

**Beebie, Lisa**

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**From:** Laura Palkovic <lpalkovic416@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 22, 2020 5:03 PM  
**To:** cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com  
**Subject:** Response to Zoning Board of Appeals meeting of Monday, November 16, 2020

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**The most important moment at the ZBA meeting on November 23, for me at least, was during the public comment time when several downtown business owners and landlords reported that no one from the Chazin Company, who prepared the parking study, ever consulted any of them. If Chazin did not consult any of these citizens, who have been supporting the Durkee Street Parking lot through SAD for so many years, then who did they consult who could give them any information or opinions on how the Prime project is going to impact the downtown environment and economy?**

**These businesses are the backbone of our downtown, and anything that is going to affect their ability to maintain their viability should not be entered into without consulting them and reporting to the appropriate boards how this will impact them, negatively or positively.**

**Further, landlords reported that they are already losing tenants because, if Prime goes through, they will no longer be able to offer parking, parking that they have been paying for for years.**

**The question, then, and one that must be answered before any decision is made, is what provision is the City going to make to ensure that businesses, landlords and residential tenants will still have access to the kind of parking they have been accustomed to and that the SAD has supported.**

**The fact that Chazin did not interview, consult, or talk to any members of the business and landlord community tells me that the report they submitted is neither complete nor accurate. It tells me that the Zoning Board of Appeals does not have sufficient information to make a legitimate finding of the environmental impact of the Prime project on downtown Plattsburgh, if we accept that a city's commerce is part of its environment.**

**Please take these comments into consideration as you prepare for your December meeting.**

**Sincerely,**

**Laura Palkovic**

This is the final comment I will write on the Prime LLC application. I will try and keep it brief and use bolded headlines for each point. It is hard, however, to be brief on the subject of a project which stands to so dramatically transform our downtown from what it has been ever since I have known it.

**THE SIZE QUESTION:** Since it was submitted, Prime has been told time and time again that their project is too big. It is the size of a city block. In terms of the footprint it occupies, it is around ten times the average size of the surrounding structures. As a historian, I feel the structure's size and massing is incompatible with the quaint, nineteenth century streetscape whose authenticity and human scale is part of downtown Plattsburgh's charm. None of us oppose the introduction of modern structures in our downtown. We would just simply like the modern structures to be of comparable size of other downtown buildings, and fit into the existing streetscape, rather than overwhelm our downtown.

**THE LACK OF PUBLIC BENEFITS QUESTION:** The DRI program was designed to give communities a chance to reinvent themselves and present something new that "revitalizes" or "redefines" a community. Given the fact that we are giving 3.4 acres of riverfront real estate; \$4.3 million of taxpayer dollars; 20 years of steep tax abatement to Prime LLC, the question is, what is in it for the people of Plattsburgh? The answer is, there are no direct public benefits to the people of Plattsburgh, only challenges.

**THE NEED FOR PROXIMATE, PREDICTABLE, UPAID PARKING:** The building of this oversized structure will eliminate 289 free, proximate, reliable parking spaces from our downtown core. Despite the City's claims that they are replacing the parking on a one-to-one basis, there have been serious flaws in the Vinson/Miller parking plan. Downtown landlords, residents, businesses and employees rely on free, proximate, and predictable parking. I live in midtown. When I might need some organic half-and-half for my coffee, I can choose to go uptown, and buy it at Market 32, where parking is always free, proximate and without hassle. But if this building takes up the Durkee Lot, I won't choose to go down to the North Country Coop, because, yes, there may be spaces in the Prime lot, but what if there is not? (a likely scenario)...Am I going to have to drive around and visit all the other lots to find an available space? No. Rather than face that possibility, I will simply opt to avoid the downtown, where, to make matters even worse, I am told they are now considering making people pay to park.

**THE CITY'S FINDINGS STATEMENT HAS SAID THAT PROVIDING ADEQUATE REPLACEMENT PARKING DOESN'T MATTER.** The geniuses on the City Council have determined that by providing less parking they will be encouraging a walkable city. The *Statement of Findings* states "The Common Council finds that an abundance of vacant parking areas within an urban setting can disrupt achieving a walkable community and commercial development in a downtown core." (23)

The *Statement of Findings* also uses this kind of language: "in the event that an adequate parking plan is sought for the DLMUD project it should be based on data that supports parking occupancy levels to lessen vehicle dependency in the city's downtown area and promote a walkable downtown core, which is the object of this revitalization project." (23) So now the goal of the DRI has shifted, and it is now to "lessen vehicle dependency" and promoting a "walkable downtown core". This will be catastrophic for our downtown, which is a county seat, and lacks adequate public transportation. Plattsburgh is a rural

center, and people use cars to get downtown and live downtown. To expect otherwise is folly. Do they actually believe that by having less available parking they will be lessening “vehicle dependency”? What they will be doing is killing residency and commercial activity in our downtown.

The authors are basically saying less parking will be good for our downtown.

And once again, not having polled downtown businesses and landlords for their parking needs, the report never says what the balance will be between on street and off-street parking and how this complex system will be managed. (See page 25) The report says they will “mitigate any loss of particular parking spaces”, but never having asked local stakeholders what their parking needs are, this statement rings hollow.

The City’s *Statement of Findings* says with confidence that they will provide “sufficient on-street parking and parking spaces in multiple lots which will be closer to many of the uses within the downtown area.” (25) As noted above, the existence of alternate parking lots in the downtown area will not mean that parking will necessarily be *available* in the one most proximate to one’s destination. In the *Findings*, the whole section on parking is based on vague statements of intention rather than a realistic description of various stakeholder parking needs. And yet the section concludes with the following statement: “...the City Council finds that the DAIP will not create any significant adverse environmental impacts on parking and avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable. No mitigation is required.” (25)

First they tell us scarce parking will make Plattsburgh a more walkable community. Then they provide vague discussion of dispersal of parking into multiple lots (most of which are already in existence). And from that they then jump to the conclusion that thus there will be “no significant adverse...impacts on parking.” (25)

I strongly urge you to seriously re-examine the logic being used here. There is a certain council member who has read a book whose thesis is that free and plentiful parking is bad for downtowns. I urge you to re-examine this contention.

Given the potential for this project to dramatically and permanently change the traffic flows and parking situation in our downtown, how about using some “tactical urbanism” and using the concrete barriers for restaurant patios to close the southbound lane on Durkee, and close all but 76 spaces in the Durkee Street Parking Lot, and see what happens?

Also, the proposed imposition of paid parking will also be disastrous for our downtown. Such a system was attempted in the postwar years, but had to be abandoned when the uptown malls provided free, plentiful and predictable parking for customers. The downtown merchants felt they needed to also provide free, plentiful and predictable parking for customers in order to compete with the uptown malls. This situation has not changed, but has been intensified by the existence of online shopping, where parking is never an issue. Bricks-and-mortar stores need to provide every incentive to draw customers downtown, and free, plentiful and predictable parking is one such incentive.

THE PROBLEM OF GIVING AWAY A LANE OF DURKEE, A PARKING LOT AND THE FARMERS MARKET PAVILION: None of us is sure how we went from *Durkee Street Re-Imagined*, with a smaller residential building, open gathering place, sculpture venue, parking garage and farmers market to the current Prime giveaway. Rather than give away the entire property, to the detriment of so many downtown landlords and businesses, why not retain both lanes of Durkee Street, retain the remaining parking spaces, and the farmers market pavilion? The original plan presented to the public had a residential building with 45 units. Although still very large, that seemed much more in keeping with the scale of the surrounding buildings. And why give away the entire Durkee Street property? Why not retain the property south of the proposed building, and if paid parking must be implemented on the remaining space, why not make it such that the future revenues generated by these spaces accrue to the city instead of a private corporation?

THE SLIGHT-OF-HAND BEING PROPAGATED ONTO AN UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC. Prime LLC, sensing that their giant-sized project is destined for disapproval, volunteered to make all 76 spaces on the ground level parking area “available to the public”. So, as a member of the public watching this charade, let’s see if I get this straight. These 76 parking spaces currently belong to the public, are used by the public, or are owned by the City for public parking. Prime has the arrogance to say, that if you give all 289 spaces to us, we will “make 76 of these spaces available to the public” which essentially means Prime will control the revenue generated by these 76 spaces. And because they are controlled by a private corporation, they will no doubt have high hourly charges in order to be used. Why has no city employee, consultant or board member asked Prime LLC how much they intend to charge for these spaces? What will be their hourly rate? Will long-term permits be sold for people who live or are employed nearby? How much will it cost to park there? My sense is that these spaces will be taken by the traffic generated by the building itself, and that it will leave nearby tenants and businesses with no available long-term parking. So, am I the only member of the taxpaying public who sees no generosity in Prime agreeing to now control and generate revenue from spaces which the public used to own, and be able to park on for free? Why should we be grateful for that???

THE PROBLEM OF FAILURE TO PLAN FOR PARKING TO ACCOMPANY FUTURE GROWTH: Currently, even before the coronavirus pandemic, a significant number of downtown storefronts remain empty. What will happen when, potentially, the economy should recover to the point that many of the empty storefronts are filled? That, presumably, will generate more traffic, and in theory, congestion. In other words, when Matt Miller and Ethan Vinson, and the expensive consultants measured parking demand in Plattsburgh, they were measuring demand in a devitalized market. We have to assume - or at least hope – that future growth will cause these empty storefronts to fill, drawing more consumers, diners and bar patrons downtown, and making parking needs grow. The City-generated parking studies have failed to consider this. Section 6 (page 42) of the *Statement of Findings* talks about potential future growth as a positive impact of the DLMUD. But if the future growth occurs in pre-existing empty storefronts, it could increase downtown parking demand, something the *Statement of Findings* does not account for.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LACK OF A VIABLE SNOW BAN PARKING REGIME: The City has yet to supply details of how it will supply an easily comprehensible, predictable, workable snow-ban parking regime for downtown residents. This is particularly important in our North Country city where we have snow for

so many months in the year. So far, all we have gotten from the City is vague good intentions on this critical question.

**DOWNTOWN LANDLORDS AND BUSINESSES WILL FAIL IF THIS PROJECT GOES THROUGH:** What the City doesn't seem to want to acknowledge is that many of our downtown businesses were/are fragile, even without the pandemic. They have testified that they rely on apartment rentals to make ends meet each month, and that they are already getting non-renewal of leases because tenants fear the loss of proximate and predictable free parking. Downtown landlords and businesses don't oppose Prime because they are anti-progress or anti-development. They are opposing it because it is a matter of life and death for them. Businesses that have expressed such opposition to the Prime plan include, but are not limited to, the North Country Co-Op, Dress Code, 20 Below Deli, Irises, Raymond James Financial, Pizza Bono, Living Well Chiropractic, Himalaya, Hobbies, Frank Zappala Law Offices, Bridgeside Properties, All Flooring Inc, AES Northeast, Living Well Chiropractic, Heritage Copy Center, Villari's Studios, North Volume Media, Maison Heritage, Jonathan Mulholland Chiropractic. Over 60 downtown businesses signed a petition opposing Prime LLC.

**DURKEE WILL SIMPLY NOT WORK AS A ONE-WAY STREET:** I am shocked that the City is asking the Boards to even consider granting a Special Use Permit that will allow the conversion of Durkee Street into what will essentially be a one-way driveway for Prime LLC. As it stands, Durkee receives deliveries for Margaret Street restaurants and its own businesses all day long. There are trucks of all kinds double parked on the street on a regular basis. Now, as things stand, traffic simply goes into the oncoming traffic of the opposite lane. This is dangerous but do-able. Think about it: With a one-way street, and 100+ new households on Durkee, given the fact that the pandemic has changed the way people shop, there will be Amazon Prime and food service deliveries on Durkee on a constant basis. USPS, UPS, FedEx, DHL and food service vehicles will be stopping in the one-lane street to make their deliveries on a constant basis. The one-vehicle delivery parking area on the Prime property is inadequate. And it doesn't take into consideration a) the enormous amount of deliveries that will be happening for the 100+ Prime households and b) the delivery needs of other businesses on Durkee and Margaret Streets. Let's face it. The reason this is happening is because Prime is greedy. Their building is so large that it, and its parking requirements are eating up a lane on an important downtown thoroughfare. Tell Prime to be less greedy, and build a smaller building, or simply vote "no" on this application.

**"THE CONSULTANTS" versus "THE PEOPLE":** The city hired expensive consultants who essentially produced reports saying this change will have minimal impact on our downtown. But as an academic who studies such things, I know all too well that the responses you get in such surveys depend on the methodology you use and the questions you ask. And in this case, the consultants never bothered to ask what local landlords and businesses think of these proposed parking and lane-closure proposals. It is your role to challenge these expensive reports, and be skeptical of their findings, as their authors were employed by the City, and in my view cannot be trusted. Of course, these consultants will come up with findings that say these changes will have minimal impact: That is what the City hired them to do.

**THE STEVE JOBS METHOD OF DESIGN** was to ask how people used his product, and to improve upon that. This is how the Ipad and Iphone were developed. In the City's case, the expensive consultants

produced reports about the impact of the proposed parking and design changes that absent how the downtown is used by real people in real time. They never bothered to ask the people how they felt these changes would impact them. This is why we are now in the position we are in. The downtown stakeholders founded the Plattsburgh Citizens Coalition, and are currently suing the city, because their voices have not been heard.

**THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT:** The DRI process was supposed to involve extensive public consultation, and also called for “constant communication” with the public to make sure the DRI’s goals aligned with public wishes. What happened here in Plattsburgh is that the public was consulted initially, and asked to vote on various projects for their downtown. The project with among the least amount of votes, developing the Durkee Street Parking Lot, is what the City chose to go with. And now the mayor seems surprised that the public has cried out its opposition to this idea, has organized into a citizens’ coalition, and is suing the city. If the city had followed the directives of the DRI handbook, and had endorsed a plan that had public support in the first place, we would not be finding ourselves in this difficult position. Mayor Colin Read is to blame for this disaster for our city. This is why he was roundly defeated in this summer’s Democratic mayoral primary. When local Democrats voted against Colin Read, they were rejecting his handling of the DRI, and implicitly rejecting the Prime LLC project.

**THE FATE OF THE FARMERS AND CRAFTERS MARKET:** One of the most successful features of our downtown is/was the Farmers and Crafters Market. Once again, the City doesn’t seem to realize, and never bothered to ask how and why this market has become so popular. This is explained by the fact that by being in the downtown core, with plentiful, proximate and predictable free parking, shoppers like to come downtown, park in the Durkee lot, browse in the antique shops, have breakfast, brunch or lunch, visit the North Country Coop for non-perishable foods, and then swing by the Farmer’s Market for fresh local produce. Re-locating the Farmer’s Market to an area outside the downtown core, and proximate to the municipal sewage plant, will be a disaster for our downtown. I will not shop there. I don’t care what multi-million dollar improvements the mayor makes on the poop plant, those open evaporation pans of human excrement/sludge proximate to fresh fruit and vegetables will simply repel me. It’s a psychological thing. The Chinese call it Feng Shui, the art of good design, and according to its tenets, food and shit do not mix. The nearby city of Longueil, Québec, moved their farmer’s market to a new location outside of the city and it is failing. The answer is, street traffic is the life blood of all commerce, and there is no street traffic down on Green Street.

**THE STRONG TOWNS ARGUMENT:** I am a supporter of the Strong Towns definition of growth. According to this view, successful development should be gradual, small-scale and piecemeal to ensure that growth is in accordance with what works well, and building upon that. Again, I am not opposed to new development, as long as it fits in, is sympathetic to the character of the community, and does not destroy what works about the community. And as a professional historian with a specialization in place making, I feel a huge, overpowering, corporate-looking apartment building adds nothing to our community character.

**THE ILLUSION OF TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT:** I am not buying the illusion of the transformative impact of this gigantic apartment complex and its expensive commercial spaces on the ground level. No local

businesses will be able to afford the rents that Prime will charge for its commercial spaces. Can someone please ask Prime what per-square-foot rents they will charge for their commercial space? My fear is that they will remain an empty eyesore, to add to the thirty or so empty storefronts in the city. This is a common problem with many such “multi-use developments” being built in American cities. And as for the residents of the building shopping downtown...No, they will be shopping uptown, and increasingly, online. There is no demonstrable positive impact on our downtown community. There is also no demonstrable need for high-end rentals in the City of Plattsburgh. There is, however, a need for affordable housing in the downtown core. Please see the City’s own Camoin study (2016) which shows that although two key lifestyle groups would be interested in downtown living, neither of them have income levels high enough to afford the kinds of rents Prime will be charging.

THE PROBLEM OF SUCH A LONG AND GENEROUS PILOT AGREEMENT for a residential development. PILOT agreements are given on a ten-year basis to industrial companies who bring many well-paying jobs to the community. Prime LLC is providing minimal jobs (none after the first year) in return for what will be a lengthy and punitive tax abatement. Why should ordinary taxpayers subsidize the profits of a private, downstate corporation to build a residential structure in return for no local jobs? By imposing a 20-year tax burden on ordinary taxpayers of Clinton County in return for almost no jobs, this imposes a financial burden on our community which is unacceptable to me. It amounts to taxation without representation. Once again, the City’s Statement of Findings concludes there will be no adverse effect on the finances of our community, but if this is so, why has Jay LeBrun, Superintendent of the Plattsburgh School Board, written a scathing letter arguing otherwise? Local C.P.A. Cynthia Snow has calculated the “adverse effect” the PILOT agreement will have on Clinton County finances, and it was published in the *Sun Community News*. Why are her calculations not being taken seriously?

THE PROBLEM OF THE CITY AS CO-APPLICANT: The City has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on outside consultants to write the FGEIS and the *Statement of Findings*. The level of professional expertise required for such a complex project which stood to reconfigure our entire downtown was simply beyond the capacity of the City councilors who opted to become Lead Agency in this file. And not surprisingly, these “outside experts”, who work on behalf of the applicant, produced reports that whitewashed any negative impacts for this proposed development. Those of us who live here and know how our downtown works, and the function the Durkee Street Lot has played, found these documents spurious at best. The City, and its lawyers, have consistently pointed to their documents, the FGEIS and *Statement of Findings*, to instruct the boards as to how they should envisage making decisions regarding the Prime application. But now, more than ever, the public is looking to you, as impartial, non-political board members, to provide the necessary checks and balances to the applicants, and exercise your informed judgement on this project, and vote for a dramatically smaller development, or preferably, vote “no” on the City/Prime LLC application as it stands. The people of Plattsburgh voted “no” on it when they defeated Colin Read. The County Planning Board voted “no” on the Prime plan, one member calling it “an indifferent design with no public amenities”. The Plattsburgh City School Board has voted “no” on it, considering the PILOT agreement to be an unacceptable burden on them. Over 2,000 individuals signed a petition against it, including 60+ downtown businesses. The Plattsburgh Citizens



Coalition opposes it. And the Mayor Elect of Plattsburgh, Chris Rosenquest opposes it. (It is his opposition to the Prime project which, in part, explains his recent electoral victory.)

THE NEAR TERM VERSUS THE LONG RUN: The City Boards have been placed in an impossible position. If the Boards vote to approve the Prime LLC application as is, the City will be sued by the Plattsburgh Citizens Coalition. If the PCC wins its lawsuit, and the project doesn't get built, potentially the City could be sued by Prime LLC, as seems apparent from Charles Gottlieb's menacing statements about Article 78. In the near term, Colin Read, and those who supported him, will be gone. I ask that the Board members consider not the near term, but the long run. You must vote what is good for our downtown community in the long run. If you vote "yes" on this application, you will please Colin Read (and his enablers) and Prime. If you vote "no" on it, you will please the citizens of Plattsburgh and of Clinton County. In the near term, Colin Read and his enablers, and the folks at Prime will not be here. In the long run, the citizens will still be there, and will thank you for preventing this folly for Plattsburgh from ever being built.

GIVEN ALL OF THE ABOVE PROBLEMS it is my hope that you will vote to deny Prime LLC the Special Use Permit it has applied for. If you cannot do this, I would ask that at the very least you request that:

- The size of the apartment building be reduced;
- Durkee Street be retained as a two-way thoroughfare;
- That the remaining parking area on the lot be retained by the City and used for its benefit;
- That the Plattsburgh Farmers and Crafters Market be retained in its current location
- That a viable snow ban parking plan be elaborated.

PLATTSBURGH

December 10, 2020



## Beebie, Lisa

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**From:** Kim Manion <krmanion@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 11, 2020 11:00 AM  
**To:** cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com  
**Subject:** Public Comment - ZBA - December 21st, 2020

Thanks in advance for confirming receipt of this email and that I have submitted it properly. I know it's a strict process and I want to make sure I've done it properly.

Thanks!

Kim Manion

Hi - Below is a letter I wrote to the Editor of the Press Republican in support of the Prime project. It is followed with a response I wrote to the PCC when they came crashing down on me for expressing my support of this project. I hope that you will take the fact that the PCC and others have made it very difficult for proponents of this project to express their support. I, and virtually every other person who has expressed support of the project, have been the target of bullying and personal attacks. I don't really care, this is more important to me than unfounded accusations and attacks, but I'm not sure others are willing to put themselves out there.

I've talked to many people about this project and more of them are in support of the project than you might be lead to believe. The City and Prime, in my opinion, haven't done a very good job of promoting the tremendous benefits of the project. I was asked to write a letter to the editor and while I supported the project, and own a building adjacent to the project, I have to admit that I wasn't really sure what to put in the letter. I had to do considerable research to figure it out. I think more people would support it if they knew how our region will benefit in the long run.

There will be many challenges ahead and the project isn't perfect but it's good for Plattsburgh. Please take this into account when you vote.

I want to express my complete support of the Prime project for downtown Plattsburgh. This project will provide a critical shot in the arm for Our city and Our region. Perhaps as importantly it's the result of considerable compromise on the part of Prime and the City resulting in a terrific project for our area.

Prime is willing to invest \$20+ million in our downtown -- an investment we need, and the benefits of which are numerous.

That \$20,000,000+ investment will create momentum. Momentum that will benefit the people and the businesses of Plattsburgh. Let's put Downtown on the map. Let's partner with Prime to get there!

The Governor created the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) because of the proven positive effects of investing in downtowns around New York. More young professionals, empty nesters, families, etc. living and contributing in our downtown will create a greater sense of community and vitality.

There are considerable financial benefits as well. Currently the City earns zero tax dollars from the municipal lot. Prime will pay property taxes of \$15,000+/year during construction. Upon occupancy,

around year three or four, Prime will pay over \$110,000 / year in taxes and those payments will ramp up to roughly \$500,000 when the tax incentive expires (based on current tax projections).

Parking has been a prime sticking point (wink!) for those who oppose this project. The City built a new parking lot plus many additional spaces, and Prime has offered the use of all 92 parking spots in the southern portion of the property. Compromise is working!

Is the Prime project perfect? No. Is it an exciting opportunity that will lift up Our Downtown and create more and more options for Plattsburgh in the future, absolutely.

Kim Manion - Owner, 31 Durkee Street & Clinton County Planning Board Member

Hi - I posted this on Facebook and the PCC ranted and raved. This is my response to them. It's more personal in nature.

You can try to discredit me all you want. The facts I presented were exactly that, facts, as has been proven by several responses to my post. The fact that you, the anonymous writer for the PCC, aren't aware of these facts should reflect your lack of knowledge of this project. I have been involved in the project since its inception. Not sure if anyone noticed but I was on the original DRI local planning committee. Yes, I've been absent until recently, for reasons I don't need to disclose here, but I have done my research and I support this project. I owned a small business downtown, Maui North Ski, Bike & Board, until May, and have gone on record several times that I have been in favor of this project. Prime and the City are working hard to ensure that there will be enough parking. Will downtown tenants, business and residential, have to walk an extra half a block, perhaps. Will there be growing pains as we move through this process? Yes. But is that enough reason to shut this down, absolutely not. -- My husband and I are born and raised in Plattsburgh. We lived away for some time and we moved back because of all that Plattsburgh and the region have to offer. But Downtown Plattsburgh, as has been pointed out several times here, is dying on the vine. "It's a 'ghost town' as a few people pointed out. Maintaining the status quo will cause that downward spiral to continue, and then, Downtown Plattsburgh will be lost, and more and more businesses will move to Rt. 3. We need to invest in Downtown and turn the ship around. Is the Prime project perfect? No. Would I love to see small quaint buildings vs. the larger Prime project, sure. But that's not what's in front of us. It's called negotiation and compromise and the City and Prime are negotiating and compromising to come up with the best project for all involved.

## Beebie, Lisa

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**From:** Adam <racewiththedevil@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2020 9:26 AM  
**To:** cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com  
**Subject:** Public Comments to the ZBA regarding the Durkee Street Project

December 14, 2020

Public Comments to the ZBA regarding the Durkee Street Project,

As city residents, we would like to express our support for the Prime project to develop the Durkee Street parking lot and the Plattsburgh DRI as a whole. While the project isn't perfect we think that it addresses many of the key issues Plattsburgh needs to solve to develop a thriving downtown. We believe the DRI is much more popular than what a certain small, but very vocal minority would lead the public to believe. They claim theirs is the majority opinion, and have a big list of names, but the bulk of those people aren't from the city and have no stake in the success or failure of the project. We've watched them on multiple occasions harassing restaurant and store patrons for signatures during the peak summer months when most are from out of state and Quebec. In reality it's really just 5-10 people with the same cherry picked facts repeated over and over no matter how many times they are debunked. Prime has even tried to appease them at great monetary cost making numerous changes based on objections raised, but it will never be enough unless the plan dies outright. The truth is, just about every city resident or business owner we know wants this project to succeed, but are afraid to speak out too loudly in fear of being bullied by the PCC. One of the few hang-ups we've heard is over the PILOT agreement, but you can't expect a company to invest millions without some sort of benefit. To expect Prime to just complete the project out of the goodness of their heart is just delusional thinking.

The benefits of the Prime project and the DRI as a whole are numerous, below are just a few things that come to mind.

-A big parking lot isn't making the city any money and we don't need more "green space" when we already have Trinity Park, McDonough Monument, Samuel De Champlain Monument, the Green St development and further out, the Oval and Melissa Penfield Park. Plattsburgh needs housing for younger, more active residents with disposable income that want to be out in the community and things for them to actually do.

-New modern housing will bring a younger, more active crowd into the city. We think a secondary benefit will be to force downtown landlords to take better care of their buildings and make more updates since they will have to compete for tenants.

-New businesses are much more likely to come to downtown if it's a new, modern commercial property, not old dilapidated buildings on Clinton Ave.

-Increased foot traffic and spending for downtown businesses from all the new city residents and increased tax revenue for the county and city.

-Parking is much more evenly distributed around the city and will benefit more businesses than just the ones that border Durkee Street.

-Development of the waterfront through the demolition of the MLD and relocation of the farmers market and possible other projects like a real dog park, playground, amphitheater, hotel, etc. We think this will be huge to expand the footprint of what is considered downtown instead of just a few square blocks.

-The Bettie Little Art Park will be a great central location for residents to congregate when things are back to normal.

We hope that you consider what is best for the city and vote to approve the Prime project and not let a few individuals hold the project hostage for their own personal gain or because they have an axe to grind with the City.

Sincerely,

Adam and Raechel, city residents