



City of Newburgh

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Summary Report Public Hearing Held Regarding Orange County Community College

On Wednesday, March 22, 2006, the City of Newburgh hosted a Public Meeting to present its information on the siting of the new Orange County Community College branch in general and, specifically, its interest in having the College developed on Broadway. The City issued a press release about this meeting and distributed flyers to residents and business owners in direct proximity to the Broadway site to ensure attendance by City residents who are most likely to be impacted by the College should it open on Broadway.

The meeting was attended by approximately 100 local residents, Orange County officials, City of Newburgh elected officials and staff and was moderated by Robert McKenna, Director of the Planning and Development Office. Additional attendees included:

Mayor Nicholas J. Valentine
Deputy Mayor Regina Angelo
Councilmember Salvatore Cracolici
Councilmember Maryann Dickinson
City Manager Jean-Ann McGrane
Ian MacDougal, City Planner
Lourdes Zapata-Perez, Director of Community Development

During this session, a number of questions were asked by attendees. These questions (*with the answers provided by City representatives in italics*) included:

- **What is the college going to do for the students (programmatically) not just for the economic development of the City? What is the planned curriculum? How does this site suit that purpose and the community as a whole?**
The final program design for the College has not been determined. However, programs being considered include engaging a curriculum in the medical field to maximize the opportunities presented by the proximity of St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital. The health field is widely considered a growing job base and one which would provide students a solid foundation for high-paying employment. Adding a medical curriculum may also present opportunities for the development of community-health initiatives which the City would encourage and support.
- **When will information from the selection committee be made available for the public?**
It is the understanding of the City of Newburgh that a report will be provided by the Consultants charged with exploring these sites by April 2006 to the county.
- **What is the value of the College to the community?**
 - Security in the area?
 - Making the community safer?

According to the Newburgh Police Department, current crime rates in the immediate vicinity of the Broadway site are far below that of the City at large. The temporary parking lot at Ann Street, which is currently being utilized by St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital staff until their parking lot is completed, only reported two minor incidents (car break-in) since the lot has been used for that purpose. It is the City's assumption that, beyond the economic benefit this College would provide to the community, security issues will not be adversely affected and in all likelihood will improve.

○ **Will green space be incorporated into the design? If so, where will it be?**

The College has not shared any designs with the City of Newburgh. However, the City will encourage the College to incorporate as much green space to be open to the public as possible in its final design.

○ **Where is the expansion potential on Broadway? This proposal is short-sighted.**

The City has strongly encouraged the County and the College to consider the concept of an urban campus in its final design. This would entail utilizing vacant or underutilized sites in the immediate vicinity (but not necessarily contiguous) of the main campus site. For example, the College could explore adaptive re-use of vacant or underutilized sites along Broadway for classroom or meeting space. Vacant residential properties along South Johnston and Lander Streets could be acquired and redeveloped for administrative offices. The Ritz Theatre could be utilized for large meetings, graduations, etc.

○ **What is the timeframe for the decision on the site? Is there a deadline?**

It is the understanding of the City that the legislature is seeking to make a final decision by the Summer 2006. However, there has not been a firm deadline identified for the selection.

○ **Has there been an analysis of the environmental conditions of the Broadway site due to the existence of the demolished properties?**

- **Lead**
- **Asbestos**
- **Construction & Demolition (C&D) debris**

Prior to the Codes Dept. issuing a demolition permit for any commercial building, an Asbestos Assessment is required. For the properties in question, an Asbestos Assessment was conducted by Wing Environmental. As a result of the assessment, Asbestos was identified in the roofing material of the buildings. On January 28, 29 and 30 and February 5 2005, Wing Environmental conducted an asbestos roof abatement project on the four buildings. During the abatement work, Greycore Environmental performed air monitoring for background, pre-air, during abatement and final air samples for a total of 91 samples. Lab analysis of the samples taken by Greycore Environmental was performed by Enviorlogic in Poughkeepsie, NY on January 31st and February 6th. Copies of those results along with a letter from Michael Dooley, Industrial Hygienist, are on file in the Codes office. Mr. Dooley's letter also states "To the best of my knowledge all asbestos containing materials in the buildings have been removed and the building demolition can begin." In addition, no exceedances of the EPA Clean Air Standard of 0.015fibers/cm³ occurred during the abatement project.

○ **Why hasn't the County Executive shared his plans?**

The City has not spoken with the County Executive regarding his timetable.

- **What are the City's plans for the Broadway site if the College decides not to go there?**
The property along Broadway is privately owned and, as such, outside of the control of the City of Newburgh. Should the College select a site other than Broadway, the City will work with the property owner to explore and encourage development of this site in a manner which would benefit City residents.
- **Open Space: How much? How will it be integrated? Will it be an open campus?**
The City's preference for an urban campus reflects its desire to see this project developed as an open campus which would both serve its students and encourage use by community residents of its open/public spaces. Again, no final designs have been shared with the City of Newburgh in this regard.
- **What are the governing regulations in the site selection and building design/construction?**
All design and construction will be required to comply with the New York State building code. The City of Newburgh is not familiar with what specific regulations the State University of New York has in place for site selection or construction of their facilities.
- **Will there be jobs created for local residents as part of this development?**
 - **Construction.**
 - **At the college.***The County has not shared this information with the City. The City will, however, encourage the College to maximize the availability of workforce opportunities for local residents as much as possible and will commit to pursuing any activity the City can undertake to assist this effort..*
- **How will the community be included in this process?**
The City will make every effort to communicate with the community on any plans proposed by the County and to forward any concerns or issues raised by the community to the appropriate representatives.
- **Where is the money for this project (donated and public) going?**
A full report of the sources and uses of these funds has not been provided to the City. At this time, the City has no intention of seeking any funding from the County for the development of this project.
- **Has the Armory site been pursued as an option? How vigorously? Could it be available before 2009?**
The City of Newburgh has not pursued the Armory as an alternative site nor has the City determined whether the site would be available before 2009 within a timeframe acceptable to the County for the College development. It is the understanding of the City that various County legislators have made inquiries about the Armory site.
- **Have the parking needs been addressed for the Broadway site?**
The City favors a parking facility located on the existing, City-owned Ann Street parking site, with a possible extension and expansion through to Broadway. This plan has been developed as a result of the Liberty/Grand Street Heritage Corridor Visioning Session held in February 2006, community planners developed a scenario which included a multi-level parking structure wrapped by commercial and residential development. This location would be accessible to the general public

as well as to the employees and students of the college. Moreover, additional support and consideration would be given to the construction of an overhead pedestrian walkway to connect the college and the parking facility as an alternative to street level crossing of Broadway. If the parking facility is to be constructed within the college campus footprint, it is the feeling of the City that this location would offer no substantial benefit to the residents or the local business district. As such, the City will not take any role in its development.

○ **Who will pay for the parking?**

Should the College go on Broadway and the Ann Street parking project be deemed appropriate, the City will explore private venues or the development of a municipal authority to fund the project.

○ **For people who may need to be relocated: What plans are in place?**

- **To ensure that they can stay in the City?**
- **To provide affordable alternatives for their housing?**

The City strongly feels that the urban campus design model will minimize the need for relocation of current residents. Should relocation be required, however, it is the County's responsibility to ensure that high quality, affordable alternative housing is identified for any Newburgh residents who may be displaced as a result of this project. These residents will be called upon to make sacrifices which deserve the utmost respect and attention of all parties involved. The City of Newburgh is prepared to utilize all of its resources and efforts to identify opportunities for relocation in support of the County's efforts in this regard. This must be done early in the project and in collaboration with residents.

In addition to these questions, attendees made specific statements regarding their concerns and opinions about siting this project on Broadway. These included:

- If there will be buildings knocked down, the City should commit to a walking tour with City representatives and community members to assess each building in question and seek consensus about whether they should, in fact, be demolished.
- The City must allow transparency in this process –
 - There have been too many mistakes in the past. The City cannot continue to try to hide its mistakes.
 - The City must be proactive and allow the community to participate in this process.
- Abandoned buildings still have worth and value to the individuals that live there. The City should not presume that relocation of local residents will be 'for their own good'.
- The City is responsible for the vacant lot that is currently on Broadway.
- The City of Newburgh is entitled to both – the College and decent housing for its residents. The College will be in Newburgh regardless of which site is selected.
- The legislators have not been given enough information –
 - Too many questions have not been responded to.
 - No details provided about expansion requirements.
- The public has serious concerns about the selection process.
- Waterfront properties are too valuable to this City to give up for the College.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.