

OBSERVER

April 30, 2017

Shovel ready was key factor in selection for cold storage facility

A proposed cold storage facility has caused a stir with neighbors on Fairview Avenue over the location, but according to Dunkirk Mayor Willie Rosas, there was one key factor that determined the selection – shovel readiness.

Where the zoning board meeting on the Great Lakes Cold Storage facility proposed for the land between Central Avenue, Main Street Extension and Fairview Avenue was a standing room-only crowd, the subsequent planning board meeting was the opposite.

Planning Board members reviewed the stipulations set out by the zoning board when it approved the use variance by a 4-1 vote and then asked its own questions of ARCO Regional Manager Eric Safko, who will be working with Great Lakes Cold Storage Owner Patrick Gorbett on the design and construction of the facility if all goes to plan.

Rosas said he could not call the project a “*done deal*” because there are still some steps to be taken on the business side of this project.

“I don’t want to count my chickens before they hatch,” he said, adding the site is not city-owned.

However, he did clarify something that he believes has not been said.

“They had other sites they were looking at and this became a very competitive process for the city. In fact, the only site we had in the city that met the specifications of this project was this particular site that we are at now. Otherwise we wouldn’t have the opportunity to bid for this site. That’s what a lot of people didn’t understand. I’ve been receiving phone calls and letters wanting to know why we didn’t take them (the Edgewood warehouse property on South Roberts Road),” he said. *“That’s another thing we’re addressing with the county now to make that*

site shovel ready. With that site the developer would have had to come in and do a demo and then also a cleanup followed by the state coming in to do their checks and that would have taken too much time for the timeframe.”

See FACILITY, Page A6

Planning Board members Chris Piede, Andy Bohn, John Mackowiak and Frank Torain asked several questions of Safko in regard to the landscaping, lighting, drainage pond and design to minimize the noise for neighbors on the Fairview Avenue side.

“Pat has three facilities that are gorgeously landscaped. He does a really good job maintaining his properties. I should have printed off some pictures. He does such a beautiful job and that was one of the reasons that really sold me too is that this is someone that takes good care of their properties, of their businesses, of their employees. So I’m sure he’ll do a very nice job,” Dunkirk Development Director Rebecca Yanus said.

Safko added, *“I think everybody will be pleasantly surprised at how this facility looks, how the property looks when it’s done and what it brings to the city compared to what that piece of property is today.”*

He also reassured members with safety concerns that if the company opts for an ammonia system, there is a safety design for the chemical to be sucked back into a tank in the case of a loss of pressure that could be a leak.

Mackowiak asked that signs for no truck traffic on Fairview and Greco be included in the planning board’s resolution.

When put to a vote, maintaining landscaping that is with the character of the neighborhood was also added. The resolution passed with three ayes, Torain abstained for an unspecified reason and Ed Schober absent.

“I’m surprised (unhappy residents) are not here. That’s why I’m changing my opinion. If they were here and voiced their opinion, good or bad, I would have to re-evaluate my decision to vote, but I expected more people to be here. ... If they’re not here, apparently either they’ve accepted it or they’re in favor of it. I’m for jobs, I’m for seeing Dunkirk progress, I’m always for the future and it’s a great tax base, but I feel bad for the neighbors. I hope this will be good a neighbor,” Mackowiak said.

Rosas said he has made it a priority to see that the least amount of

disruption comes to the Fairview neighborhood.

Safko concluded by saying once the property is purchased, it will take a month or two for design, followed by getting permits and construction is expected to last seven to nine months.

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Bill Sell ·

There is a lot of land around the Edgewood site that would not require demolition.

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NEWS

Page One

Obituaries

Business

Community

Notebook

SPORTS

Local Sports

For the

record

New York

Sports

National

Sports

OPINION

Commentary

People's

column

Retrospective

The

OBSERVER's

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Community

News

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