 9:01 AM

To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

[Quoted text hidden]



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

May 4th, 2020 ZBA Special Durkee Street Meeting

3 messages

Naomi Bradshaw <n17omi@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 24, 2020 at 6:04 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I live in Plattsburgh, 107 Maryland Rd, since 2006.

My opposition to the Prime plan for replacing parking with the proposed apartment building and retail space needs to be registered now before it's too late.

Please, NO NO NO to the Durkee Street project.

Respectfully,

Naomi Bradshaw

Naomi Bradshaw <n17omi@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 24, 2020 at 6:31 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Done. Sent to Keitha and Carol and Fran.

[Quoted text hidden]

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:45 AM

To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

[Quoted text hidden]



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board comment 05/04/2020

2 messages

Jeff Moore <jmoore1748@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 24, 2020 at 11:29 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I would like to go on record as being heartily in favor of the latest proposed city project. I am not native to this area but have lived and worked in Plattsburgh since the 80's and have watched the steady improvements here.

I remember in days gone by all of the rather raucous bars on City Hall Place—and recall the then bemoaned city efforts to curb the proliferation of “college” bars downtown. But no sooner did the those bars disappear than the likes of Irises and, later, the Pepper, etc. shot up—then Sawatdee, now the Bistro, and Sip and the Twisted Carrot and the Himalaya, and Aleka's—and there were the improvements of the buildings—and let's not forget the ensuing art projects around town.

I remember that folks got cranky about the city trying to curb the prevalence of one kind of downtown drinking, but it has proven a boon—still lots of bars or restaurants where one can buy alcoholic beverages but a wider variety of places and ages of patrons. The result: the city is more generally appealing and widely appreciated.

I hear each season the gripes about “lost parking” when many of the local restaurants create outdoor seating out of parking spaces—but can anyone deny the palpable energy that exists when each day the seats are full with delighted diners?

I remember when there was a new mayor in Burlington who took abuse for just the sort of issue before you—changing where cars could be parked. Mr. Sanders closed 4 blocks of Church Street—and created the shopping area that exists today. I was at several of the Burlington zoning board meetings during which many were arguing to retain the parking spaces in front of their stores—and I mean shouting. But does anyone today think that the conversion of those few blocks of Church Street was a dumb idea? That move created a center of commerce and theater and public assembly upon which more was built—thus the aquarium location, the mall, the parking garage, and the connection to the city parks and docks.

Change is hard—and change in and of itself is certainly not automatically good—but Plattsburgh has over the years quietly progressed, and has in my opinion become a more diverse and interesting and welcoming city as the result.

Making the river and lake part of the city center by redirecting the focus of downtown with new housing and shops and restaurants just seems to me to make sense.

Pat Hoffmann, [62 Clinton Street, Plattsburgh, NY 1290](#)

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>
To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:33 AM

[Quoted text hidden]



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Of Appeals May 4, 2020

2 messages

Jeff Moore <jmoore1748@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 8:34 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I would like to state my strong support for the Durkee Street development by Prime LLC. The people opposed to this project consistently and falsely state that Prime is getting a "sweetheart deal". They are going to invest over 20 million dollars to construct this building and are going to pay more in property taxes or payments in lieu of taxes than is currently generated by that lot. On page 15 of "Durkee Street Reimagined Project Implementation" (attached), it stated that incentives must be offered to attract a developer for this project, because even though there is a market for higher-end apartments and retail/office space, the costs associated with investing in such a project would not yield an attractive-enough rate of return for a developer. It is unrealistic to think otherwise. If it were a "corporate giveaway" as PCC has stated, one would think there would have been more bidders. The people that are the leaders of the PCC want to keep repeating the same falsehoods in hopes of convincing people it is true. Like many of their claims, they are trying to scare people and promote doubt. They think more funding should go to existing building owners. The idea of using a large portion of the DRI funds to have owners of present buildings revamp their properties was an idea tried years ago and it did not revitalize the downtown as they had hoped.

This project, a mixed-use development on the Durkee Street Parking lot, is consistent with the concept that was submitted to the State "Durkee Street Reimagined, Market Analysis, and Site Design" (attached) pages 7,8, and 11. There is a vision of a multistory vertical building. Further, this building as envisioned was 5 stories tall. Imagine that! The details of the concept, whether 50,000 square feet of commercial space vs. 10,000, or 45 apartments vs. 114, does not change the character of the proposal vs. the proposed Prime project. The volume of residential or commercial space was not what anyone was promised. If there had been 5 bids on the project, they all could have been different from the concept. The proposal submitted by Prime is a very worthy project, which was vetted through the PAC committee, made up of various professionals and citizens including someone in opposition, and it was unanimously approved sending the project to the City Council for public review.

As far as adding a gathering space, we already have Monument Park (where there is a great view of the river) Trinity Park, Harborside all of which are underutilized. In addition to all the aforementioned, the space colloquially known as "Westelcom Park" right across the street from the Durkee Street Parking Lot, that is scheduled to be revamped, is similar in size as the gathering space the opposition continues to promote. While I don't claim to speak for anyone else in writing this letter, I am sure that some would agree with me that it would be excessive and redundant to have two gathering spaces right across the street from each other.

Presently there is little access to the river because of its layout: a steep bank made up of riprap leading to rapids. There's no way it could safely be made accessible. The trees can be trimmed but cannot be removed. The development of the Riverwalk will be a great improvement and look very nice, and create a scenic pedestrian walking opportunity that does not presently exist. I don't see how the downtown will look better by keeping the existing parking lot rather than a brand-new building. I can't imagine that I'm the only person who thinks spaces for people to live, work, and visit are more attractive than an at grade parking lot.

In my opinion, the proposed development is very attractive. "Durkee Street Revisited" paints a picture of a new building as a mix of the styles of the present buildings with new and modern architecture. I think this building accomplishes that very nicely. Prime Plattsburgh LLC has listened to and been very receptive to the concerns of the public and various boards, and have made many substantial changes in response to these concerns.

This is a great project for our downtown and for the surrounding area. To have this once in a generation opportunity slip through our fingers would be a travesty. We'll never get another opportunity like this. It would be good for the whole area. The DRI projects as a whole are going to transform our downtown in a positive way, attract other developers, (a project like this gets other developers attention) and gives hope and confidence to the small businesses downtown that may be unsure about reopening after the Pandemic passes as they will have more potential customers. The Farmer's Market decision to move to Harborside is a great idea. They will have more space, parking, and will have more flexibility in managing their market as they see fit. I wish them well.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with a quote from an article in the Press Republican from Mark Dame, former Clinton County Legislator: "Look at the issues and, whenever you make a decision, don't think of the people you're looking at that are sitting in the gallery who have... immediate vested interest in that decision. Think of...who aren't there, who haven't said anything and trusted you with making the right decisions."

Thank you for your time and service to your community.

Sue Moore

City of Plattsburgh

 **Attach for sue prime letter.pdf**
5003K

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>
To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 9:10 AM

[Quoted text hidden]



Attach for sue prime letter.pdf

5003K



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Comment

2 messages

Timothy Palkovic <palkovtj@plattsburgh.edu>
To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 7:26 PM

Durkee Street Drama and Covid 19

Why is the 10 million dollar state grant to Plattsburgh mired in controversy when other communities are easily moving ahead with redevelopment?

The answer may partly lay in the grant application itself. Many people have seen the Durkee Street Lot (DSL) as an empty stage on which something could be built. The Plattsburgh grant applicants were, no doubt, dreaming of possibilities.

They must have thought: "Wouldn't it be nice to have a mixed use development? We could add a green space, garden islands, perhaps even a 45 unit apartment building. How about a water feature and a skating rink? In my opinion the 3.1 acre lot is not large enough to adequately accommodate all of these features.

The DSL now is a community asset. Downtown landlords and businesses in the special assessment district (SAD) pay a portion of their taxes for the upkeep of the lot. As it stands now it does not require the depth of city services as would stores or residences.

Currently, the DSL is an indirect, though indispensable, asset to the central City. It provides long term parking for visitors, employees and residents. The lot has also evolved into a civic meeting space. The Farmers and Crafters Pavilion attracts visitors on Saturdays in the summer months with spillover effect as patrons visit restaurants and shops before or after visiting the market. Civic events are staged there on Saturdays and Sundays.

The DSL also serves as snow emergency parking for residents who must park on the street. Residents know where to take their cars when the flashing lights are on. They do not have to search various lots to find a parking space.

The open nature of the grant application made possible the hijacking of the grant application by the Prime LLC, taking over the entire DSL.

The Prime building is contentious for several reasons. Diminishing parking spaces is one of the most pressing. The City Parking Committee has not been able to find sufficient replacement parking spaces. They are using clumsy and ill advised schemes to replace the parking spaces lost by the proposed 114 unit apartment building.

Turning Durkee Street into a one way with diagonal parking is one scheme. It is both dangerous for oncoming traffic and for delivery trucks. The parking committee, additionally, has not been able to find equivalent long term off street parking to replace the spaces lost in the DSL. Tearing down the former Glens Falls Bank Building on Margaret Street is another desperate move to gain spaces. This building could be rehabbed into living space or into a hotel.

Most outrageous of all is the reintroduction of parking meters. This was tried in the early 70's but removed when the mall went up in the town of Plattsburgh. Proposed parking kiosks, similar to those in Lake Placid will discourage visitors to the City.

Many citizens have hoped to put a building on the Durkee Lot to increase the tax base. This building will actually be a drain on the city for 20 years. The project will be excused land and school taxes using a formula. In one instance, Superintendent of Schools, Jay Labrun, says that the potential influx of students in the Prime building may cost the City more than 1/3 of a million per year.

What do we get in return for losing the Durkee Street Lot? The Farmers Market, an attraction for both tourists and community, gets moved to Green Street next to the sewage treatment pools. While the citizens get burdened with a private enclave in the historic downtown core.

The situation downtown will certainly continue changing as the Covid 19 pandemic grows and businesses downtown become more and more desperate for rejuvenation. A large apartment building in the City core is not the way to bring about recovery from a Covid 19 disaster. The City needs to rethink how it can best use the State Grant funds.

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Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:54 AM

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MARKET ANALYSIS

SITE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The market analysis identifies trends that are currently impacting real estate development at the regional and local level and suggests a simple yet informed setting of existing and future investment opportunities for the Durkee Street site.

Relying in part on proprietary data (EMSI and ESRI Tapestry), at the core of the analysis was a thorough evaluation of socio economic data, residential, retail and office market data, as well as insight into other future city projects. In-person and telephone-based interviews were conducted with representatives of the Plattsburgh real estate market, commercial developers, economic development professionals, municipal officials, and licensed real estate professionals to inform the project consultants with "on-the-ground" data about the opportunities that likely exist, where demand lies, and how this project might seek to fill these voids in the market supply.

All of this data supports the notion of a "sharing economy" that prioritizes flexibility in design to accommodate multiple uses. This dynamic trend is popular in competitive real estate markets and could be employed in Plattsburgh. Examples include the following:

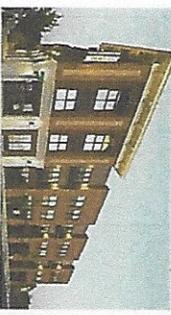
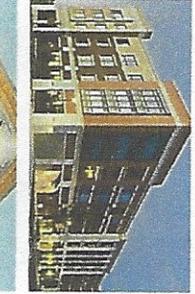
- Co-work space where users temporarily lease office space and share conference rooms and additional resources
- Shared kitchen(s) where multiple users can share equipment at different times for varying purposes
- Flexible market space that can serve various retail opportunities
- Short-term destination rental units for visitors - such as AirBnB

In conjunction with strategic site design, this analysis plays a large role in defining the size and form of proposed development allotments.



MARKET / POP-UP RETAIL

Competitive price points in the City of Plattsburgh compared to other larger cities in the northeast allow for young entrepreneurs to start up small businesses and shops using shared space, often under the umbrella of a Market Retail Co-Op. Under this model, successful businesses will evolve into their own space, furthering economic growth while allowing opportunities for new market trends.



HIGH-END RESIDENTIAL

A growing demand for an urban experience is increasing the potential growth for modern, urban rental units and experiences offered in a downtown urban core. Downtown rental units are an attractive option to young professionals, empty nesters seeking to downsize, including seniors and retirees, and families of all income levels as the trend back to urban centers continues.

PRELIMINARY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ELEVATION



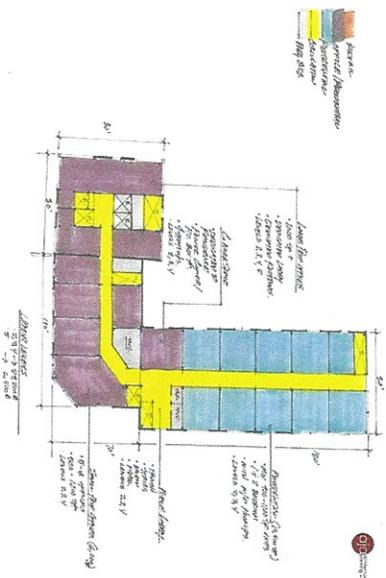
PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN W/ PARKING GARAGE ON SITE



PRELIMINARY FIRST FLOOR PLAN



PRELIMINARY UPPER FLOOR PLANS



SITE DESIGN

A RESIDENTIAL HUB & MARKET DISTRICT

Section A: A Summer's Pedestrian Promenade, Green Roof Terrace, & Riverside Esplanade



The site design is unified by a theme that includes a new residential hub & market district that speaks back to an era of post-industrial development. To achieve the activity and vitality of a lively downtown core, this district is envisioned to include the following site & building elements:

- ① 4-5 story Residential Hub with activated retail & office space throughout the first story. The overall architectural aesthetic should compliment the surrounding architecture
- ② Flexible Retail & Market Space for various uses including an indoor farmer's market, pop-up retail, and event space
- ③ 2 Story Mixed-use Development allows for attractive views from the nearby residential building while also providing rooftop dining overlooking the Saranac River
- ④ Activated Pedestrian Promenade with numerous amenities including: decorative pavements, planting, lighting, banners, & cafe seating
- ⑤ Active Great Lawn & Outdoor Market Space
- ⑥ Concert & Event Pavilion with a subtle lawn amphitheater
- ⑦ Riverside Access with natural stone seating stairs & fishing dock
- ⑧ Meandering riverside esplanade with selectively cleared views of the river

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & FUTURE INVESTMENT

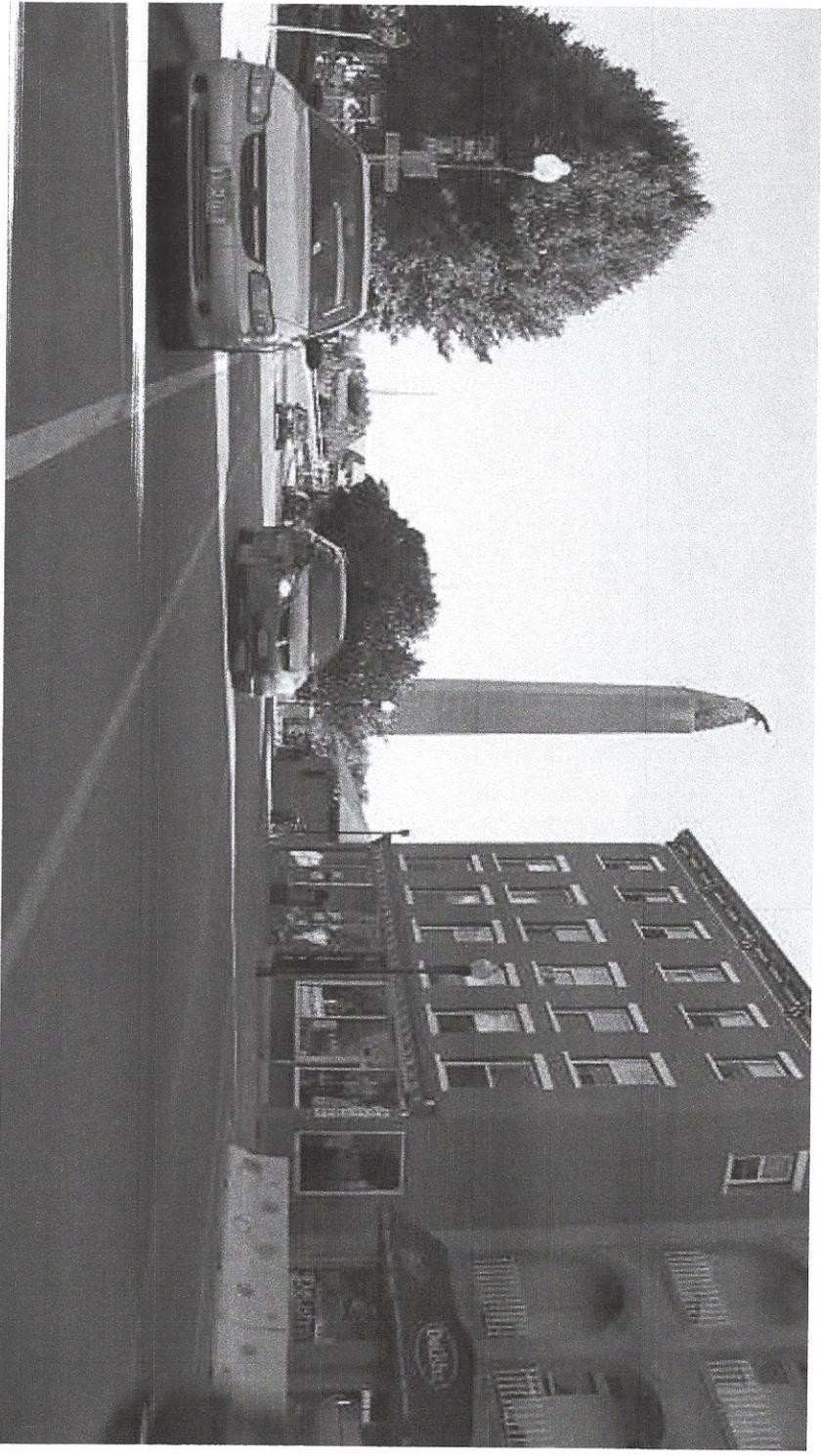
A financial feasibility analysis was completed to inform decision-making around the redevelopment of the site and to help the advisory committee understand how different uses and phasing may affect the expected profitability for a prospective developer. This analysis provides information regarding the funding gaps that may exist and what is required to attract private investment related to the current redevelopment scenario.

The financial development pro forma analysis uses key assumptions for lease rates, land acquisition costs, site construction costs, construction phasing, and market conditions.

The results of the pro forma analysis demonstrate that the project is feasible from a lending institution's perspective, but not necessarily from the developer's standpoint. The internal rate of return (IRR), which measures the developer's return on investment for implementing the project, may not be attractive enough to be considered feasible by the private sector. There are several options to bridge this funding gap, including public sector involvement in the form of grants, loan guarantees, incentives or other tax breaks. Pursuing public sector assistance by utilizing Downtown Revitalization Initiative funds could bridge the funding gap. When public support of \$1 million is included in the pro forma calculations, the IRR is boosted to a level that may be more attractive to the private sector.

A shared public/private investment may be just what is needed to reimagine Durkee Street, its historic connection to the Saranac river, and its future impact on the revitalization of downtown Plattsburgh.





Tearing down old walls

Editorial aired July 11, 2014 on WPTZ



Updated: 2:05 PM EDT Jul 11, 2014

Kyle Grimes

President and General Manager

There's a debate going on in the City of Plattsburgh that has people hot on both sides.

At issue: whether or not to close down a small stretch of road for a regularly scheduled community gathering.

Close the road or keep it open -- we don't much care about that.

What we are concerned about is the continued force against progressive ideas in the city.

Any mention of progress is met with an all too predictable outcry of parking problems or confusion over shifting traffic patterns.

The worst kind of parking problem a city can have is not having a parking problem.

Downtowns -- once written off as dead -- now have the unique opportunity to win businesses back. Key to winning that business back is foot traffic. Yes, foot traffic. People who actually will walk from store to store without having to park right in front of them.

There are some great ideas being floated in the city. The elected leaders would be best served spending their time figuring out how to make them work instead of putting up old walls.

I came upon this article and thought it was appropriate to the current situation. Six years have passed and at that time we couldn't get behind a very small idea. This time it's not the elected officials resistant to tearing down old walls,