

**Genesee Brewery Visitor Center Idea/Brainstorming Meeting
11-15-2011 Meeting, City Hall Room 008A**

Over-arching goal of the City: seeing this project successfully completed

Attendees:

Dave Balestiere (City, Housing and Business Development)
Jason Haremza (City, Planning and Zoning)
Dorraine Kirkmire (City, Manager of Zoning)
Mark Minunni (Genesee Brewery)
MaryBeth Popp (Eric Mower and Associates)
Tim Raymond (City, Planning and Zoning)
Brad Rye (Erie Mower and Associates)
Janine Schoos (North American Breweries)
Peter Siegrist (City, Planning and Zoning)

A. Recommendations on How to Accomplish

1. Separate visitor center project (25 Cataract) from demolition and parking (7 and 13 Cataract). The visitor center is anticipated to be a Major Site Plan Review and SEQR Type 1 Action. Site Plans are approved administratively and can be completed by middle of December if complete application is made by December 1. This keeps intended spring 2012 opening on target.
 - a. Work through issues related to demolition and parking at 7 and 13 Cataract over December and January. Recommendations include retaining at least a portion of the buildings. The City's priority is the taller, western building. This would still require a variance but would very likely be a variance that the City could support with favorable staff report and environmental determination.
 - b. The ideal situation would be to retain all the buildings and eliminate the need for a variance.

B. City Can Offer:

1. Approximately \$150,000 of improvements to Platt Street in the form of enhanced/decorative paving, enhanced sidewalks and street lighting
2. Approximately \$30,000 of improvements to Upper Falls Terrace Park in the form of expanded park parking lot to serve the entire High Falls area amenities, including the park, Pont de Rennes, and the visitor center

C. Points to Consider:

1. Retaining all or part of the buildings can:
 - a. Make the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR), zoning review, and permitting easier
 - b. Reduces potential for negative publicity
 - c. Preserves the assets of a truly unique site, an large urban waterfall, singular not only in Rochester, but possibly the nation

- d. Retains and secures historically significant buildings; once buildings are stabilized, there is time for the brewery, city, non-profits, and developers to work together on a financially viable re-use plan
 - e. Maintains 'sense of enclosure' at intersection of Platt and Cataract. This unique outdoor space contributes significantly to the "cool factor" of this destination. Without the buildings enclosing the intersection, the site becomes very suburban in character, with the destination set back behind a large surface parking lot. Destinations like the proposed visitors center are selling an authentic, local, experience. The historic architecture and unique sense of enclosed space is a key part of this experience. Examples of this include:
 - i. Village Gate courtyard (Rochester)
 - ii. North Water Street (Rochester)
 - iii. Distillery District (Toronto)
 - iv. Stone Street (Manhattan)
 - v. Lowell, Massachusetts
2. Adjacent investment in historic structures at Germanow-Simon
 3. Linkage to High Falls and the substantial investments made in that district. Think of the site not necessarily as "on St. Paul Street" but as the eastern extension of High Falls. The visitor center is only 1750 feet from the High Falls Parking Garage (approximately a 7-10 minute walk over possibly the most spectacular pedestrian bridge in Upstate New York).

Elements to Consider:

1. Sign structure at corner of Cataract and St. Paul
2. Arch over Cataract Street
3. Enhanced paving on Platt Street
4. Riverside plaza/concert space
5. Parking lot concert site
6. Using corridor through building and 'portal' to parking lot
7. Screening/landscaping/hardscaping along St. Paul possibly using unique landscaping plants relevant to brewing: hops vines, barley, etc.
8. An historic water tower element that itself can be a iconic, identifying structure and tout the use of pure "Finger Lakes" water from pristine Hemlock Lake.