

Pittsfield Economic Development Authority  
September 30, 2013 - Public Meeting

Minutes

In attendance were Board Members Mick Callahan, Larry Tallman, Mike Filpi, Christina Barrett, Dan Bianchi, George Whaling, Pam Green and Paul Dalton.

Also in attendance was Beth Goodman, legal counsel, Cory Thurston, Executive Director and Colleen Hunter-Mullett, clerk.

**I. Administration**

Call to Order - Chairman Callahan called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM, reminding all in attendance that they were being audio and video taped. He also gave a brief overview of the agenda for the benefit of the audience.

Introduction – Mr. Thurston welcomed everyone, stating that it's great to see such interest in this topic and the PEDDA Board welcomes this open dialog. Mr. Thurston briefly reviewed progress that has occurred at the William Stanley Business Park (WSBP) in the past year for the benefit of the audience.

Mr. Thurston informed the audience that the teens, which Waterstone is interested in developing, is a 16 acre parcel that borders Tyler Street Extension and Woodlawn Avenue. He also stated that the Waterstone presentation can be found on PEDDA's web site if anyone wanted to review it.

**II. Development Presentation**

Neil Shalom of Waterstone Development, gave a brief background on their company, stating that they would like to develop a 200,000 sq. ft. building for retail space on the teens parcel.

Doug Richardson, Waterstone, informed the audience that their project is estimated at 30 million dollars and that it will cost approximately 10 million dollars just to prepare the foundations for building construction. He gave a 3D presentation on how the capping of the foundation would be achieved.

Anton Melchionda, Waterstone, reviewed a list of similar mixed use projects, which include retail, hospitality, offices and light industrial that have been successful. He informed the audience that retail was the catalyst that started all of the projects listed.

Don Harr, Waterstone, reviewed the survey they had done of available developable properties in Lee, Adams, North Adams and Pittsfield, with Pittsfield's WSBP being the most favorable in their opinion.

**III. Community Development Office Presentation**

CJ Hoss, Department of Community Development Planner, briefly reviewed the permitting process and explained the process that a developer will go through prior to beginning construction. He informed the audience that the teens parcel is zoned for General Industrial, much the same as Berkshire Crossings & BJ's. He stated that it's a by-right use but because of the size of the project, it requires a special permit from the City Council. Mr. Hoss informed the audience that the Community Development Board would review the plans and make a recommendation to the City Council and then the Council would vote on it. He stated that there would be a minimum of two public hearings in regards to this project.

Doug Clark, Director of Community Development, showed the audience a large file full of studies that have been done for the WSBP resulting in a Master Plan, which was completed approximately 15 years ago. That Master Plan involved a campus like setting with light industrial and office space, promoting a mixed use facility. He stated that he believes things have changed in the past 15 years to what he calls innovation cluster, including the life sciences, which should play to the City's strengths.

Mr. Clark reviewed some of the reasons why he believes it's taking so long to get advanced manufacturing industry to locate to the WSBP, such as a 3 decade period of industrial decline, but he sees encouraging trends in the advanced manufacturing of innovative cutting edge products and there are companies that are re-locating to the northeast. He believes that Pittsfield has a great opportunity to attract them because people want to live work and play in the same area.

Mr. Clark reviewed some of the advantages and disadvantages of the Waterstone proposal, stating that the 16 acre parcel is more than half of the developable land that PEDDA has to offer with the next largest parcel being 4 acres. Mr. Clark stated that he believes PEDDA must remain patient and wait for advanced manufacturing. He informed the audience that if PEDDA did not approve Waterstone's proposal, his department is ready to assist them in finding another site.

#### **IV. Questions & Answers by PEDDA Board**

Board members had no questions of Waterstone or members of the Department of Community Development.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

Mark Lausier, 21 Fairfield Street, stated that he has worked in and now teaches manufacturing at Taconic High School. He believes the site should be developed for manufacturing, not retail.

Joe Nichols, 39 Cascade Street, stated that whatever ends up at the WSBP should be good for future generations and he just does not see retail as being the right choice for future generations.

Diane Marcella, 851 East New Lenox Road, supports the Waterstone proposal because they are here right now. Industrial can be done when PEDDA is able to attract them.

Ron Marcella, Jr., 851 East New Lenox Road, stated that he's made a large investment in the morningside area and would like to see the site developed now into retail space.

Terry Rock, 295 Springside Avenue, stated that she is in support of the retail proposal because she would like to see the blight cleaned up and get development started.

Jessica Marcella, 851 East New Lenox Road, supports retail because she's planning to relocate to Tyler Street in the near future.

Lisa Tully, 58 Oak Hill Road, stated that her husband commutes to Ashland to work every day and that her son had to relocate to Tampa in order to find work. She believes that PEDDA needs to bring industrial manufacturing to the site, not retail.

Rick Kielman, 1450 North Street, stated that he felt the retail proposal represented a good opportunity for the City.

Ron Marcella, III, 674 Tyler Street, stated that he supports the retail proposal because he doesn't believe industry will come to the WSBP and hoping that it will does not get development done. He felt that both could be done.

Jim Haggerty, 209 Springside Avenue, stated that it's been more than 10 years and no manufacturing has developed on site. He was in support of the retail proposal.

Frank Engels, 71 South Church Street, stated that he was in favor of the Waterstone opportunity in order to move the site forward and that there is a place for manufacturing when they're ready to come.

Suzanne Engels, 71 South Onota Street, stated that she was in favor of the Waterstone proposal and she believes the property will end up being mixed use.

Richard Latura, 90 Dorchester Avenue, stated that retail is not the answer because it creates low paying jobs and will require millions of tax payer dollars on road improvements due to increased traffic loads.

Thomas Martin, 118 Imperial Avenue, stated that he's a North Street merchant and there are currently a number of vacant retail spaces now. He stated that if retail was to come, people would just swap their shopping locations, which means there would be losses somewhere else.

Ellen Kennedy, BCC 1350 West Street, spoke in favor of advanced manufacturing and the life sciences.

Bill Mulholland, BCC 1350 West Street, stated that advanced manufacturing and the life sciences will not want to locate next to retail space.

Jake McCandless, 50 Cambridge Street, asked the PEDAs Board to consider the future of the City's children and provide high skill, high wage jobs. He encouraged the Board to stay true to its vision and commitment to the life sciences.

Esther Bolen, 88 Lincoln Street, questioned the employment feasibility of retail. She wondered what type of light manufacturing would locate alongside retail. She stated that she had more questions.

Lee St. Martin, 207 Second Street, spoke in favor or the Waterstone development because he felt it was something that would jumpstart the area.

Rob Proskin, 21 Cherry Hill Drive, stated that he was representing Downtown Inc. and that they are in favor of development, but that retail is not the right way to accomplish the City's goals. He encouraged development of the life sciences, light industrial and biomedical fields.

Erin Sullivan, 9 Hope Street, stated that building a retail space away from the City center may detract from the downtown that the City has worked hard to revitalize. She stated that PEDAs needs to be patient and keep with their vision.

Kevin Sherman, 15 Birch Grove Drive, thanked Waterstone for their desire to develop in Pittsfield, but he doesn't believe the WSBP is the right location for that development. He stated that he is not against retail, it's a land issue, and it's best use, for him. He stated that right now if retail comes, that land will never be developed for advanced manufacturing, but if retail does not come, it might be in the near future.

Anne Trabulsi, 185 High Street, encouraged the Board not to take the Waterstone proposal because it's easy, but to wait for the best use of the land.

Denis Guyer, 97 Cambridge Street, stated that he felt Pittsfield has always been a place for big ideas. He asked if mixed use follows retail why it never happened at Berkshire Crossing.

Josh Cutler, 51 Brookside Drive, stated that he was cautiously in favor of the Waterstone development, but they need to understand the nature of the neighborhood.

Mike Ward, 73 Whittier Avenue, stated that PEDAs should retain land for industrial purposes. He stated that he was confident that manufacturing will come.

David Pill, 17 Holmes Road, stated that he was not in favor of a retail development. He stated that he knows something needs to be developed on this site, but was sure that retail is the wrong something. He stated if retail were to come at the end of developing the 52 acre parcel, he might have a different opinion.

Van Shields, 1425 West Street, stated that he was not in favor of retail. He stated that there is nothing more important than making the right decisions about land use.

Mark Miller, 300 Williams Street, thanked the PEDAs Board for opening this up to the public for discussion. He stated that this land has only been marketable for the past few years and encouraged the Board to be patient.

Lew Cuyler, 43 Roselyn Drive, spoke firmly against retail, stating that land can't be made and that the City needs industrial development to support our community.

Chairman Callahan thanked everyone for their comments and participation, encouraging them to follow PEDAs future activities.

## **VI. Adjourn**

**There was a motion to adjourn at 8:15 PM, seconded and carried.**

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Hunter-Mullett

Clerk