



30 April 2019

Addendum to the Ithaca Arthaus PILOT application

To the TCIDA Board,

Thank you for your consideration of the Ithaca Arthaus application for the PILOT program. We are submitting the following additions and clarifications to our original application:

- Addition to Page 4 – Describe what green building practices you plan to use
Ithaca Arthaus is utilizing air source heat pumps for all HVAC and domestic hot water systems.
- NYSERDA Incentives
Arthaus is pursuing \$92,000 in NYSERDA incentives. These additional funds will cover sustainability engineering fees (\$77,900) and the balance will go towards upgraded materials and systems required to achieve the Tier 2 energy efficiency (performance +25% above energy code).
- Attached org chart with additional details.
- Attached letter of support from our partners at The Cherry Arts, for your reference.

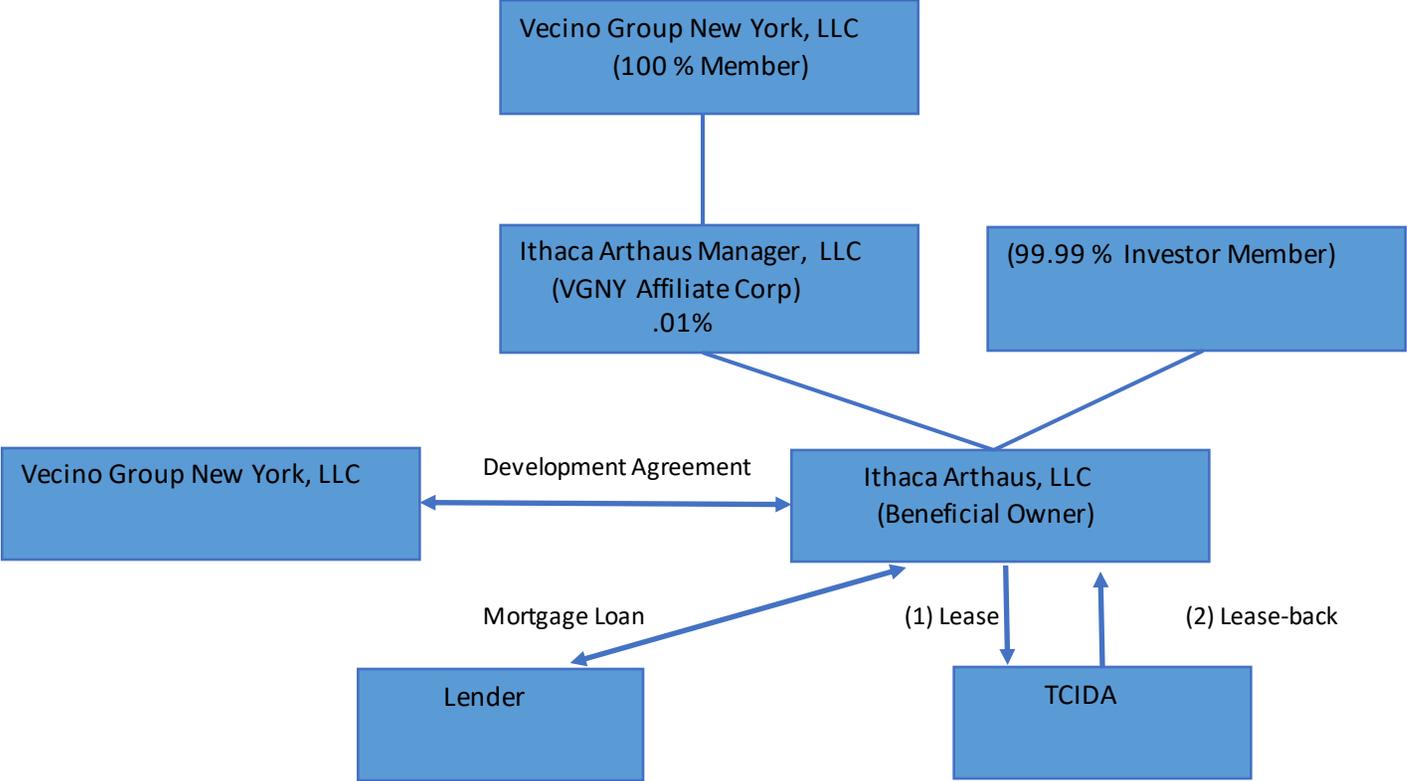
We look forward to bringing affordable housing to the Cherry Street neighborhood. Please let us know if there is any other information you require prior to the May 8th Board meeting. We are seeking final approval of the PILOT program.

Thanks,

Molly Chiang, AIA
Vecino Group

Ithaca Arthaus

Legal Structure (During Construction)





April 23, 2019

Dear Members of the Planning & Development Board,

In a spirit of great respect for the voices on all aspects of this question, I am writing to support the Vecino Group's Ithaca Arthaus project on Cherry Street.

I am the founder and Artistic Director of the Cherry Arts, a non-profit arts service and presenting company. We support a wide range of Ithaca artists and companies by hosting their work in the Cherry Artspace at 102 Cherry Street. The Artspace is one of the proposed Arthaus project's nearest neighbors, and Vecino has been in contact with the Cherry Arts throughout the planning of the project. We have been very impressed throughout by Vecino's level of communication, and to their commitment to a development that will create opportunities not only for Ithaca's arts community, but to all Ithaca households for whom Ithaca's market rents are out of reach.

Not only are the Arthaus apartments proposed to be 100% lower-income housing, but the indoor ground floor area, which another developer might rent to commercial tenants, is planned for facilities to serve the needs of the area's arts community. The Cherry Arts helped to facilitate some of Vecino's outreach to local artists (alongside the Community Arts Partnership), and in this process it became clear that area artists did not list studio space as their most pressing need. (This was partly because of the large and growing number of studios being built in the South Hill Business campus Artists' Alley.) Rather, a larger space for rehearsals and other gatherings, and a space for exhibition, were identified as "missing links" in Ithaca's arts landscape. The current plans reflect those expressed needs of the community. If it is built as planned, the Arthaus will offer transformative opportunities to a wide range of Ithaca artists.

As part of these conversations, Vecino put the Cherry in touch with the people who run the Troy Arthaus, an earlier project of Vecino's with a similar mission. An unexpected, inspiring point came out of that contact: in practice, the Arthaus would be occupied by a mix of artists and the general population of lower-income families. The Arthaus therefore provides opportunities not only for artists to live affordably, and create and show their work, but also to connect the arts to lower-income people overall. Making the arts available to working-class families is one of the trickiest ongoing challenges of the arts sector, and to me, the Arthaus mix of working artists with lower-income families offers an exciting set of possibilities in working to correct this problem.

In addition to my position with the Cherry Arts, I am a member of the Waterfront Working Group that is about to submit the Phase Two Waterfront Area Plan (we are fixing typos!). The most significant part of our work happened in April, when we submitted to the Common Council our recommendations for new waterfront zoning, including for the Cherry Street District, and the Common Council voted a version of these recommendations into law. I understand the Arthaus project to be in compliance

with this new zoning. As a committee we carefully considered our recommendations, taking into account a large number of factors, and I stand by the Working Group's recommendations and the zoning that resulted.

One of these factors, which we discuss in the report, is the difficulty of building on the sandy soil of the waterfront area. To build here requires an unusually expensive foundation, and the overall development must be of a size to pay for that. (I confronted the same balancing act on a smaller scale when building the Cherry Artspace.) Since the Arthaus project is 100% affordable housing and dedicates its ground floor to the arts rather than to business tenants, I imagine the project stands to make less money than a more commercial development would. If this requires that the scale be slightly bigger to make the math work, I am convinced that is a worthwhile trade-off.

While there are challenges to building on the Flood Control Channel, there is a built-in advantage that makes housing development particularly suited there. A permanent federal DEC easement requires that no construction happen within 24 feet of the bank of the channel, though the easement land remains the property of the owner and can be robustly used. So even when building to 100% of the building area, the easement creates a 24-foot-deep grassy waterfront recreation space behind each building, a beautiful area that is currently underused, and a much bigger backyard than many happy Ithaca families enjoy.

I don't believe the Arthaus would impede operation of the businesses that surround it. Cherry Street is already used by a mix of trucks servicing businesses, alongside private cars taking the "back way" to Wegman's, Found, and Nate's Estates. Some shift in traffic patterns is an inevitable part of more effective use of that part of town.

The scale and shape of Ithaca is changing. Over the past few years, I have watched a large number of new constructions shift the scale of various neighborhoods. The Arthaus will also shift the scale of building in the Cherry Street district. But this is a shift the Waterfront Committee carefully considered, and approved, as a means to make better use of land close to downtown, to make housing more affordable, and to reduce the regional sprawl that is bad for the community and the environment. But most important, to a far greater extent than any other development I have seen in Ithaca in recent years, Vecino's potential Arthaus development is one-hundred-percent focused on community-improving uses in a very inspiring way. I urge the Board to grant the permissions that may be necessary for this project to thrive.

My best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sam Buggeln, Artistic Director
The Cherry Arts, Inc.