

## **Minutes from YMCA Site Selection Advisory Committee, Nov. 12, 2019**

The City of Poughkeepsie YMCA Site Selection Advisory Committee held its second meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 13, regarding possible future uses of the property on Montgomery Street.

Attending were Chairperson Barbara Jeter-Jackson; Common Council member Sarah Salem of the Second Ward, where the former YMCA is located; city residents Sashawna Isaacs and Arthur T. Rollin; Paul Calogerakis, the city's economic development director; and John Penney, the city's community engagement director. Tamoya Norwood attended near the end of the meeting and was given a summary of the conversation.

Earlier this year, the city took ownership of the property and then released a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for the property, with the goal of soliciting ideas for future uses of the property that will yield significant community benefit.

The city initially had four proposals, but three of the respondents have subsequently withdrawn from being considered as the lead entity for the project.

The remaining respondent is The 35 Montgomery Community Coalition, which includes Community Matters 2, Inc., DAY ONE Early Childhood Learning Community, Dutchess Community College, Dutchess County, MASS Design Group, Nuvance Health, Poughkeepsie Farm Project, Poughkeepsie Public Library District, Vassar College and YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County. The coalition is proposing a multi-use facility that would provide services connected to their respective missions in the community.

The coalition presented its views at a public information session on Wednesday, Oct. 23, at Changepoint Church. Approximately 80 attended.

The Advisory Committee members said they thought highly of the presentation but had a series of questions about how viable the project is and what the timeline would be.

Barbara Jeter-Jackson said she was impressed by the presentation, particularly since it involves local organizations that understand the community's needs.

Sashawna Isaacs also said she was impressed with the Coalition's presentation, particularly the part by the Community Matters 2 organization that showed the results of a student survey. She liked that the organization didn't make assumptions about what the children wanted but did research on the issue.

Paul Calogerakis pointed out that, at this point, there is no central controlling organization. Although all of the organizations have issued letters of support, only Dutchess County has committed funding.

Arthur Rollin said the Coalition's presentation was strong but agreed the Coalition would need to show they could take the project to the next level.

Sarah Salem also spoke in favor of the presentation but expressed concerns that the Coalition doesn't have a leading organization.

John Penney voiced a similar concern about the lack of a clear project leader.

Committee members agreed the Coalition has gone as far as it can at this point without further commitments. They agreed to recommend that the mayor and administration reach out to the Coalition and give the group 90 days to produce a business plan. The information in that plan should include but not be limited to: What organizations are committed to the plan? What is the timeline for design and building? What is the legal owning entity? What is the capital budget and source of capital and funding? How would the site sustain itself in terms of an operating budget?

Penney informed the group that Mayor Rob Rolison wanted the Advisory Committee to stay on as part of this process, at least until a clearer picture emerged about the viability of the Coalition's proposal.