

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak on the proposed project for the Rondout and its potential for public benefit,

The impetus behind the proposal to acquire land should be viewed in the context of the City's consistent and longstanding efforts to rebuild and revitalize its Historic waterfront

In the late 1960's most of the historic downtown Rondout District was demolished in accordance with a misnamed and misguided program known as urban renewal. Some have called this reckless idiocy and while that may be harsh the result for the Rondout was decades of lost opportunities and major parts of its community fabric that makes Kingston – Kingston. The City has spent at least the last 2 decades rebuilding and reimagining its waterfront using millions of public and private dollars to create an opportunity for redevelopment the most recent being a RAISE Grant to interconnect (WEAVE) its waterfront into a walkable resilient whole.

The County's Housing Action Plan and numerous regional reports, the Hudson Valley including Ulster County is in a severe housing crisis with approximately 12% of owners and 29% of renters in Ulster County spending more than half of their monthly income on housing costs. This housing crisis requires creative and bold actions to help resolve our housing issues to ensure the long-term livability and sustainability of our communities.

And Confronted with a major housing crisis the City has moved boldly, To amend its zoning statute, embrace short term rentals, encourage housing development while protecting its environment.

As the City has looked for opportunities to meet its housing needs it seems most natural if not overdue that its gaze fell upon major vacant parcels that remain like missing pieces in a puzzle from that reckless idiocy of urban renewal. These remaining portions that are under discussion in this public hearing have remained vacant for over 50 years.

I do not believe that the Eminent Domain process is a first solution to address a public need but I do believe it is an appropriate consideration to address a 50 year loss of opportunity and that in looking forward a case can be made for the public benefit. This requires a commitment from all parties to negotiate fairly and to assure that whatever the process to get there the promise of housing envisioned by the city is realized.

Thank you

Dennis Doyle
Comments October 29th