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New life for old warehouse?

\$10 million project under consideration for former Edgewood facility

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The former Edgewood Warehouse facility on Roberts Road is on the road to redevelopment - again.

Article Photos



OBSERVER Photo by Gib Snyder

The former Edgewood Warehouse site is once again in the redevelopment process, as Atwater Capital LLC of Boca Raton, Fla., is the new developer and is looking to rehabilitate the structure for warehousing use.

Another step in the long history of the former industrial site in the city of Dunkirk occurred recently when Common Council gave its approval to allow for the pass through of any funds received from a RESTORE NY Grant Program under an application the city approved in 2009. At that time, the city, with the help of the county, got some \$2.4 million in tax credits for work that was to be done at the Edgewood site.

"The project didn't go through as hoped. There is a new developer who's working with the county and the city," Development Director Steve Neratko explained before the vote. " ... He is looking to do a roughly \$10 million project to rehabilitate the structure at the Edgewood facility for warehousing. At this point he is looking for confirmation from council that those tax credits would be authorized."

According to the resolution, the project has been determined to be appropriate by the New York State Empire Development Corporation.

Atwater Capital LLC of Boca Raton, Fla., is the new developer and is familiar with the area, being involved with a Stegelske Avenue warehouse, according to Neratko. He added there was nothing in the works for the city to do for the time being.

"We will have to go in front of probably the Zoning Board and Planning Board; it will have to go through that planning process," he stated. "Other than that, the property is owned by an LLC. (Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency Executive Director Bill Daly, Mayor Anthony J. Dolce and the county executive) are the three people in charge of that LLC."

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That organization would sell the property and basically we would just work with them to make sure the project is a go."

As for environmental work, Neratko said there have been some reports and studies done on the property and there is some cleanup needed.

"That would be done by Atwater Capital, the city would not be involved in any of that and actually the DEC has been working with (Atwater principle) Bill Cocose on the project. Right now they're trying to figure out exactly what would need to change from the original plan because the original plan was to tear down the current Edgewood building, clean up everything, even under where the building was and then build new," Neratko explained.

"Since they're not going to be tearing it down there probably won't be the same remediations done under the current building because you just can't get under there, so they'll probably do some slightly different work there.

"He's working that out, he's going to do all that with the DEC's help. The city, all we're doing is telling them to go ahead with the project."

With the original project pegged at some \$15 million and the current project being closer to \$10 million, the prorated tax credits would likely drop from \$2.4 million to a little less than \$2 million.

Neratko said Atwater is looking to purchase Roberts Road property from the Millennium Parkway north to the CSX railroad tracks. That would include the former Roblin Steel and Alumax Extrusions properties with a goal of developing those along with the Edgewood site.

HISTORY

In the early 1900s, the three properties were part of a larger industrial complex operated by the American Locomotive Company, according to the DEC. The property was eventually broken up into three parts.

In early 2009, the county/city LLC was formed to clean up the site.

In January 2010, a required public comment session was held by the DEC on its preferred plan to clean up the Edgewood property. At that time the proposed cleanup included removing contaminated flooring, asbestos and drums from the warehouse and cleaning and closing all drains; excavating soil from three contaminated areas of the site that are potentially impacting groundwater quality; treating the groundwater; placing a paved or soil cover over the entire site outside of any buildings; and evaluating the potential for soil vapor contamination to enter buildings and addressing the problem if necessary.

By October 2011, the plan was to build a manufacturing, warehousing and distribution center that would have been built by a partnership consisting of the Krog Corporation and the former Cliffstar Corporation under the auspices of the Roberts Road Redevelopment Corporation. According to assessment records, Chautauqua County purchased the property in November 2008 for \$153,833.

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