MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
Ex Libris, LLC
May 6, 2019; 5:00 PM
Tompkins County Legislative Chambers
121 E. Court Street, Ithaca NY

Present:  Heather McDaniel (TCAD), Rich John, Martha Robertson, Laura Lewis, John Guttridge (TCIDA Board), Russ Gaenzle (Harris Beach, PLLC), Frost Travis (Ex Libris, LLC)

1.  Heather McDaniel called the public hearing to order at 5:02 PM

2.  Ms. McDaniel gave an overview of the purpose of the public hearing and the incentives contemplated.

   Frost Travis gave an overview of the Ex Libris, LLC project.

3.  Call for comments.

   Irene Stein – Town of Ithaca, former director of the Office of the Aging. Ms. Stein strongly supports the project. The features and amenities of the project will keep seniors living independently in their homes, it provides a strong link to Lifelong, contributes to the vibrancy of the City, and increases the property tax revenue. It will be a jewel in the crown of Ithaca.

   Jim Dennis – Trumansburg, 12 years at County Legislature and before that on the City Common Council. He chaired TCIDA for four year. This project has been four years in the making. Political careers were won and lost over it. The developer has gone through every possible hoop that people could put up. This is a difficult business and developers need tax abatements due to the cost of construction and high property taxes in the City of Ithaca. He strongly urges the IDA to support the project. It is long overdue. The location in the City and the central business district is a boon to the City. He has sat through 100s of meetings and heard about the evils of tax abatements. Developers pay taxes on vacant land until the building is done. The building will come on the tax roll in full in the future.

   Laura Lewis asked the audience to respect the speakers.

   Bill Demo – City of Ithaca - see attached comments.

   Ann Halpern – City of Ithaca – I have lived here since 1972 and have served the community as a public school teacher for 30 years and an advisor for 14 years for Golden Opportunity. I have lived in the Belle Sherman area for 42 years. We would like to downsize from our house. This is the first
David Brumberg – Town of Ithaca – We have lived in Ithaca for 43 years. I see the abatements as an investment in the future. This property has not been on the tax rolls for a long time. Once it is done it will generate a lot of taxes for the County for a long time.

Joan Ormondroyd (comments ready by David Brumberg) My husband Edward and I have lived in Tompkins County for 48 years and for the past 27 years in the countryside just outside the Village of Trumansburg. Edward is 93 years old and legally blind. I am 88. We love our home and our community but for the past year or so we have realized that we can no longer handle house maintenance, the gardens, and 7 acres of land. Having to drive everywhere we go is something I have begun to dread. We would like to be able to walk to a library, to the movies, bookstores, coffee shops and markets. For that reason it seems to us that the proposed Library Place project would afford us that possibility. We know that there are many among our friends who are at this same point in their lives and they too would benefit from the proposed building. Nothing like this exists downtown. None of the buildings are for people 55 and older. We urge you to allow the builders a tax abatement so that this project can proceed apace. Sincerely, Joan Ormondroyd.

MacDonald Carden – He asked that the Board vote against the housing project. Ithaca is having a housing crisis and this project will not ease that crisis. He held up SFO area doing the same thing and how this is not helping. It will just gentrify the area. The housing crisis and the need for senior housing should be addressed in an affordable manner.

Mary Ann Erickson – City of Ithaca – Professor of Gerontology at Ithaca College. She has also sat on the Board of Lifelong. She is very familiar with the project and supports the project. Housing is very important for seniors and having a variety of options is very important. This project fills a need for some of those options.

Theresa Alt – City of Ithaca – She spoke to the income needed to rent a one-bedroom apartment. This is luxury housing for seniors. She spoke to the difference between Kendal as an assisted living facility and this project. She feels there are not any benefits for seniors that would merit a tax abatement. She spoke to the method of asbestos removal and feels that this showed irresponsibility on the developers part.

Mona Sulzman – she echoes all that Theresa Alt just said. She lives in the City of Ithaca in a nice two-bedroom apartment. She pays half her monthly income for rent. She still pays less than a one-bedroom in this project. This is not affordable. She fears that the high rent apartments will become air bnb’s, which will raise all rents.

Peter Wissoker – City of Ithaca - see attached comments.

Leslie Brack – There is a lot of enthusiasm for this project and it should do well. If I had the income and were over 55 I would love to live here. I am all for the project. But I am so fed up with inequality. I have had the same potholes in the front of my house for 15 years. My kid’s school has lead in the pipes. I know these are not related but never the less this is for high-income residents to
enjoy downtown. There will be up to 3 affordable units. It seems obscene to give abatements to a luxury project.

Robert Lynch – Town of Enfield - see attached comments.

Walter Hang – City of Ithaca - see attached comments.

Elizabeth Demisse – She joined this community in 2001 and has worked with Bridges Cornell Heights since 2005. She is the Vice President of that entity. They were thrilled when Travis Hyde asked them to partner on this project. This is a great bridge for those seniors who need help but want to stay at home. She is proud to be part of the project and asks for support of the project.

Mark Macera – Serves as Executive Director of Longview. He acknowledged the wide views of all the speakers. He wanted to speak to the options available to older adults in terms of housing/services in Ithaca. This community is recognized for meetings everybody’s needs without regards to income. This project will open up many options to older adults that are not available now. The location is key to many – the walkability and other amenities located in the City downtown. Just because it does not address the needs of all seniors especially those with low incomes and those who are impoverished, is not a reason why it should not be considered for abatements.

Jennifer Birnbaum – City of Ithaca – She spoke of McGraw House that is a place for seniors that need affordable housing. This project is not such a place. She objects that tax dollars will go for luxury housing. Tax abatements should be for projects with amazing environmental impacts, for affordable housing, for a number of jobs being brought downtown. This project does not do this. This particular project she objects to – not a building in her back yard nor senior housing in her back yard.

Mark Lawrence – The project has had large impacts on his and his families – He spoke to how Mack Travis’ company has done much good for the community since inception. But a good reputation once built must be maintained. He feels that the company did not reach out and engage the community during the beginning stages of the project. Neighbors were seen as an annoyance not as stakeholders. He feels that the housing will only benefit a narrow swath of residents of the City. He did comment that the community room does offer some benefits. He would like to understand more about the approval process – are all projects automatically approved – a fait accompli? If awarded, could benefits be reduced? There are cracks in the houses nearby due to demolition, he urges no approval for this project.

Isaac Kramnick – He has lived in Ithaca for 47 of his 81 years. He has been involved in City politics in the past, Chair of the City planning board in the early 1980s. He urges the County to be as helpful as it can in providing housing for people like himself. The ones who will move into this project will spend money downtown as well as bring diversity. He urges assistance to the project.

Stephanie – She doesn’t know where to begin with this. The requirement for CIITAP changed as there is a need for affordable housing and many are fed up with abatements going people building housing for other wealthy people. The median income in the County is $50k/year. A one bedroom apartment for this project requires an income of $70k/year – this is for wealthy people. The jobs to be created – how many will be fulltime and paid a living wage. Walkability for whom? Wealthy
people. The Legislature has changed because people want change. The Board chooses itself – she didn’t vote for anyone of them. She grew up here and remembers when the old library was her library. She spoke to what she feels is a gentrification policy.

Ken Jaffe – City of Ithaca – He is an older Ithacan and it is amazing that he pays his taxes. The project will abate taxes for housing for wealthy older people. Just pay your taxes. The Agency is poised to award the project millions of dollars and is ignoring the environmental impact and the need for affordable housing, also local living wage jobs. This project is the old green deal – money for developers. The IDA is too close to developers. The project is backward looking and out of date. He spoke to the green new deal to address environmental issues. The new green deal will take money.

Mack Travis – He would like to give perspective on the “tax abatement.” In 2000, the company bought the brownfield project at the base of State Street. When he bought the site and paid $30,000 in taxes, he would not have been able to building the existing two buildings without abatements. The property would only still be paying $40,000 in taxes if no new buildings were built. The latest tax bill is over $275,000. This is not a tax abatement, the money is not given to the developer, but what is being done is co-investing to increase the tax base. He spoke to the Ithaca Gun project that is underway with the DEC for clean up.

The Ex Libris project is formed by what is known in this market – there is a glut of housing for the younger generation. They have teamed up with Classen. This project has a walkability of 96.

Tom Butler – City of Ithaca – President of Board of Lifelong. The sale of the building next to them helped them to stabilize – they are desperate to grow but are squeezed for space – the pace that will be made available to Lifelong is crucial to our grown. They want to provide services to all who need it. This project will help with this need. Lifelong very much supports this project.

Miriam – Supports the project that is incredibly imaginative and important. She represents the demographic this project will serve. She has looked at many apartments in Ithaca. The rents for this project are comparable to other buildings. The opportunities offered by this project will help her stay in Ithaca.

Suzy Kramer – see attached comments

David Kramer – He has a few things he would like to say. Travis Hyde’s contributions to this city are of a historic nature and yet even though he reveres the family and will welcome the new neighbors who live in the building, he does not think they should be given a tax abatement. Their treatment of the neighbors – communication was so bad – it was insulting. Things happened that they were not informed of. He finds it disturbing and troubling that those who struggle to pay taxes – they are landlords but get no tax abatements. He does not think that the lowly should subsidize housing for wealthy people built by wealthy developers.

4. The hearing was adjourned at 6:15 PM
Comments to be made to the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency concerning the tax abatement proposal made by Travis Hyde for the Library senior housing project (Ex Libris), May 6, 1019.

I’m here to speak in support of the tax abatement proposal being made by the developers of the Ex Libris senior housing project. I speak not without some ambivalence, as I believe strongly in the critical need for affordable housing in the city of Ithaca, and this is not affordable housing by any stretch. I’ve also never been an unconditional supporter of the value of granting tax credits to any developer that requests it. Despite those misgivings, it’s hard for me to understand how you could deny this abatement request in light of the many projects that have recently received such abatements. Further, I believe the library project merits positive consideration for several other reasons:

First of all, quite simply, this development will serve a relatively under-served demographic in Ithaca. As a population, seniors and retirees are an increasing percentage of the total Tompkins County population; many of these would like to downsize, but their housing options are fairly limited.

Also, as a practical matter, the construction of this particular development will provide about $30 million in private sector investment; it emphatically meets the demand for greater density in the downtown core, and—as I understand it—it will be energy efficient and seek Tier III certification with regard to NYSERDA energy efficiency standards, a laudable goal.

This development will bring seniors who have relatively high disposable incomes into the heart of the city, something that will accrue to the benefit of downtown businesses and the many people who work for them. Most seniors these days are quite active: they like to eat out, shop, and patronize cultural events. Their added presence downtown will be felt.

I think that it’s also a very positive thing that this kind of development supports aging in place, something that we now know is crucially important to the health and to the quality of life of most seniors. The involvement of Lifelong and Classen Health Services will greatly enhance this aspect of the proposed residential facility.

Finally, I am only sorry that this is not a condominium development which would have the potential to provide a better investment, greater equity, and longer-term stability for its residents than do rental apartments. However, I’m told that the regulatory environment provides disincentives for that kind of development in Ithaca. I hope that that condition can be changed over time by those, like yourselves, who may be in a position to do so.

Bill Demo

City of Ithaca
May 7, 2019

To: Heather McDaniel, President and the Board of Directors
    Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency

From: Peter Wisniewski, 705 N. Tioga St., Ithaca, NY 14850

Re: Full comments on the possible abatement of taxes for the Ex Libris project

In Ms. McDaniel’s May 8 memo, “Library Place Determination of Financial Need,” she states that this project is eligible for tax abatements under the CIITAP program. I would ask that you not confuse eligibility with a right to the benefit. Ex-Libriss LLC is a private developer who is building a project that offers nothing in the way of compromises to help solve the problems of the less-than wealthy in our community, either in the form of more long-term, good-paying jobs or housing for those retirees on less-than high fixed incomes. The building serves those in the senior demographic who need the least assistance, and we should save our tax breaks for efforts that help the middle class and the poor (including the working poor), and leave projects like this to the market.

How could the building do more to help those who have a greater need for assistance? The developers could:

- lower the rent to be affordable to middle income retirees
- insist that any workers in the building be paid a living wage
- offer to have more affordable units than the law requires in the Gun Hill project
- look at the long-term profit of the project and say a lower return on investment is fine for now because over the long-term the building will continue to be remunerative
- make all the units that have been added since the original budget/project was approved affordable to those on lower fixed income (what is the AMI for people over 65?)
- leave the tax benefits for projects that do broader public good.

At the last public hearing for this project Frost Travis said that he hadn’t calculated the cost of the project without an abatement. This is not right. CIITAP is not a program that should be taken for granted nor should it be assumed to be a blank check available to all comers. Whether it is long-term jobs at a decent wage or affordable housing, if there is no *quid pro quo* from a developer, there should be no abatement. Please take back the control of the project and turn down the request for an abatement unless the developer is to offer substantive compromises. Let Ex Libris use its own financing to build what will clearly be a successful project without being subsidized by tax payers. Thank you.
Before the:
Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency
May 6, 2019

PUBLIC HEARING

Ex Libris, LLC
a.k.a. Travis Hyde Properties
(Library Place)

Application for
Real Property Tax Exemption
Old Tompkins County Library Redevelopment

Prepared remarks by: Robert A. Lynch.

In the words of Bob Dylan,

The Times They Are A Changin’

In the wake of the Amazon fiasco in New York City, a series of bills are pending in the State Senate and Assembly that would reform local Industrial Development Agencies like this one. They’d mandate greater transparency; require more detailed economic impact statements; demand that organized labor have a seat at the table; and, perhaps most importantly, restrict elected officials from sitting on these boards, granting sweetheart benefits to the powerful.

But while the wheels of Albany grind ever so slowly, we’ve got a job to do. And what your Agency needs to do this week is to reject the Library Place tax abatements requested by Travis Hyde Properties and its Ex Libris subsidiary.

You’ve heard my concerns month after month. I need not repeat myself. But I will remind those in this room that the Library Place abatement would yield the developer a whopping Three-point-Ninety-Five Million Dollars ($3.95 M) in tax savings over a decade! Travis Hyde would pay absolutely no tax in the first three years, and then just One-point-Seven Million ($1.7 M) in years four-through ten.

That’s a savings of Two-Dollars, Thirty Cents (City, County, and School) for each dollar in tax actually paid.
I suspect you’ll approve this abatement two days from now; for whatever reason, I cannot fathom. Frost Travis concedes his apartment house will create no direct jobs; only a few farmed-out maintenance workers, plus a small on-site restaurant whose employees—and patrons—will likely be drawn away from somewhere down the block.

And what about construction workers? Frost Travis admits his 31 Million Dollar project will only draw 35 per cent local labor.

All this for just 66 luxury apartments. Library Place will not solve Ithaca’s affordable housing crisis. These apartments are not affordable. There’s no proof the residents will be new arrivals, rather than just well-off seniors who’ll market their homes in Fall Creek or Cayuga Heights. That makes any projected sales tax benefit from this project a mere illusion.

But at the heart of my grievance is the inequity of it all. When Travis Hyde pays less in taxes—nearly Four Million Dollars less—we, the taxpayers, make up the difference. We pay Four Million Dollars more in exchange for an ugly high-rise looming over DeWitt Park, negligible jobs, and 66 apartments most of us cannot afford.

This is Amazon in miniature. And it’s why some in Albany want the laws changed. One member of this Agency’s board has accepted campaign cash from Frost Travis. But she’ll get to vote. Organized labor must grieve from the sidelines. Your pre-published draft resolution already presupposes approval. The deal is done. To the IDA, I suspect, this hearing is but a necessary nuisance.

Had my sister and I built our new radio station, hoisted towers into the air and dug copper into the ground, I suspect we’d have paid market-rate taxes, just like everyone else. Even though we’d have contributed far more to the health—and the heart—of this community than Library Place will ever do. The average Joe or Jane, who risks life savings to start a repair shop or a coffee bar—and create far more jobs—gets no special favors. Yet, the well-heeled, the lawyered-up, the politically-connected always do just fine. The people versus the powerful; a national conflict played out in this Legislative Chambers here tonight.
Reject the Library Place Abatement. It’s too much taxpayer sacrifice for too little economic benefit in return.

It would cost us taxpayers as much as Four Million Dollars in additional burden. It flouts the City of Ithaca’s mandates for 20-per cent affordable housing. It would only bring to the city another gentrified high-rise. Only one-out-of-three construction jobs would be local. And it stands to represent how out-of-touch this IDA—and perhaps every IDA in the State—is with both the purposes of an Industrial Development Agency and the needs and desires of the citizens it purports to represent.

Yes, The Times They Are A Changin’... only, maybe, not fast enough.

Reject the Library Place Abatement.

Thank You.

Respectfully submitted by:

[Signature]

Robert A. Lynch
175 Gray Road
Ithaca, NY
(Town of Enfield)
May 6, 2019

Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency/Tompkins County Development Corporation
401 E State St #402b
Ithaca, NY 14850

Re: 105 West Court Street (Former 316 North Cayuga Street Project)

Greetings:

I write to request that the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency/Tompkins County Development Corporation (TCIDA/TCDC) deny a request for City of Ithaca Community Investment Incentive Tax Abatement Program (CIITAP) assistance for the above-referenced project.

First, I believe the City of Ithaca’s 2/3/19 approval of the CIITAP application for the proposed project was improperly granted and must be rescinded because the applicant does not fulfill a key CIITAP eligibility requirement.

See attachment.

Second, I also believe that the CIITAP incentive request must be denied because the "Applicant" cannot comply with a key requirement mandated by TCIDA/TCDC. According to the incentives application:

"The Applicant confirms and acknowledges that the owner, occupant, or operator receiving Financial Assistance for the proposed Project is in substantial compliance with applicable local, State and federal tax, worker protection and environmental laws, rules and regulations (emphasis added)."


Both the letter and spirit of the law limits CIITAP benefits to Applicants that must comply with all environmental laws in the City of Ithaca, including consent agreements. This requirement is spelled out in the City’s CIITAP application.

"II.4 Municipal Compliance - Each property in the City of Ithaca owned by the Applicant (bold and bold are emphasis added) must be in full compliance with all applicable local laws and regulations, consent agreements, and orders of the Director of Code Enforcement, and current on all taxes, assessments, fees and penalties due to the City. Properties owned by the Applicant in the City of Ithaca shall include any property for which an Applicant or their partners has an ownership of 20% or more. Partners shall include any partners owning 20% or more of the project LLC, Corporation, or project equity."
I believe that the Ex Libris, LLC CIITAP application cannot fulfill either the letter or the spirit of this critical requirement because owners of that firm are also owners of a firm called IFR Development, LLC that is in clear violation of a 2013 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Brownfield Cleanup Agreement for the Former Ithaca Gun Factory site.

"A. Frost Travis" is reportedly the "Manager" of Ex Libris, LLC.

"A. Frost Travis" is also "Managing Partner" of IFR Redevelopment, LLC.

See page five:

brownfield cleanup program application support ... - City of Ithaca

IFR, LLC Non-Compliance with Ithaca Gun Factory Brownfield Cleanup Agreement

According to Section XIV D 1 of the NYS DEC/IFR Development, LLC Brownfield Cleanup Agreement for the Former Ithaca Gun Factory Site (C755019), 4/30/13:

"Applicant shall use "best efforts (emphasis in the original)," to obtain all Site access, permits, easements, approvals, institutional controls, and/or authorizations necessary to perform Applicant's obligations under this Agreement, including all Department-approved Work Plans and the schedules contained herein."

The Former Ithaca Gun Factory is located within the City of Ithaca and to this day violates an enormous array of applicable state clean up requirements for lead, other heavy metals and toxic solvents. There is also no approved site remediation plan to fulfill the requirements of the Brownfield Cleanup Agreement.

For example, massive lead contamination up to 190,000 parts per million remains at the Former Ithaca Gun Factory Site six years after the Brownfield Cleanup Agreement was adopted and nearly 19 years after I first reported lead pollution at the site.

See: Former Ithaca Gun Site - Post Demolition Screening Results Map - Oct 2013

Solvent pollution in groundwater exceeds applicable cleanup standards and has migrated into a residential neighborhood west of the Former Ithaca Gun Factory Site where numerous homes are threatened with toxic soil gas vapor intrusion.

Due to widespread pollution at that facility, New York State recently determined that the Former Ithaca Gun Factory constituted a "significant threat to public health or the environment.

See: Unremediated Ithaca Gun Factory Toxic Site Hazards to Public Health and the Environment
Conclusion

Based on the seemingly endless failure by the owners and operators of the Former Ithaca Gun Factory property to remediate extensive documented pollution all over the abandoned site in strict compliance with applicable law, I believe there can be no dispute that the responsible parties have failed to make the "best efforts" required by the Brownfield Cleanup Agreement.

Given this irrefutable conclusion and the letter and spirit of the law which limits CIITAP benefits to applicants that must comply with all local, State and Federal environmental laws according to City of Ithaca and TC ICA/TCDC mandates, including consent agreements such as the Brownfield Cleanup Agreement, I believe the applicant cannot fulfill the CIITAP eligibility requirement because owners of Ex Libris, LLC are also owners of IFR Redevelopment, LLC.

For all these reasons, I believe that the request for CIITAP financial assistance must be denied. If TCIDA/TCDC fails to enforce both the letter and the spirit of its own environmental protection mandates, I believe that would warrant the scrutiny of the highest levels of authority in New York State.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very best regards,

Walter Hang
From: Susan Kramer <suzy196@msn.com>
Date: May 6, 2019 at 6:05:39 PM EDT
To: Heather Mcd <heatherm@tcad.org>
Cc: Susan Kramer <suzy196@msn.com>
Subject: Revised letter to IDA members

Dear Heather,

Please substitute this version of my letter for previous ones, as I have further clarified it and removed some typos.

Thank you,

Suzy

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy Note9, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone.

Dear Members of TCIDA,

I am writing to request that at this time you deny the tax abatement package sought by Frost Travis on behalf of Ex Libris for the Library Place project.

As you are aware, among my greatest concerns has been the handling of the widespread asbestos contamination at the property, which remains a serious one, if only in terms of the questions raised about how the property and project have been managed since the acquisition—and most pertinently here, what this has revealed about the way the developer has faced financing challenges.

Following the Privilege of the Floor part of the April 10 meeting, Mr. Sigler asked Frost Travis how long he’d been in business, to which the developer replied, “since 1977”—and how many projects he’d overseen—“about 10.”

In fact, Frost’s history with the company started by his father—whose new Shaping a City reads like a gripping coming-of-age novel as it recounts Mack Travis’s many decades of accomplishments and milestones in a long real estate career—is much more limited.

Frost Travis worked for the family business briefly in the 90s, then again starting in 2007; but it’s been since 2011 or so since he has been the one who can legitimately take credit—and responsibility—for the operations of the business and the projects it has undertaken.

The Gun Hill project may reasonably be viewed as the younger Travis’s: while under a different LLC than Ex Libris, he serves as the designated manager, and is the one responsible for bringing that ambitious project to fruition. Since participating in the Brownfield Clean up Program under Frost Travis’s management, however, it seems that little has been accomplished at that site in the way of clean up activities for many years.

Currently, despite the elaborate designs drawn up and presented last year—designs that have been altered, quite radically—over the course of the proposed development’s history, there still seems no firm date for construction to begin.

What will happen to projected costs at the Gun Hill site, given the considerable delays in acting on necessary (indeed urgently required, given the scope of the contamination and the possible exposure of the public) clean up activities?
Such costs may even jeopardize that project’s feasibility, as the necessary financing, and corresponding tax abatement amount sought for that project, could potentially soar.

Is it surprising then, or irrelevant, that the Gun Hill project is mentioned when members of the public call for more scrutiny of Travis Hyde’s track record in an effort to assess the likelihood of another major and concurrent project’s success?

Turning again to the Library Place project, the developer has now completed both application forms, the CIITAP and the IDA versions.

Both of these applications reveal that Ex Libris has made radical changes to the plan approved by the ILPC the previous year: an increase from 58 to 66 apartments, the addition of a 60-seat public restaurant, and greatly enhanced amenities, resulting in luxury rather than market-rate rents, largely due to the new partnership with Bridges.

We see in the June 2018 CIITAP application that the Project Costs (part 4) have risen considerably from the developer’s 2015 estimate of 14 million—before the unusually long process of design review, and before the addition of enhanced amenities due to the partnership with Bridges—to a total cost of 19,950,000.

I would like to remind the members of the IDA that the initial cost estimate of 14 million in this developer’s 2015 proposal included other major components that are no longer part of the current plan: the proposal at that time was not only to demolish the Old Library after a planned encapsulated abatement (costing approximately 500,000 and adding a couple of months to the timetable), but also to “replace the fragmented, outdated Lifelong Building,” significantly enhancing its amenities in a “new built presence” on W. Court St.; in addition, to repurpose the large white building, 121 ½ (also owned by Lifelong at that time) as an annex.

Because these aspects of the 2015 plan are no longer part of the project, it does seem as if the overall cost ought to have significantly decreased, rather than increased.

But apart from this, and of much more relevance at present, is an even greater subsequent jump in cost between the CIITAP application and the one submitted to the IDA just last month, in April of 2019, less than a year later: as the developer states on the latest application, the cost of the project has doubled from what was “originally anticipated in 2014.” Furthermore—and this is the crux of the matter—the cost of the project has swelled from just under 20 million on the June 2018 application to more than 30 million today. This increase has come about in the space of only 9 months!

It is understandable, then, that the company seeks an abatement due to financial need.

There are a couple of places on the application form where this financial need must be explained. How then does the doubling of costs get explained? And where, in these explanations, do we learn what has caused the increase in total costs from 19,950,000 in June of last year to 31,713,000?

“Since our initial involvement in this project in 2014, construction costs have continued to rise as time passed and we developed more detailed architectural drawings. Additionally, given the locally unprecedented nature of this site—owned by the county, design subject to both ILPC and planning board approval—final site plan approval required eight different iterations of design taking more than
two years of entitlement work. Many of the design requirements that arose out of the entitlement process caused costs to almost double compared to what was originally anticipated in 2014. (p4/79)

Elsewhere the "lengthy entitlement process" is again cited as the primary reason for this new, and eye-poppingly high, amount of financing now being sought (p8/83): "it has taken three years to bring Library Place to this point, including eight different design iterations to satisfy the requirements of both the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the City of Ithaca Planning Board...there have been enormous cost implications from these required design changes, which have made the project almost untenable financially without the tax abatement."

The doubling of costs, however, has in fact not occurred because of these design changes and the time delay blamed on them.

Firstly, the numerous iterations were not "required," but rather made necessary only because none of the designs presented by the developer adequately addressed the primary consideration which came up at every ILPC meeting, over many months, and which also troubled members of the Planning Board. The fundamental problem with the building remained the same: it was simply too big and out-of-scale to be considered appropriate for the site, and even the final design, narrowly passed by the ILPC, was still considered inappropriate--due to this single, significant factor--by members who held their ground, despite considerable political pressure, and voted against it.

The square footage of the initial building proposed at the outset--which would've also utilized land occupied by the current Lifelong building--had not been reduced at all, because, according to the developer, making it any smaller would result in fiscal "infeasibility."

Once again, the project's outcome is threatened with fiscal infeasibility—and again, if approval is not granted, the City faces the threat, articulated by the developer, of having a "vacant, underutilized lot in the downtown core." Without the abatement, this project is "almost untenable financially," and (p 4) "will be rendered financially infeasible."

Even if we accept the developer's argument that the large rise in cost can be attributed to the demands of ILPC, Planning Board, and inflation caused by time delays—and of course also because of considerable, and arguably desirable, changes in the 2017 design due to enhanced amenities—all of these factors would already have been accounted for at the time of the CIITAP application, when the costs were indeed higher, but still less than 20 million.

What new circumstances, therefore, have caused another increase to 10 million?

Nowhere in the application or other materials do I find this discrepancy noted or explained.

What else about the project ought to give the IDA pause—and indeed dissuade the agency's representatives from granting this abatement—aside from the fact that there is this significant and unaccounted for discrepancy?

The increasingly doubtful probability of the project's being completed in a timely manner going forward is also a concern that should be seriously taken into account.

The CIITAP application's response to "Proposed Project Start and Completion Dates:" is simply "June 2018"—meaning that not only is this application incomplete (no completion date) but also inaccurate
(work had not begun, and was obviously not about to start, in June 2018, the time of this application, nor did it start until many months later).

On the IDA application more specific dates are supplied (May 14, 2019 to August 2020) but apparently even this timetable remains questionable, because as the IDA’s own Overview states, “It is reasonably expected that construction will begin in 2019.” That could mean December—and as passersby have observed, all work has ceased at the site since the completion of demolition, resulting in the further construction delay of another couple of months.

If, therefore, as the developer has often reminded us, time is money, the probability that the final cost will exceed even the most up-to-date estimates seems high. This means the risks are also high.

Therefore I respectfully reiterate my request that the Library Place abatement be denied, certainly until there is far more clarity regarding the project’s costs, timetable, and overall viability—and the supporting documentation that has been provided has been more thoroughly examined and assessed.

Sincerely,

Suzy Kramer
May 6, 2019

Via email to heatherm@tcad.org

Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency
Board of Directors
C/O Heather McDaniel
Administrative Director, Tompkins County IDA
President, Tompkins County Area Development
401 East State/MLK Jr. Street, Suite 402B
Ithaca, NY 14850

RE:  Ex Libris LLC Tax Abatement Application

Dear Tompkins County IDA Board of Directors:

My law firm represents Susan Kramer, a City of Ithaca taxpayer concerned about the impacts of development in downtown Ithaca. The Ex Libris project (“Project”), which will create up to 66 luxury rental units for seniors 55 and over at 316 North Cayuga Street, is not an appropriate use of county resources, and the developer’s tax abatement application should not be granted.

The purpose of the City of Ithaca Community Investment Incentive Tax Abatement Program (CIITAP) program is to “encourage development in the City that will increase jobs, increase the tax base, promote density in the city core, encourage rehabilitation, and redevelopment of underutilized sites, and help create a vibrant downtown center.”

However, the Ex Libris Project does not achieve these stated goals as the Project creates few jobs and does not address the pressing need for affordable and middle income senior housing in the city core. For these reasons, the IDA should not be providing a tax abatement for this Project.

Project Will Result in Little Job Creation, No Direct Jobs

First, the proposed Project will result in little job creation. While 35% local labor will be used to construct the Project, construction jobs are temporary in nature. The Community Benefits Overview memo appended to the April 10th meeting materials indicates that only indirect jobs will be created—via the on-site
restaurant and local property management staffing. The Project will not result in any direct jobs.

Additionally, it is unclear how many full time jobs will materialize as a result of this Project. In fact, the employment information section of the developer’s IDA application does not discuss whether any full time, local jobs will be created.

**Project Does Not Meet Need for Affordable and Middle Income Senior Housing**

Second, the need for affordable and middle income senior housing far outstrips the need for luxury housing in the City of Ithaca. The proposed Project will contain apartments for seniors with rents ranging from approximately $1,900 per month to $3,000 per month. However, the Danter Company’s 2016 Residential Analysis in Downtown Ithaca indicated that the city is approaching market capacity for higher end rental housing (III-4).

Ithaca is noted as having one of the most expensive rental markets in the country, and the results of the 2014 Tompkins County Senior Housing Preference Survey indicated a strong demand for affordable and middle income senior housing. In fact, survey comments highlighted “the need for affordable housing options in the City of Ithaca, close to services, and transportation… Another consistent theme was the lack of housing options for the middle class. Middle income levels are too high for subsidized housing, but insufficient to cover the cost of many existing options.” 2014 Tompkins County Senior Housing Preference Survey, Pgs. 8-9. Not surprisingly, the 2017 Tompkins County Housing Strategy noted that “affordable options for seniors are the greatest need.” P. 5.

It is worth noting that the CITTAP application submitted to the City of Ithaca did not indicate that affordable housing units would be developed, and the City’s letter referring the developer’s application to IDA highlighted this deficiency. While the developer’s application to the IDA states that up to 3 affordable housing units will be developed (if funding can be secured), 3 units amounts to only 4.5% of the Project’s total units. Given the undeniable need affordable and middle income senior housing, this Project should not be funded if the majority of its units will consist of luxury senior housing.

For these reasons, the Ex Libris LLC tax abatement application must be denied.

Sincerely,

Frances Kabat
Good morning, Laura,

I am writing in support of the proposed phased tax-payment, aka tax abatement, for Travis-Hyde’s Library Place project.

I attended the hearing yesterday but had to leave before I could speak. Therefore, I ask that the following be included in the IDA’s consideration:

I am a 75-year-old, 20-year resident of Ithaca NY. I moved to Fall Creek after living in the hamlet of Jacksonville for two years and the Town of Covert for 25. All those numbers add up to my having made choices about where I could live. That the weather and level of taxes have not driven me elsewhere is a testament to the appeal of Ithaca. However, the aging process is taking its toll. Owning and, more to the point, managing a home are increasingly burdensome. My husband and I are seeking alternatives to allow us to stay in the City and not be removed from the central life of the community.

Library Place provides just that alternative.

Public investment through the IDA is a recognition of that worth to middle class elders who are still fortunate enough to be engaged and active. We are part of the community who still contribute to the vitality and culture of our city. Even more we can contribute diversity and thoughtful involvement to our city.

Allow me to add that the IDA backing of the Travis-Hyde project is a recognition of the financial risk that company has taken on. After twenty years of a tax-exempt, non-contributing facility, surely this is the moment to ensure a return to an economically viable corner of Ithaca, one that will generate needed tax dollars in the years to come. Please vote “yes” for the IDA tax abatement.

Thank you,

Caroline Cox
601 North Aurora Street
Ithaca 14850-3712

607 277 4566

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Ina Arthur:
I write to support tax abatement for Library Place, the 55+ rental building being developed by Travis Hyde.

This project deserves this abatement because it helps to meet the middle class senior housing shortage identified in prior County surveys. Seniors want to give up homes that have become too big but there are few options: Kendall and Longview are too far away from downtown, and one is fabulously expensive.

Older active people who want to live downtown and reduce their dependence on cars will be attracted to this building. It will also provide services as well as amenities for Senior citizens. It will incorporate the latest research on quality of life for the elderly and stimulate economic development downtown. Middle class housing is as sorely needed as affordable housing and the City is already increasing affordable housing in a robust way.

Joan Jacobs Brumberg
Stephen Weiss Presidential Fellow
and Professor Emerita
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York
607-220-8838

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Rich, Martha, Leslyn, and Laura,

I am writing to express my support for the Travis-Hyde project on the old library site and its requested tax abatement.

As a lifelong advocate for housing (Cornell Masters Degree in City & Regional Planning with an emphasis on housing and finance; former executive director of Ithaca NHS; starting the homeownership and rental programs; retired executive at NeighborWorks America; and currently the president of the INHS sub corporation that handles financing for INHS’s new development projects), I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Travis-Hyde project.

I am pleased that Travis-Hyde seems to be sensitive to the needs of aging-in-place. Working with Ms. Claussen to understand the appropriate amenities and services needed for an older population, Travis-Hyde is including an appropriate continuum of services in their project. I also understand that the firm is incorporating the latest research on urban communities for the active elderly.

I have long wanted to downsize out of our four bedroom, two story 1906 Craftsman home in Belle Sherman to an appropriate site downtown and was an early and strong advocate of condominiums at this site. Travis-Hyde’s project is the only suitable option in downtown that has arisen.

With its focus on a middle class, older demographic, this apartment complex offers a solid addition to the apartments that have been built or are currently under construction in downtown, targeted toward either low income, students, or young professionals. Adding a building that encourages people like me to move downtown will give our little city a vibrant and diverse population in downtown, encouraging and supporting businesses of all kinds.

Thank you,

Beth Prentice
Dear Rich, Martha, Leslyn, and Laura,

As members of the IDA board, you have a critical decision ahead this coming Wednesday, April 10th: whether to approve the tax abatement for the Library Place development. I am writing to support your voting "yes" in favor of furthering the ability of Travis-Hyde to complete the project in a solvent and professional manner.

As a resident of the City of Ithaca who is likely to choose to live in Library Place, I have a strong personal interest in seeing the project finished. Further, as a taxpayer I am deeply interested in seeing the enhanced fiscal well-being of our community. Library Place is a model of attracting a financially stable population to live in the urban core of the City. That stability will add to the demographic and economic diversity of the community.

Ironically, had Library Place been approved as condominiums, the legislative bodies represented on IDA would have seen a future of more residents who would have paid property taxes. Instead, the property tax payments will be made by Travis-Hyde. That said, the infusion of new residents will help increase sales taxes. In either case, having Library Place supported by IDA will be a positive investment in the economic future of the City and the County. I therefore ask you to please support the tax abatement proposal now under consideration.

Thank you for your attention to my request as well as for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Caroline Cox

601 North Aurora Street
Ithaca 14850-3712
My name is Ann Halpern. I have lived in Ithaca since 1972. I love living here. I have served my community as an elementary teacher in the district for 30 years. Since retiring I have had a volunteer job for 14 years as the education advisor with the non-profit tutoring organization Golden Opportunity, or GO.

I want to stay in Ithaca. My partner and I have lived in the Belle Sherman area for 40 years. He and I no longer need the space of our house. There are stairs to the upstairs for our bedroom and to the basement where we have our washer/dryer. We have been considering downsizing and finding a living situation which enables us to continue to age independently.

Library Place is the first living situation which has appealed to me. I love that it is downtown. Perhaps, unlike some, I am pleased that it is apartments rather than condos. I personally do not want to own again. I love that I will be able to walk to the library, to Cinemapolis, and to shop at the stores on the Commons. I also look forward to a sense of community in the building.

How wonderful that something is being constructed which will keep long time Ithacans living here and continuing to contribute to our community.

I strongly urge you to give any approval necessary to enable this project to go forward.

Ann Halpern
206 Valley Road
Ithaca, NY 14850
Dear members of the Committee,

Our community needs innovative housing for seniors. We are fortunate that Frost Travis’ plan for the site of the old library offers thoughtful and workable solutions to addressing the needs of our older citizens. While wholly supportive of affordable housing, I think it is important to consider middle class seniors, as well. They will bring expendable income to downtown business, volunteer in civic organizations, and participate in local arts offerings. I hope you will support this model approach to aging in place, one that could be an important model.

Thank you for your attention.

Nina Miller
Town of Ithaca
forward to IDA, please.

Heather D. McDaniel, CEcD, AICP, EDFP  
President  
Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD)  
401 E. State St., Suite 402B, Ithaca, New York 14850  
607-279-0000 | heatherm@tcad.org | www.tcad.org

---------- Forwarded message ----------

From: Nancy Medsker <nmedsker@gmail.com>  
Date: Tue, Apr 9, 2019 at 11:45 AM  
Subject: Library Place  
To: Heather D. McDaniel <heatherm@tcad.org>, Joseph Murtagh <JMurtagh@cityofithaca.org>, Ducson Nguyen <ducson.nguyen@gmail.com>, Svante Myrick <moyarmyrick@cityofithaca.org>, Mike Niechwiedowicz <MNiechwiedowicz@cityofithaca.org>

Hello,

I am writing in support of the approval for IDA money for the Travis/Hyde Library Place project because it will fill a much-needed niche in Ithaca as it can function as an independent living center for older people who no longer can live in their own houses. My husband & I own the house next door at 308 N. Cayuga St, and I have been intimately involved with the process of this saga for almost 5 years. I know that some people are upset because they say $1900 for an apartment is not affordable housing but when that is compared to the price of living in a “corporate independent living center” like Longview, it is very affordable and it eliminates the need for tenants to have a car or drive into town.

If you were to want your mother/father to come live in Ithaca, so you could take care of them, I really don’t think that there is an option like the one the T/H is proposing. At the Library Place your parents would be safe, can get a meal plan, work-out, and have access to the office that provides home health care. My mother lived in a Brookdale independent living unit in Cleveland and it was over $9000/month (which included just dinner). The new Senior Living apartments at Cayuga View are $1550/month and don’t provide any of the same amenities as Library Place. This is project should be considered below market-rate housing for those in this age & need demographic.

Now, about the asbestos removal, if the letters being received state that T/H did something evil & wrong when they did the "controlled demo" they are just plain wrong and probably from people who refused to believe the facts about the poor condition the building was in. If you really want to know the facts about this demo I suggest you talk to David Crouch about it, he is superintendent for LeChase and has decades of experience, he can tell you all about the reality of condition of the building as it was coming down. I was onsite many times as I watched the building come down. The building basically crumbled as it was demolished, the roof was so ratted it flipped around in the wind, and the smell of mold that was growing in the basement was overwhelming. It is my understanding that all the air quality monitoring readings for asbestos during the demo were well under the legal limit.

The asbestos in the building couldn’t have been removed with a contained abatement approach for many different reasons and thankfully the City held its ground and rightfully gave the experts the final say about it. As it was being demolished asbestos fireproofing was discovered on the on the South side exterior and if it hadn’t been sprayed with water as it was being demolished there would have been a lot of asbestos flying around in the air. It appeared that the building couldn’t have been rebuilt like the Franklin/Stream project was proposing because it was in such poor condition and Noah Demarest dodged a huge bullet.

In all honesty, I was not in favor of this project for a long time and supported the adaptive reuse of the Old Library, but once the T/H project was approved by the TCH I supported it and many of us worked hard, in conjunction with the ILPC, to get a good design approved. I still don’t like how big the building is for the size of the site and I hate the fact that the IDA tax abatements are placing a huge tax burden to the rest of the tax-paying public. But we need to move on and let this project come to life. Its time to be grateful that a local firm has been willing to withstand the years negative aggression from the community and is still willing to move ahead and build this project.

Best,

Nancy Medsker
Here are a couple pictures of the offices on the first floor of the building before it was demolished sent as an example of what poor condition the building was in prior to demolition. The only way to do a contained abatement would have been to wrap the entire building in plastic, create a negative air-space with several huge exhaust fans, and take everything out in plastic bags. Not only would this have been very inefficient but it would have been terrible to put all that plastic into our landfills. The controlled demo was the really the only option.
please forward to IDA - this should go in the public hearing comments for Arthaus and Ex Libris

Heather D. McDaniel, CEdD, AICP, EDFP
President
Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD)
401 E. State St., Suite 402B, Ithaca, New York 14850
607-273-0006 | heatherm@tcad.org | www.tcad.org

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: Ann Sullivan sarah.sullivan@gmail.com
Date: Tue, Apr 9, 2019 at 1:23 PM
Subject: Tax Abatements
To: heatherm@tcad.org

Dear TCAD Board Members and Staff,

I am an almost 40 year resident of Ithaca and Tompkins County. I have paid county, school and city taxes on my property since 1982. Last year, my property taxes were more than $13,000 on a house I purchased for $143,000. As someone who fully pays my taxes, I am very concerned about the granting of any abatements.

That said, I urge, the Board to grant an abatement to the Arthaus Project. The project will add to our supply of affordable housing, as well as supply a place for our most creative residents to live and practice their arts.

On the other hand, I urge the Board to reject ANY abatement for the Library Place Project. The apartments and services in this project are designed and tailored to attract well-heeled, upper middle class retirees. While I welcome them to the City, I do not think we should subsidize their lifestyle through a tax subsidy. The sponsors of the project, Mr. Travis and Mr. Hyde, also are businessmen who have become wealthy by building market rate properties. I do not begrudge them their success. I just do not think the County and City owe them or their prospective tenants a tax break.

Thank you for your work for the community.

Best Regards,

Ann Sullivan

I
Subject: Old Library / Ex Libris tax abatement
Date: Tue, 9 Apr 2019 17:14:41 -0400

Dear Leslyn,

I hope this message finds you well.

Writing to you again concerning the Travis Hyde Properties’ Old Library development project (under the name "Ex Libris") that is up for a tax abatement at tomorrow afternoon’s IDA meeting. I urge you not to vote for this proposed tax abatement for the following main reasons:

* The project is for luxury apartments supposedly to be priced between $1900 and $3000. The public should not be subsidizing luxury anything and indeed the city’s guidelines for this category of tax abatement require at least 20% of units to be affordable. Clearly this project does not meet the requirement.

* The building/land parcel was purchased for a reported $925K when it was last assessed at around $1.5 million. This at a time when many (most?) property sales in the city were changing and continue to change hands for well over assessed values. The developer has therefore already received a huge discount on its project from the county.

* The developer has cited design changes increasing the cost of the project as being a reason it needs the tax abatement. Having followed the ILPC meetings, it was clear that it was the developer’s own foot-dragging and unwillingness to adhere to ILPC recommendations for the building design that resulted in the developer having to return before the ILPC a number of times before it would submit an approved design.

* The developer’s asbestos abatement fiasco which has put the city and community at risk should not be rewarded with a tax break that could potentially serve as a model for other developers to also show disregard for community health and safety with future projects in the city.

Finally, I have continued concern that Martha Robertson will potentially be voting on this tax abatement after reportedly receiving over $20k of combined campaign donations from the developer, partners and family members. I would hope that she recuses herself from this vote and discussion.

Please feel free to contact me if any clarifications or expansions are needed on any of the above. I’m not sure if I’ll be able to attend tomorrow’s meeting. I would appreciate it if this letter can be entered into the meeting’s public record somehow.

Thanks once again for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Michael Troutman
another one for the public hearing comments...

thanks

Heather D. McDaniel, CECd, AICP, EDFP
President
Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD)
401 E. State St., Suite 402B, Ithaca, New York 14850
607-273-0005 | heatherm@tcad.org | www.tcad.org

----------- Forwarded message -----------
From: Tom Seaney <tseaney@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 10, 2019 at 9:24 AM
Subject: Library Place
To: <heatherm@tcad.org>

As the owner of the 1821-built house at 308 North Cayuga Street, I am writing in support of the tax abatement requested by Travis Hyde for the redevelopment of the old library site.

The requested tax relief will allow rents to be kept to a competitive level compared to other senior living facilities offering similar amenities and bring much-needed housing stock to the downtown walkable area of the city. It is also commendable that the developers are meeting the City's green energy code and seek to comply with NYSERDA's Tier III building standards.

While I acknowledge the knee-jerk reaction to the asbestos removal plan and the resulting controversy surrounding the demolition of the building, the question of a tax abatement should have nothing to do with how the developers were allowed to handle the asbestos removal, which, as it turns out, was done in a professional, code compliant manner.

I want to see this project completed and become part of our neighborhood.

Tom Seaney
308 N Cayuga St
Honorable Richard John, Chairman
Tomkins County Industrial Development Agency
c/o Tomkins County Area Development
Attention: Heather McDaniel, President
Suite 402-B
401 East Street Street/East Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Ithaca, NY 14850

Dear Chairman John:

I write respectfully to request that the Tomkins County Industrial Development Agency deny the City of Ithaca Community Investment Incentive Tax Abatement Program (CIITAP) Application for 105 West Court Street, former 316 North Cayuga Street Project, submitted by Ex Libris, LLC.

As I will document herein, I do not believe that the application can be approved by your agency because it fails to fulfill a critical eligibility requirement that:

"Each property in the City of Ithaca owned by the Applicant must be in full compliance with all applicable local laws and regulations, consent agreements (emphasis added), and orders of the Director of Code Enforcement, and current on all taxes, assessments, fees and penalties due to the City. Properties owned by the Applicant in the City of Ithaca shall include any property for which an Applicant, or their partners has an ownership interest of 20% or more. Partners shall include any partners owning 20% of the project, LLC or project equity."

According to the CIITAP description,

"In conjunction with the goals of the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan (emphasis added), the objective of CIITAP is to encourage development in the City that increase jobs, increase the tax base, promote density in the city core, encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment of underutilized sites, and help create a vibrant downtown center.

The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan states that:

"Tompkins County should be a place where:

- the needs of current and future generations are met without compromising the ecosystems upon which they depend (emphasis added).
- all levels of government work cooperatively to address regional issues.
- taxpayer dollars are invested in public infrastructure and facilities in the most efficient manner possible."

Efficient is defined as "preventing the wasteful use of a particular resource."

While the City of Ithaca is charged with determining a CIITAP applicant's compliance with the applicable requirements, I believe it is beyond dispute that the Applicant cannot comply with the above-stated criteria as well as the intent of the CIITAP for well-documented reasons that I will explain.

Ex Libris, LLC

Ex Libris, LLC is referenced as the CIITAP "Applicant/Company Name" for 306 North Cayuga Street. The "primary contact" is "Frost Travis" with an email of ftravis@travishyde.com. Ex Libris, LLC is reportedly an entity of Travis Hyde Properties.

IFR Development, LLC

According to the Brownfield Cleanup Program application submitted for "Former Ithaca Gun Factory" at "121-125 Lake Avenue" in "the City of Ithaca," "A Frost Travis" is "managing partner" of IFR Development, LLC, an "entity that purchased the Site on June 28, 2012 in contemplation of taking the Site through the Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) and constructing a residential development."

Former Ithaca Gun Factory - Brownfield Cleanup Program Application

Given that Ex Libris, LLC and IFR Development LLC, are reportedly entities of Travis Hyde Properties, I believe that the on-going failure of IFR Development, LLC to clean up massive toxic contamination at the former Ithaca Gun Factory Site in the City of Ithaca constitutes an irrefutable rationale for denying the Ex Libris, LLC CIITAP application.

Clearly this rationale contravenes both the letter and the spirit of the CIITAP requirement that:

"Each property in the City of Ithaca owned by the Applicant must be in full compliance with all applicable local laws and regulations, consent agreements (emphasis added)..."
High-Level Toxic Contamination That I Documented Circa 2000 at the Former Ithaca Gun Factory Has Yet to be Remediated

In August 2018, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) “in consultation with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), has determined that the [Former Ithaca Gun Factory, not in the original] site poses a significant threat to public health or the environment. This decision is based on high concentrations of lead present in surface soil over nearly the entire site and presence of chlorinated volatile organic compounds in groundwater on-site and the migration of contaminated groundwater off-site.”

Read full formatted: Request That Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency Deny the City of Ithaca Community Investment Incentive Tax Abatement Program Application for 195 West Court Street, former 316 North Cayuga Street Project

Virus-free. www.avast.com
Attn: Rich John, Chair, Ithaca Industrial Development

My husband Edward and I have lived in Tompkins County for 48 years and for the past 27 years in the countryside just outside of the Village of Trumansburg. Edward is 93 years old and legally blind. I am 88.

We love our home and our community but for the past year or so we have realized that we can no longer handle house maintenance, the gardens, and 7 acres of land. Having to drive everywhere we go is something I have begun to dread.

We would like to be able to walk to a library, to the movies, bookstores, coffee shops and markets. For that reason it seems to us that the proposed Library Place project would afford us that possibility. We know that there are many among our friends who are at this same point in their lives and they too would benefit from the proposed building. Nothing like this exists downtown. None of the buildings are for people 55 and older.

We urge you to allow the builders a tax abatement so that this project can proceed.

Sincerely,

Joan Ormondroyd