

Columbia-Greene Democratic Socialists of America



Thomas DePietro, President
Hudson New York Common Council
councilpres@cityofhudson.org

Monday, May 18th, 2020

Regarding: *proposed development of mixed-income housing at 75 North 7th Street*

Dear President DePietro:

This letter is to amplify the position of the Columbia-Greene branch of the Democratic Socialists of America in regard to the construction of affordable housing for 75 North 7th Street.

We do not intend to insult or to alienate the Galvan Foundation, but the City can do better, hopefully with the willingness of the Galvan Foundation, and it should do so even if the project's PILOT agreement receives a favorable assessment. We Democratic Socialists of America do not scorn the good merely because it's not the perfect, but we also know that what's presented as good often must be pushed to be better and truly to serve its stated purpose. We meant exactly what we said in our letter of May 6th: the 75 North 7th Street project "is far less than what truly is needed." Indeed, the need for all the residents of Hudson to obtain affordable housing especially is made acute upon the unwillingness of the City to pursue rent stabilization.

A draft of the PILOT has been made available to the public "for discussion purposes." Yet, no public hearings have been held to elicit that discussion. Though the open-meetings law was temporarily modified on March 13th, no long-term programs, like a PILOT spanning forty years, yet should bind Hudson's citizens without public questioning and commentary. That may easily be had by videoconference. Among the details that plainly should be given publicly by Galvan are: the amount in taxes the City would receive from such a project without a PILOT; how the figure of \$77,000 came to be; why there is a beneficial owner separate from an equitable owner; why there is a need for certain amounts of apartments in certain percent ranges of area median income; why the area median income used is not that of Hudson; why there is no requirement that the proposed average area mean income for the building, which is currently below 70%, be for the full term of the PILOT; how, or if, the apartments differ according to income; and why the maximum legal term for the PILOT is necessary. Also, prospective leases need to be provided to the public as well as detailed plans and elevations of the building.

Even with a favorable study upon the PILOT, no vote upon this project should be taken without the opportunity for a robust public discussion which, again, may readily be had by videoconference if then warranted. A lack of public hearings would place the legitimacy of this program at issue at its very outset, especially given that this PILOT is proposed to span four decades, that is, to span a generation.

There is, also, a broader question that the Common Council should pose to itself: why can't the City construct and manage affordable housing? If the Galvan Foundation finds this plan for providing affordable housing profitable enough, can't the City just as well be developer and landlord, then to use the modest profits in rent to lessen the tax burden on the rest of Hudson?

Respectfully submitted,
The Columbia-Greene Democratic Socialists of America
CGDemocraticSocialists@gmail.com