

**Old Library Committee**  
Regular Meeting Notes (same as Minutes)  
Wednesday, August 16, 2017 3:30 PM  
Legislature Chambers

**Attendance**

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
Michael Lane	Chair	Present
Leslyn McBean-Clairborne	Vice Chair	Present
Dooley Kiefer	Member	Present
Michael Sigler	Member	Present
Martha Robertson	Member	Present
Catherine Covert	Clerk of the Legislature	Present
Joe Mareane	County Administrator	Present
Jay Franklin	Director of Assessment	Present
Lisa Holmes	Director, Office for the Aging	Present
Jonathan Wood	Tompkins County Attorney	Present
Marcia Lynch	Public Info. Officer, County Administration	Present
Arel LeMaro	Facilities Director	Present
Ed Marx	Planning and Sustainability Commissioner	Present

Guests: Frost Travis and Chris Hyde of Travis Hyde Properties; Graham Gillespie, HOLT Architects; members of the public

**Call to Order**

Mr. Lane, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:23 p.m.

**Minutes Approval**

March 29, 2017

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [4 TO 1]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, Vice Chair
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Martha Robertson, Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Lane, McBean-Clairborne, Sigler, Robertson
<b>NAYS:</b>	Kiefer

**Public Comment**

Robert Lynch, Town of Enfield resident, spoke about his objection to selling the Old Library parcel to Travis Hyde because of the esthetics and economics. He recommends putting the sale on hold for further study by the new Legislature in 2018.

**Travis Hyde Update on Project**

Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Travis displayed pictures of the site plan and building design. All approvals have been received by the City of Ithaca. Essentially there have been no changes to the interior

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plans of the building since the Committee last met. There have been some minor changes in the use of materials to the exterior of the building including the use of brick on the upper levels.

Mr. Travis noted the company recently purchased the property at 310 North Cayuga Street for their offices. It includes a parking lot and will allow up to 10 spaces to be offered for rent to the tenants of the Dewitt House.

In response to Ms. Kiefer's question about the age of the tenants that will be targeted, Mr. Travis said he would like to attract a more mature population who want to downsize and continues to consider the apartments being available to persons 55 or older.

Mr. Marx said he has followed the process very closely and commended the team for the work they have done with this project. The result is really good.

### **Resolutions**

#### **Resolution No. - Determining that the Former Tompkins County Public Library ("Old Library") Property, Located at 310-314 North Cayuga Street in the City of Ithaca, Is No Longer Needed for Public Use (ID #7231)**

Ms. Kiefer said she appreciates the Committee is considering a ground lease for this parcel and suggested the words "at this time" for declaring the property no longer needed for public use be added to the resolution.

Mr. Wood does not believe adding those words would hinder the idea of a ground lease or sale. He noted the resolution will require a two-thirds vote by the Legislature.

In response to questions raised about whether this resolution was already done, staff noted that a search was conducted and no resolution had been done. Mr. Mareane said approving this resolution would have tax implications and the County would have had to pay property taxes on the property if a resolution had been adopted.

It was MOVED by Ms. Kiefer, seconded by Mr. Lane, to amend the resolution and add "at this time" at the end of the last Whereas.

Ms. Kiefer believes this language is important as a ground lease is being considered and it reflects that action.

Ms. Robertson spoke in opposition to the amendment as she believes that throughout the process, she understood that there was only interest in selling the property and not leasing it. She does not believe the County would evict families from their homes in order to do something else with the building.

A voice vote resulted as follows on the amendment: Ayes - 2 (Kiefer and Lane); Noes - 3 (Robertson, McBean-Clairborne, and Sigler). MOTION TO AMEND FAILED.

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to Call the Question. THE QUESTION WAS CALLED.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED [4 TO 1]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Martha Robertson, Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Michael Sigler, Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Lane, McBean-Clairborne, Sigler, Robertson
<b>NAYS:</b>	Kiefer

WHEREAS, the County is the owner of certain real property in the City of Ithaca located at 310-314 North Cayuga Street and designated as Tax Parcel No. 61.-1-4, said parcel consisting of a building commonly known as the “Old Library” situated on a site of approximately 37,750 square feet, and

WHEREAS, the Old Library property is now vacant after serving as the home of the Tompkins County Public Library until its relocation to a new facility on Green Street in 2000, and subsequently serving as the home of the County’s Community Justice Center, which has now been relocated to new space within the County’s Human Services Building, and

WHEREAS, the Old Library parcel is no longer used or needed for any County purpose, and

WHEREAS, there is no other County purpose for this parcel, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Old Library Committee, That it is hereby determined that the Old Library parcel as described above is no longer needed for public use.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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**Resolution No. - Concurring in Negative Determination of Environmental Significance with Respect to Authorizing the Sale of County Property for the DeWitt House Project (ID #7230)**

Mr. Marx explained the process. The City of Ithaca did the SEQR review and the negative declaration. The County reviewed the City’s forms and had no comments; however, the County now needs to formally concur with the City’s action.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Martha Robertson, Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, Vice Chair
<b>AYES:</b>	Lane, McBean-Clairborne, Kiefer, Sigler, Robertson

WHEREAS, Resolution No. \_\_ of 2017 authorizes the sale of the Old Library property at 310-314 N. Cayuga Street to allow construction of the DeWitt House project, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County concurred with the designation of the City of Ithaca Planning and Development Board as the Lead Agency for purposes of review of the DeWitt House project under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has received, reviewed, and accepted the City of Ithaca Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) documents, including a Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF), for the project listed as DeWitt House (Mixed Use Residential 310-314 N. Cayuga Street), and

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WHEREAS, the City of Ithaca Planning and Development Board has determined the DeWitt House (Mixed Use Residential 310-314 N. Cayuga) project to be a Type I Action with a Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance under SEQRA, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Old Library Committee, That Tompkins County concurs with the CEQR Negative Determination of Environmental Significance with respect to the DeWitt House (310-314 North Cayuga Street) project and finds that the project will not have a significant environmental impact.

**SEQR ACTION: Type 1**  
(FEAF on file with Clerk of the Legislature)

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**Resolution No. - Authorizing the Sale of the Tompkins County Old Library Property at 310-314 North Cayuga Street to Dewitt House Associates, LLC (ID #7232)**

Ms. Robertson said she would like to sell the property and MOVED to amend the resolution as follows, seconded by Mrs. McBean-Clairborne:

Title: Change “50-Year Lease” to “Sale”;

Resolved: Change the word “lease” to “sale” and change “an amount equivalent in value to a sale price” to “the sum”.

Mr. Lane responded to Ms. Robertson’s questions about leasing and said this property has been owned by the County since the 1960’s. He believes it is good planning to look long-term and said the County may have use for the property 50 years from now as it is close to other County offices and it is in a historic district. He said this ground lease is similar to the arrangement the County has with Cornell for the Health Department.

Ms. Robertson does not believe the County should be in the business of owning land; it is not good policy for government in her opinion.

Mr. Travis spoke to the issue of a ground lease and said he has not done one before. He commented that the property is not worth as much if he does not own the property. His business model is to have leverage against it and said refinancing could be difficult in the future. He spoke of one of his other properties that has an agreement with Cornell that includes a Reversionary Interest clause and suggested the County consider that option.

Mr. Sigler spoke of his support to sell the property and wants to see the County go forward with that action.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said she too thought the Committee was moving forward with selling the property, not leasing it. She believes this issue should have been discussed by the Committee before being proposed.

At this time, Mr. Travis further explained his proposal and what he interprets Reversionary Interest to mean and said if the building is used for something other than its original propose the ground title reverts to the owner.

Following further discussion of Mr. Travis's suggestion, the Committee agreed to have the County Attorney and Mr. Travis's attorney prepare agreed-upon language to be added to the resolution as it relates to Reversionary Interest.

A voice vote resulted as follows on the motion to amend: Ayes - 4 (Lane, Robertson, McBean-Clairborne, and Sigler); Noes - 1 (Kiefer). MOTION TO AMEND CARRIED.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED [4 TO 1]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Dooley Kiefer, Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Michael Lane, Chair
<b>AYES:</b>	Lane, McBean-Clairborne, Sigler, Robertson
<b>NAYS:</b>	Kiefer

WHEREAS, Tompkins County owns property commonly known as the "Old Library" located at 310-314 North Cayuga Street, Real Property Tax Parcel 61.-1-4, in the City of Ithaca, and

WHEREAS, the property consists of approximately 0.88 acres with a 38,630 square foot building that was originally built to serve as the Tompkins County Public Library, and

WHEREAS, subsequent to the Library moving to its current location on Green Street in 2000, the Old Library building has been primarily used for records storage and as the site of the Community Justice Center, and

WHEREAS, the Old Library is now vacant as the result of the digitization of County records and the relocation of the Community Justice Center to new space added to the County's Human Services Building, and

WHEREAS, studies of County space needs have considered re-use of this site but found no economically feasible use for County purposes, and

WHEREAS, the property is strategically located in the City of Ithaca and has the potential to contribute to the community and to the tax base if redeveloped, and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 2013-199, this Legislature authorized the issuance of a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) to seek potential developers who would purchase or lease the property for the purpose of redevelopment, and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 2014-221, this Legislature authorized the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to three respondents to the RFEI, requiring the presentation of additional project details and commitments that would inform the Legislature's ultimate selection of a preferred developer for the Old Library site, and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 2015-158, following seven meetings by the Old Library Committee during which responses to the RFP were reviewed and debated, and as the first step in a review process that included completion of a coordinated State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) with the City of Ithaca, this Legislature designated Travis Hyde Properties of Ithaca, New York (in collaboration with HOLT Architects) as the preferred developer for the Old Library Property, and

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WHEREAS, the Travis-Hyde (“Dewitt House”) proposal received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 14, 2017, and

WHEREAS, the City of Ithaca declared the Dewitt House project to be a Type I Action under the City of Ithaca Environmental Quality Review Ordinance (“CEQRO”) §176-4 (1) (h)[4], (k) and (n) and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQRA”) § 617.4 9 (b) (9), for which the City of Ithaca Planning Board issued a Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance on May 23, 2017, and

WHEREAS, the City of Ithaca Planning Board gave preliminary and final site plan approval for the Dewitt House project on June 27, 2017, and

WHEREAS, this Legislature’s Old Library Committee has reviewed the plan for the Dewitt House and found that the core elements of the project are in keeping with the preliminary Travis-Hyde proposal earlier considered by this Legislature and will include a four-story structure of approximately 86,700 (gross) square feet comprised of approximately fifty-eight apartment units, thirty-two underground parking spaces, 1,160 square feet of commercial space, and 2,000 square feet of community space that will be managed and utilized by Lifelong, and

WHEREAS, the development will be undertaken by Dewitt House Associates, LLC, a limited liability corporation created by the Travis-Hyde/HOLT Architects team, and

WHEREAS, a sale price of \$925,000 was established in the Request for Proposals based on the appraised value of the parcel which was reviewed by the County’s Director of Assessment and found to be fair and reasonable based on current market values, and

WHEREAS, the process followed in the disposition of this parcel is compliant with Chapter 19-1 of the County Code governing the sale or lease of County Property, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Old Library Committee, That the County Administrator be and hereby is authorized to execute any and all documents to complete the sale of the Old Library property, City of Ithaca tax parcel 61.-1-4, to the Dewitt House Associates, LLC of Ithaca, New York, for the sum of \$925,000.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE I (Negative Declaration)

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**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.