

Tracy Delaney

From: Tom DePietro
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 3:33 PM
To: Tracy Delaney
Subject: Fw: Affordable Housing Project

Hey Tracy,

Please include this in the record.

Thanks,
Tom

Thomas DePietro
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From: Rebecca Garrard <rgarrard@citizenactionny.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 2:14 PM
To: Tom DePietro; Tiffany Garriga; Calvin Lewis, Jr.; Dewan Sarowar; Dominic Merante; Eileen Halloran; Jane Trombley; Shershah Mizan; John Rosenthal; Malachi Walker; Rebecca Wolff
Subject: Affordable Housing Project

Dear Councilmembers,

I hope you are all well and staying safe at this moment. Yesterday, I saw a social media post from the Mayor which I found upsetting for a couple of reasons. Here is the content (unedited):

"Hudson politics drives me crazy. People say they want affordable housing. Then when I propose a project that would be real affordable housing for over 70 units. Some of the council have reservations or are unsure. A project that would bring thousands of dollars into the city. Ask yourself do your elected officials really want affordable housing if they keep saying let's wait or not this developer but offer no alternatives? If things stay the same in Hudson it won't be because I didn't try. "I said what I said." #AHOD"

Frankly, I have been immensely disappointed by the state of politics in Hudson as of late myself. The excitement I felt about the candidates who were elected being able to bring transformational change to the city has all but evaporated as I see only an increase in political posturing which impedes policy implementation. This post seemed to me the latest example of this. In addition, I was also upset by this post because it oversimplified a complex issue. I posted a reply to the Mayor on his thread, which he immediately deleted. The content of my reply was as follows (also unedited):

"Jumping on here to offer some thoughts:) I don't know the details of the plan, but if it involves tax breaks to the developers, that does cost the city money. Money that will have to be made up by increased property taxes on homeowners and landlords (who will just pass that cost on to tenants). Also, how is affordable defined? If it's 70% or more of AMI, then it's not really affordable to anyone who is not upper-middle class, and therefore does nothing to solve the housing crisis in Hudson. Lastly, I must ask, in the context of this conversation, how can you justify your veto of the vacancy rate study which would have been the first step towards stabilized rents for an estimated 300 units and provided the strongest tenant protections to those residing there that are available in the state, and arguably the country? Couldn't help myself-you know housing is all I care about:). Thanks for indulging me in the convo folks:)"

I'm mostly disappointed that my reply was deleted because, if a discourse on a topic is going to be initiated in a public capacity such as social media, one would hope it would allow for all opinions. Instead, it seems there is no interest for a substantive conversation of that sort.

I am writing today because I believe all of you are thoughtful elected officials who do want to know all sides of an issue before you make a decision. I have gotten the details since I posted my reply. If I'm correct, the parameters are that the developer would be given 40 years of 95% tax abatement on the property. In addition, the building would include 1/3 of units which could be priced up to 130% of AMI, 1/3 of units which could be priced up to 80% of AMI, and 1/3 which I do believe fall within the affordability metric.

My questions are - are these parameters non-negotiable? 40 years is a staggering length of time for that type of incentive, and the post-development value of the building will place a huge tax burden on those who are left paying taxes in the city. In addition, could the number of units which are required to fall below 80% of AMI be increased? Could there be a requirement that the affordable units go to community members and not out of towners? (ie college students, etc). I think these are all topics that could be fleshed out in a setting such as a housing committee, of which you have one:) If it's a good project, why the need to ram it through instead of making it the best it can be?

Much appreciation for all of your time and all of your good work,

Rebecca

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