

OBSERVER

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Maybe next time

City of Dunkirk wants Edgewood Warehouse 'shovel-ready'



OBSERVER File Photo. Dunkirk and its residents would like to see the Edgewood Warehouse on South Roberts Road cleaned up and made shovel ready for future development.

The city of Dunkirk's lack of shovel-ready sites led to a disappointing loss of development this weekend, but at Tuesday's Common Council meeting, the much-discussed Edgewood Warehouse property was described as worse than not shovel-ready by one resident.

On Saturday, the city of Dunkirk received confirmation that an Article 78 lawsuit appealing the zoning board's decision on a use variance for the property between Main Street Extension and Central and Fairview avenues drove the \$15 million Great Lakes Cold Storage project from the city.

The lament after that announcement was not to blame residents of the Fairview neighborhood, but that there were not other options available.

"I was disappointed to know that we had lost the ability to have a partnership with them as well as create more tax base and jobs in the city — whether they were five jobs or 50 jobs, I think that

they were needed and always will be needed. The biggest part of it was I was disappointed we didn't have another area that met their specifications. I think we have all the right people in this room right now that are going to try to make that happen," Fourth Ward Councilwoman Stacy Szukala said at Tuesday's Common Council meeting.

Also on Saturday, Dunkirk residents converged on the city for the inaugural Community Clean-Up Day. All four wards were reached and beautified, but one area stood out in a volunteer's mind.



Fairview resident William Reardon speaks about his belief that the parcel formerly slated for cold storage should remain residential.

"We picked up a lot of garbage and in specific places there was more than others. In that vein, I'd like to speak to the Roberts Road section of the Millennium Parkway near Progress Drive. We fought for many, many years to get that road built. When I went there on Saturday morning, it had become a dump. We pulled out bed frames, we pulled out gas grills, we pulled out more plastic and garbage than you can imagine — six bags full, lawn bags," Mike Civiletto said. "This is a section that's not owned by the city, it's owned by the county and I think the county should be ashamed of themselves for allowing this to look the way it does, not only that but also for not getting that site shovel ready. They've owned it for quite a few years and as of right now, I think we've lost over a quarter million dollars in development because the county hasn't gotten their act together and brownfielded this area. They brownfielded half of it and then stopped. I'd like to ask the councilmen and the city of Dunkirk to

draw up some type of resolution to ask the county to start to brownfield this area.”

Civiletto also mentioned security and safety concerns with the vacant structure and land.

Mayor Willie Rosas said he has already been in contact with County Executive Vince Horrigan and the Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency on the topic.

First Ward Councilman Don Williams Jr. asked if Legislator Bob Bankoski could help the city in fighting for this.

Bankoski said he has already started to do just that.

“We have a windmill company that’s going to be building up in Arkwright; they’re going to be using that as a staging area for four months. They’re going to be paying the county \$15,000 for four months, for a total of \$60,000. I have already mentioned to the county executive about using some of those funds to start the cleanup process on that site. CSX, whose going to be bringing the windmills to that site, they’re going to be doing some site improvements also so that they can unload equipment,” he said.

Rosas and councilpeople also thanked Development Director Rebecca Yanus and her team for their work behind the scenes, even if this development didn’t pan out.

One Fairview resident said he was happy to see the land remain open for residential use in the future.

“As a residential section, there’s not much building in the city going on, but let’s maintain that for that privilege because sooner or later, more homes going in there are more than going to make up for any business that could come into the city because there are going to be people coming into the area and they are going to be looking for good homes. This is a good area to build in; that’s why I built there. Let’s keep it as such ... because we should be looking 30 years ahead at least because this city wasn’t born in a day, it’s not going to demise in a day; it’s going to be around for quite a long time,” William Reardon said.

Rosas said the city plans to work with residents on an acceptable development plan for the future of that land. In that vein, there will be several Planning Department meetings this summer that are being held to gain residents’ feedback.

One of these is the Brownfield Opportunity Area Phase 2

presentation on May 17 at 6 p.m. at the SUNY Fredonia Technology Incubator.

COMMENTS

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Mary Tobiczek · Dunkirk High School

No one will build homes if there are no jobs. To many people in the area are living on welfare and like it that way. If someone is retired they no longer have to worry about having to work for their money.

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