

Minutes of the Meeting of the Village of Williamsville Planning and Architectural Review Board, held in Williamsville Village Hall, 5565 Main Street, Williamsville, New York on Monday, December 2, 2019, at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Wes Stone, Chairman
Walter Pacer, Member
Kevin Lester, Member
Charles Rizzone, Member
Ron Trigilio, Member
Amy Alexander, Alternate Member

Also Present: Deborah A. Habes, P/T Clerk
Charles Grieco, Village Attorney
Tim Masters, Code Enforcement Officer
Basil Piazza, Village Board Trustee

Excused: Elizabeth Holden, Member
Catherine Waterman-Kulpa, Member
Ellie Grenauer, Alternate Member
Matthew Etu, Village Board Trustee Liaison to Planning Board

Chairman Stone opened the meeting at 7:32 p.m. by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

So there would be an orderly process for acknowledging speakers, Mr. Stone asked the audience members to sign their names and addresses on the list if they wished to speak during tonight's public hearing. He would then call speakers up to the microphone in the order that they signed in.

PUBLIC HEARING

Log # 2019-PB-6a

Blocher Homes, 135 Evans St. (NMU)

Mr. Stone opened the public hearing at 7:34 p.m.

Members of the audience who spoke and the topics of their comments regarding the proposal to close Blocher Home facility and redevelop the existing building and site into 97 mixed income apartments owned by People Inc.

1. Craig Speers, 140 Winston Rd., Buffalo – Opposed. Spoke on behalf of his mother Mildred Speers, a resident of Blocher Home. Wonderful staff; none support the project; loss of green space and natural habitat; project will cause denigration of neighborhood; not a good fit for the Village; will impact nearby schools; no public support for this project; will dispossess current elderly residents from their home; high density/low income project does not fit in with middle to upper class neighborhood; drugs and alcohol will be present.

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2. Marilyn Alfes, 59 Evans St – Opposed. Submitted and read aloud a letter dated 12/2/19; Issues included: increased traffic; loss of green space; of no benefit to current residents of Blocher Home; will have poor effect on neighborhood.
3. Carol Descutner, 144 Eagle St. – Opposed. Submitted and read aloud a letter received 12/2/19. Issues included: increased traffic on already overloaded streets; will increase likelihood of accidents; relocation of current Blocher Home residents; loss of green space; project will increase load on schools and other public services; will People Inc. sell in the future; no support from the community; of no benefit to our community.
4. John Ostroot, 144 Eagle St. – Opposed. Addressed Village Code requirements for NMU zoning; pedestrian/auto balance should weigh in favor of pedestrians.
5. Mark Sinnott, 33 Arend Ave. – Opposed. At peak traffic times, traffic is crazy; will bring property values down; would be better if located somewhere else.
6. Carolyn Schlifke, 196 Evans St. – Opposed. Two sides to every story; understands what Village is up against; will bring more noise and pollution; non-profit won't pay taxes; loss of green space; low income housing is paid for by everyone; Evans Street is already overloaded with traffic; does not want more absentee landlords on her street; the current Blocher residents have rights; urges compromise between all parties.
7. Nancy Boulden, 9 Clarion Ct. – Opposed. Read aloud a statement. Issues included: code says density should be gradual, this is not gradual; loss of green space; parking lots are unsightly; noise pollution; parking should be underground; no off street parking in neighborhood; would contribute no taxes and increase load on taxpaying public; will increase load on public services; displacement of current Blocher residents; traffic study did not take into account school drop offs and pickups; there are no continuous sidewalks; no crossings on Essjay.
8. John Boulden, 9 Clarion Ct. – 9 Clarion Ct. – Opposed. Everyone loses here; high density; no taxes will be paid; Evans is already overloaded with traffic.
9. Kyle E. Witul, 75 Rinewalt St. – Opposed. Believes Trustee Etu has a conflict of interest; referred to Village Code of Ethics; knows of no letter from Trustee Etu stating in writing his conflict of interest which should be posted on Village website; community plan requires projects to improve quality of life and this project does not; should be gradually integrated but this does not; community plan calls for aging in place but residents are being displaced from their home at Blocher; Blocher should remain as is and Village should work with the owners to help them improve its present use; Village Board and all other boards should be doing what is right for the people.
10. Eileen Torre, 109 N. Ellicott St. – Opposed. Submitted and read aloud a letter. Issues included: many bad things are happening to the village; historic homes are being bulldozed and huge mansions are being built; project does not fit in the Village; streets

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are already overburdened; Village residents, including the 58 displaced Blocher residents, should have a vote in this project; Blocher residents are stressed by this corporate development; submitted photos of traffic at peak times; project is too big and is unattractive; they are asking for fewer parking spaces and they should be denied; there is no on street parking; won't benefit the Village; won't pay taxes; asked for an immediate building moratorium in Village; loss of green space; project should be denied.

11. Nelson Torre, 109 N. Ellicott St. – Opposed. There should be an environmental impact study and he sees none; four-way stop at Eagle and Evans is worst in town; traffic backs up constantly; how will residents get out of their driveways; project should be denied; area is a major migration route for wildlife; project fails the balancing act; fails the Blocher residents; project is ill conceived; send developers back to the drawing board.
12. Laurie Kishbaugh, 132 Evans St. – Opposed. Concerned about getting out of her driveway if this is allowed; will miss her neighbors at Blocher Home.
13. Joe Azzarella, 130 N. Ellicott St. – Opposed. Been a Village taxpayer since 1972; area is already overdeveloped with Essjay and Cimminelli; drivers use the side streets to cut through already; school children will be affected; has there been any traffic study of workers coming out of their offices on Essjay; drivers go through stop signs all the time; should be no more development in this area.
14. Christine Hunt, 75 and 81 Evans St. – Opposed. Everyone is on the same page – they don't want it; will increase taxes; high density is a recipe for disaster; it is disrupting the current Blocher residents from their home and they are not being considered; wondered if Planning Board members have already made up their minds; traffic safety will be impaired; blind spots will be created by driveways and traffic; put Village on notice for any injuries that may occur because of this project; residents will leave the Village if this project is allowed.
15. Amy Carrato, 162 N. Long St. – In favor. Her son is 29 and disabled but not enough so to be placed in a home; if project is approved, it would be a perfect home for him to live independently that would be close to her and allow her to visit him often; being a mixed income project does not mean it will attract drug addicts and other criminals; the Village needs this kind of housing option; hopes it goes forward.
16. Doug Coppola, 215 Village Pointe Lane – Opposed. Thanked Planning Board for public hearing opportunity; over 500 people have signed a petition against this project; this project does not enhance the quality of life for the neighborhood; it is too big; why can't center building be removed; it is profit driven; could be a low-income senior housing that would be better suited for the neighborhood and site and would not be such a burden on public services; project only benefits wealthy out of town investors; everyone opposes it; loss of greenspace; Wegman's is .7 miles away from project and residents won't walk there and back loaded with groceries; hopes a previously suggested "gate" connecting project to Village Pointe Lane will be off the table.

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17. William Hein, 207 Village Pointe Lane – Opposed. Project is too big and does not fit in the community; vast majority of residents oppose it; traffic study done was done by the developer.
18. Victoria D'Angelo, 216 Village Pointe Lane – Opposed. Submitted and read aloud from a letter; Traffic is a huge concern; Village must look at overall plan; Evans is already overburdened with traffic; Village's website urges traffic calming but this project will not contribute to calming of traffic at all; a curb cut to Village Pointe Lane would hurt Village Pointe Lane residents as there is no continuous sidewalk and blind spots on the hill would make safety matters even worse; Town of Amherst would not approve the curb cut; project only benefits the developer; removes green space; should be owner occupied not by tenants that come and go; Village Board sent out a survey to S. Cayuga Rd. residents asking if they wanted to have their neighborhood designated as a historic district; this project violates everything the Village stands for.
19. Paul Comeau, 216 Village Pointe Lane – Opposed. Questioned whether the new zoning category of NMU was consistent with the Community Plan; he did not receive any notice of public hearings at the time it was re-categorized; submitted a FOIL to Village and only got meeting minutes back; Evans is just as residential as Garrison Rd.; NMU went thru but how is that consistent with single family and 2-family; community plan referred to Blocher Home as a very unusual business; no one ever thought it would change hands; there is other subsidized housing in the Village including the senior hi-rise on Main St. and the Jewish Federation housing on Essjay; why are there 97 units – could it be scaled back in size?; People Inc.'s Linwood Av. Property has only 44 units.
20. Cathy Bloom, 9 N. Ellicott St. – Opposed. Works at Blocher Home and is concerned about the elderly residents being displaced; they love their home and the natural green space and wildlife.
21. Larry Zasowski, Los 70 Los Robles – There are already 90+ apartments and 40 condos being built on the Village's west side.
22. Diane Heim, 207 Village Point Lane – Opposed. Will Evans Street eventually become all commercial?; street would have to be widened if so; Evans should be rezoned to just residential; asks developer to reconsider the plan

There being no other members of the audience who wished to speak:

ON MOTION by Mr. Trigilio, seconded by Mr. Rizzone, it was moved to close the public hearing at 9:11 p.m. Mr. Lester thanked the audience members for attending and speaking at tonight's public hearing.

Motion carried. 6 – 0.

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Mr. Speers asked the board if they would respond to the speakers' questions raised at tonight's public hearing. Mr. Stone replied that they would take them into consideration.

Mr. Speers then asked if people could submit further questions/comments subsequent to tonight's public hearing.

Village Attorney Grieco replied that if the Planning Board were to allow post-hearing comments/questions, we would have to allow the applicants' to respond. We will see what is submitted and decide if there are additional comments that were not included in their oral comments at tonight's public hearing.

Log # 2019-PB-6a: Blocher Home, 135 Evans St.
Site Plan Review

ON MOTION by Mr. Pacer, seconded by Mr. Lester, it was moved to **TABLE** the site plan review for Blocher Home, 135 Evans St.

Motion carried. 6 – 0.

Log # 2019-PB-6b: Blocher Home, 135 Evans St.
Architectural Review

ON MOTION by Mr. Trigilio, seconded by Mr. Pacer, it was moved to **TABLE** the architectural review for Blocher Home, 135 Evans St.

Motion carried. 6 – 0.

ON MOTION by Mr. Trigilio, seconded by Mr. Pacer, it was moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Unanimously carried.

Deborah A. Habes, Clerk-P/T

**The next scheduled Planning Board meeting will be held on
January 6, 2020 at 7:30pm
*Work session starts at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise notified.**