

## Cook, Joshua P (DEC)

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**From:** McElroy, Kerry M (DEC)  
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**To:** Marko, Matthew J (DEC); Webb, Stephanie H (DEC); Parker, Reginald (DEC); Warner, Harry (DEC); Cook, Joshua P (DEC)  
**Subject:** #Clips: Palladium-Times - Housing development proposed for Breneman site

## Housing development proposed for Breneman site

- By MATTHEW REITZ mreitz@palltimes.com
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OSWEGO — An 80-unit, “mid-market” apartment complex proposed at the former Breneman Co. site on East First Street is scheduled to enter the environmental review and site plan processes in front of city planning and zoning officials next week.

The so-called Lock 7 project — named for the neighboring portion of the Oswego Canal — is a proposed four-story structure with a combination of studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments. Vacant for more than two decades, Rochester-based non-profit DePaul Properties, which has developed and operates a dozen affordable housing facilities across the state, is proposing the project, which is scheduled to start the approval process Tuesday in front of the city Planning Board.

Located at 220 E. First St., the structure, if approved, would be built on the former Breneman Co. site that was home to a fabric and window shade factory for more than 100 years before its 1981 closing and demolition in the late 1990s.

DePaul Vice President Gillian Conde said the project is contingent on funding through New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), which is the state’s affordable housing agency. Conde said company representatives plan to submit for funding later this year, and there’s not yet a firm timetable on when the development could be completed.

Conde said the Oswego site is an ideal fit for the company, and the additional housing for the income bracket DePaul plans to serve is needed in the community.

“We think it’s really a super site, and the data for Oswego really shows the need for that income bracket,” she said. “We’re excited about it.”

Oswego Mayor Billy Barlow, who previously called the site “ripe for development opportunities,” said this week the project would make good use of the site and “undoubtedly enhance” one of the city’s major intersections and gateways.

“The site has sat vacant and has been an eyesore for so long that I’m excited to see some development beginning to take shape,” Barlow said, adding he would write letters in support of the project and lobby state agencies if DePaul feels it would be helpful.

The city Planning Board is expected to establish itself as the lead agency in the state’s environmental review process next week, and the project is also subject to site plan approval from the planning board.

City Attorney Kevin Caraccioli said the development is permitted by special permit but due to the “odd shape of the lot,” there would also likely be variances required. In order to receive the variances, the project would also be reviewed by the city Zoning Board of Appeals.

Caraccioli said the approval process would be “multi-month” endeavor, and — due to the nature and location of the project — various state agencies, including the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), would review the project, in addition to the county planning department. He said each of the bodies would receive notification from the city Planning Board and have the ability to weigh in on the environmental impact of the project.

“We’re going to go through a full environmental review, because a project like that — once it’s up — it’s there for a good, long while,” Caraccioli said. “So we want to make sure it’s done correctly and it’s a good project and sited well on the property.”

The mid-market housing would be designed for individuals with a roughly \$31,100 annual income, increasing to a family of four with annual income around \$44,450. She said quality housing is often out of reach for the individuals and families within the income ranges.

As part of the housing project, Conde said DePaul would allocate 20 apartments to individuals or families with special needs and another 20 apartments to what she described as “frail seniors.” DePaul would give preference to seniors and veterans for the remaining 40 apartments.

Conde said the Lock 7 project would also provide an extra level of support for the occupants, with additional staff to connect them with community services.

“The only difference is in the building we will have a couple staff people who will be able to connect people with services as they need,” Conde said. “If they have a medical issues, want to change jobs, or don’t know how to connect with things our staff will assist.”

One of DePaul’s main objectives, Conde said, is to create housing that is “very beautiful” and fits in with the surrounding community.

In January, the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) reported cleanup activities at the site would likely be completed this summer. Contaminated soil and groundwater at the site have halted development in the past, but cleanup at the property—which was once tapped for a hotel—is expected to pave the way for future development.

The 2.1-acre site housed the fabric and window shade factory from 1834 to 1981, and DEC officials called the contamination typical for a former industrial site, noting subsurface soil samples revealed metals such as mercury, lead and barium.

Paints, dyes, oils, organic solvents, plasticizers and other contaminants used in the manufacturing process were disposed of on the site, according to the DEC. An environmental assessment discovered volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were present in soil and groundwater samples taken from the site.

Cleanup activities are aimed at protecting public health and the environment, according to the DEC, which indicated one of the primary issues at the former Breneman site is portions of soil and groundwater that contain elevated levels of petroleum byproducts.

[http://www.oswegocountynewsnow.com/news/housing-development-proposed-for-breneman-site/article\\_edc856fa-71b4-11e9-a4a1-b3891dcecb73.html](http://www.oswegocountynewsnow.com/news/housing-development-proposed-for-breneman-site/article_edc856fa-71b4-11e9-a4a1-b3891dcecb73.html)