

**VOORHEES TOWNSHIP
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (BID)**

August 6, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Mr. DiNatale, Mr. Platt, Mr. Witham, Mr. Mintz; Mr. Rizzieri (by phone), Mr. Urbeita (by phone)

Absent: Mr. Grimley, Ms. Barlow.

Also present: Mr. Chadrijan, Namdar Retail Asset Manager; Mr. Schwenke, LAN Associates; Ms. Bradley, Voorhees Township Zoning Officer, Ms. Sytnik, Board Secretary, Mr. Strausser, Attorney for the Platt Group.

Members of the public: Dr. Sekhon, DDS, Kids Smiles; Ms. Gisele DiNatale, ARVF.

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Mr. DiNatale called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and stated it was being held in compliance with the “Open Public Meeting Act” and had been duly noticed and published as required by law.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Sytnik took roll call.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. DiNatale offered a 5-minute video of the Township vision and his plans for the mall redevelopment.

Mr. DiNatale then provided an overview of the history of the relationship between the Township and Namdar, current mall landlord. He stated that the Township and Planning Board spent enormous amount of time trying to turn the shattered mall into a community destination for our residents, without help from Namdar. This has been going on for 8 years, since Namdar took over the mall. The Township introduced it to several developers and there was interest, but then Covid happened, and they changed their mind.

At this time, the mall is under a contract by a developer who is looking for a higher number of town homes as opposed to the community activities demonstrated in the video. It would require this developer to produce additional parking, and we have been in negotiations with him. 4 months ago, on April 19, the fire broke out in the food court area of the mall. For the last 4 months, we have been working with the Township Construction and Fire Departments to ensure safety of the tenants and trying to help the tenants to get back to their businesses. Some of them are here tonight to testify. Gisele DiNatale, President of the Alicia Rose Victorious Foundation cannot even access her space. Sonya Pennington, the owner of the Dance Studio, lost all her investments in 21 years, her property is damaged. Bath and Body store moved out. David Witham, mall manager, has been very helpful with utilizing his security to save some documents and equipment. Unfortunately, 4 months later, we are still in a sad spot and only received “lip service” from Namdar. The fire suppression needs to be fixed and the construction permit has not been obtained.

Mr. Chadrijan stated that this was incorrect, the permit was obtained.

Mr. DiNatale asked Ms. Bradley to confirm; Mr. Bradley stated she will confirm with her staff tomorrow.

Mr. Witham stated that this coming Thursday, August 8 is a “big” day when all the inspections will be conducted by Namdar.

Mr. Chadrijan stated that each time they did the inspection, they were asked to postpone and could not present any application so they could open the mall.

Mr. DiNatale pointed out that the 2 permits are of essence – alarm and fire. The lack of effort from Namdar resulted in multiple calls and complaints from residents, Mayor’s office, even a publication in the Voorhees Sun mentioning that residents are wondering when their once favorite mall will be functional again. It is

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not just 4 months; it has been 8 years. Therefore, the BID Board authorized us to make a proposal to the Committee in how we can deal with “the blight”. Our engineers and construction crew went out and assessed the damage. It included non-functioning elevators, AC, etc. They determined the initial budget to be \$82,591. That is spelled out in the proposal for Architecture & Engineering Design for the Town Center Mall prepared by LAN Associates, Engineering, Planning, Architecture, Surveying, Inc. This is preliminary estimate. The proposal was shared with all in attendance. Mr. Schwenke stated they are not sure but based on preliminary evaluations the repairs will total to roughly \$100K. They propose an allowance for professional fees. He can’t estimate as he does not know exact damage until the demolition happens.

Mr. DiNatale explained that the Board will reconvene in 2 weeks to determine a complete cost of the damaged area. As an educated guess, it will be close to \$500K.

Mr. DiNatale asked for any questions from the Board.

Mr. Platt asked when the final proposal could be drafted. Mr. Schwenke stated by August 27th.

The following Committee meeting falls on September 9 when they could adopt the resolution and forward it to the Tax Assessor to be applied to Namdar property tax bill for the 1st Quarter of the year 2025.

Mr. DiNatale addressed Mr. Chadrijan and stated this is the last chance for Namdar to “ride a ship” Otherwise, the tax lien will be added and cannot be reversed.

In the absence of further questions from the Board, Mr. DiNatale opened the floor to the public.

One of the tenants, Dr. Sekhon, DDS, Kids Smiles, asked if the mall will be opened once the fire inspection has been completed. Mr. DiNatale explained that it won’t as the fire alarm repairs need to be completed as well.

Another tenant, Ms. Gisele DiNatale, ARVF, asked if the repairs will be completed by December 2024.

Mr. DiNatale stated that if Namdar does not complete the repairs, the Township intends to do it on their own.

Mr. Platt mentioned they should move forward with escalators, elevators and need to complete all the drawings and estimates.

Mr. DiNatale confirmed with Mr. Chadrijan that they put out 3 bids to select vendors for mall repairs.

Mr. Chadrijan also mentioned that Mr. Witham has been very cooperative and helpful in the process. They are eager to start the work ASAP. Inspection has been complete, fire suppressor is done, details to be forthcoming.

Ms. Gisele DiNatale stated that all she received were bills from the landlord.

Mr. Chadrijan apologized for the oversight; they did not communicate with the tenants.

Ms. Gisele DiNatale added that she does not have any AC or bathroom.

Mr. Chadrijan said they will accommodate. She should contact the landlord, and they may find a temporary place for her outside the mall. He further asked to provide a list of those tenants who cannot access their space. Ms. Gisele DiNatale asked if Namdar will cover moving expenses. Mr. DiNatale mentioned to cover such expense, each tenant needs to contact their insurance company.

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One last time, Mr. DiNatale told Mr. Chadrian that if they start repair process ASAP, all of this can go away. The Board will be voting tonight for a \$82,591 budget that will pay for the demolition of the damaged area. The Board will meet again on September 27 to vote on the remodeling construction budget which they anticipate being roughly \$500K.

Mr. Chadrian stated they are working as hard and as fast as possible to fix the damage.

Mr. DiNatale opened the voting process.

Motion made by Mr. Platt to adopt the \$82,591 budget to perform the demolition of the damaged area of the mall. Motion seconded by Mr. Matan Mintz.

Motion carries by the following roll call vote:

Yays: Mr. DiNatale, Mr. Platt, Mr. Mintz, Mr. Witham, Mr. Rizzieri, Mr. Urbeita.

Nays: none

Abstain: none

With no one from the public wishing to speak any further and no business from the Board, Mr. DiNatale asked for adjournment.

Mr. Platt motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:57pm; seconded by Mr. Mintz.

Respectfully submitted by

Stella R. Sytnik

BID Board Secretary