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Tonight you will be considering the appropriation of \$350,000 to purchase the Hoffman's Block. Though I appreciate that the property has been unused for quite some time, has fallen into disrepair, and has become an eyesore, I have to question the sensibility of spending TWICE the assessed value to buy the building.

Since the building is in such bad shape and will require substantial renovations, it's unlikely that the city will recover anywhere near the assessed value, much less the purchase price.

So I have to wonder, what's the plan here? Are we, like we have with the Salinger/Scenic blocks, going to simply gift this building along with substantial taxpayer expenditures and tax breaks to another wealthy investor?

Or, as the recent Foster's article would infer, are we going to fund the renovation of the building on the backs of the taxpayers? What are we looking at there? At \$150 per square foot in renovation costs, we will have well over

1 million dollars in taxpayer funds invested. Can the city rent that space out for even the low industry average of \$10 per square foot per year? (Which is also the 20 year return on investment) That's not likely with the current downtown vacancy rate. Or, as the Foster's article also infers, are we going to rent the space out at a reduced rate putting the city into direct competition with current downtown property owners that are already suffering with vacancies?

I understand the goals we are trying to achieve in fostering a resurgence of our downtown but then I have to question why we give tax breaks to other wealthy investors in subsidizing the Ridge so that businesses can open outside of our downtown. It doesn't make sense.

Going forward, how many millions in direct subsidies and tax breaks are we going to expend? How much have we spent over the years? What has it gained us? Our downtown is still floundering with multiple empty storefronts. Is it worth the gamble of more taxpayer dollars with the hopes that something will take hold and miraculously a business venture can actually survive with the competition from the Ridge?

But more importantly, all of these 79-E and TIF tax exemptions we're granting represent literally zero additional tax revenue to the city. That lost revenue is made up by the homeowners that are taxed at full market value for their homes. Our policies are turning Rochester into a bedroom community where most of the tax revenue is derived from homeowners. We are missing out on the very distinct tax advantages of little demand on city services that commercial and industrial property brings to the tax base.

I fully understand the council's desire to foster growth in our downtown but taxpayer subsidies for wealthy investors is the wrong approach.

Government's job is to create an environment where capitalism can flourish, it is not its job to subsidize it with taxpayer funds.

Troy Brown  
Winkley Farm Lane, Rochester, NH

I would like to first say I'm traveling today and working from my cell phone thus my input will be brief.

I know the previous council voted in favor of water line expansion and I hope this council sees the same merit in the project. I live on Winkley Farm Ln. My house is the one with the orange stain that runs down the driveway. If you have been listening to the reports from the Public Works Committee you understand the importance of bringing city water to our neighborhood.

I have included two pictures as a visual reference as to the poor water quality we have. The water in the mason jar is what comes from our well and the other picture is a 3/4" section of pipe filled with iron. Yes, I have a robust, multi section filter system but still we can't use our water for consumption, cooking, washing cars or our house.

Please continue to support this project by voting for the 202A water line expansion.

Thank you. Troy Brown





June 16, 2020

Honorable Mayor and Councilors,

I am encouraged to see the proposal for redevelopment of the Hoffman Building on North Main Street. I fully support the plans for the city of Rochester to purchase the building with the intent to redevelop the building into an innovative marketplace concept. The Historic District Commission has worked hard over the last several years to lay the groundwork for revitalization of downtown Rochester. Beginning with the renovation of the City Hall Annex, the last couple of years have proven the value of reinvesting in our downtown. We can see the results of many shifts in policy that have allowed for multiple projects now underway in downtown. The opportunity to redevelop and recreate a building serving as an anchor on North Main Street should not be turned down. I would expect that special care would be taken to preserve the excellent art deco façade. It is a prime example of the importance of recognizing the evolution of our downtown and the unique fabric of buildings. I hope that the Council embraces the opportunity presented to move the needle even further to a vibrant downtown Rochester.

Molly Meulenbroek

Resident and Chair Rochester Historic District Commission