

# Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency

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Administration provided by Ithaca Area Economic Development

**Minutes of Public Hearing  
Conifer Realty, LLC  
November 6, 2023 @ 10:00 am  
Town Hall, Town of Ithaca  
215 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca, NY 14850  
and  
Via Zoom and Livestreamed on YouTube**

Present: Heather McDaniel (IAED for Tompkins County IDA), Kellea Bauda , Ina Arthur (IAED), Rich John – remote, Anne Koreman (TCIDA Board)

1. Heather McDaniel called the public hearing to order at 10:05 am.
2. Heather McDaniel gave an overview of the project and the proposed incentive.
3. Public comment was heard from the following:

**Peter Wissoker, 705 N. Tioga St., Ithaca, NY**

Thank you for inviting public comment on Conifer's request for assistance.

1. First, it is always nice to see affordable housing projects coming up for discussion.
2. However, Belveron, the ultimate owner of the property, and of Conifer, says on its website that it has \$3.6 billion in assets. Is it really unable or is it just unwilling to support the upkeep and expenses of the complex? And should that be our problem to address?
3. Conifer was named the 38th largest manager of affordable housing in the U.S. by The National Affordable Housing Management Association and the sixth largest affordable housing owner by Affordable Housing Finance. Again, why can't Conifer provide the resources to keep this complex running smoothly and up to date. Growth shouldn't be the firm's only concern. You have to weed your garden, not just keep planting more crops.
4. Let's say that half the benefits gained from TCIDA will be used to update the facilities, something that is needed, according to Conifer's application. Would it make sense to require a matching investment from their parent company in order to approve the benefit? That could be a win for the facility.
5. Finally, two separate points that this application invites:
  - 5a: Why are there no salaries in the application? Moreover, the Cost-Benefit Analysis assumes there are no direct jobs associated with housing projects—who's the building manager? Who cleans up and mows the lawn? I'd ask you to consider if it is time to discuss employees in terms of anyone who works on a site rather than just direct employees of just the project in question? Too often developers avoid addressing the employment question and it means you're missing a crucial data point.

5b: This hearing is a perfect example of why the agency needs to rethink the way it advertises public hearings. There appears to be no residents of the complex here to speak. Was the hearing advertised through signs or on a complex e-mail list? If not, clearly it should have been so the principal group affected by your decision could be heard.

4. The hearing was adjourned at 10:15 am.