

# Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency

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*Administration provided by Ithaca Area Economic Development*

**Minutes of Public Hearing  
121-125 Lake Street, LLC (The Breeze)  
March 6, 2023 @ 9:00am  
Ithaca Area Economic Development Offices  
119 E Seneca Street, Suite 200, Ithaca NY  
and  
Via Zoom live streamed to YouTube**

Present: Heather McDaniel (for Tompkins County IDA), Rich John (TCIDA Board), Laura Mattos – remote (121-125 Lake Street, LLC), Ina Arthur (IAED), Theresa Alt, Margaret Fabrizio, M.A. Teraltto, Barb Herman, Walter Hang (Speakers)

1. Heather McDaniel called the public hearing to order at 9:02am.
2. Heather McDaniel gave an overview of the project and the proposed incentive.
3. Public comment was heard from the following:

**Theresa Alt – 206 Eddy Street**

You probably think I'm here to flat-out oppose a tax abatement for The Breeze. Not quite. I think that if anything other than affordable housing deserves a tax abatement, then getting a brownfield cleaned up does. And it is not bad if the housing built there will be classy, because that suggests that the cleanup will be done well.

However, I do want to criticize the amount of parking – a space for each apartment. That seems excessive in a fairly central location. It is only 1 mile from Aldi's and a few blocks from Car Share at Stewart and University Avenue and Lake Street – really nearby. I think one could easily live there without owning a car. Turn that parking lot into a garden.

**Margareta Fabrizio – 105 Cascadilla Park Road**

The City of Ithaca Planning and Development Committee has an issue with the potential liability over the island and bridge that the project will be building. It is a legitimate concern since the City has had lot of legal suits over people falling into the gorge. At the very least I ask that no decision be made on the abatement as the community benefit of the island may become a moot point. The developer will save hundreds of dollars if they don't build this bridge. I would also like to state for the record, we cannot afford to keep giving developers abatements especially for high-end apartment projects. This is not a category that typically gets assistance in other communities. I understand the usefulness of abatements and that developers are still paying something during the abatement period. But we know that projections are just projections, and the public is not privy to the financial materials submitted. All the Collegetown luxury apartments were built without abatements. 60% percent of the City of Ithaca is already tax exempt. The small amount of those paying property taxes cannot afford anymore abatements. We need significant tax relief, another abatement does not due that. We understand that after 10 years the property taxes will be more than what is being paid on the empty lot. But if the developer is saying he will walk away from the project unless he

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gets the abatement, I don't think we can justify it. The clean-up costs were known when he bought the property. The cost is not enough. It would be 10 years that the payment would be delayed. The project is not projected to have a slow start up. The bottom line is that the city is in a dire situation. Residents are at a breaking point. Ithaca has become unaffordable. Also, having a hearing at 9:00 am on a weekday is not as inclusive as it could be.

## **M. A. Termado – 130 East Court Street.**

I agree with Margareta Febrizio as we are finding it very difficult to pay our property taxes in Ithaca.

## **Barb Herman**

I echo the two prior speakers.

## **Walter Hang**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am with a company that provides environmental data. My main focus today is to implore you not to approve this proposal. The site will not be fully cleaned up. It is currently on a track 4 restricted residential plan. The lead at the site from a study in 2013 was 190,000/mg of lead with the allowable amount is 400.

It is very hard to clean up the lead and barium at the site. The city and the State and the feds did not do a proper clean up. The contamination is spreading out from the site.

The contamination goes downhill and through Fall Creek and the problem is that the high levels of gas vapor from these contaminants are threatening homes. The method of clean up that the developer will use will not be affective. The lead is still at the site.

I implore you don't approve this proposal. Make sure it gets properly cleaned up. Join me in requiring the US Environmental Protection Agency to add this site to a national priority list. Until it gets cleaned up properly, we cannot let people live on top of it. That is irresponsible.

4. The hearing was adjourned at 9:18 am.