



November 1, 2019

Dear Mayor Herzig,

The Otsego County Chamber of Commerce represents 700 Members employing 15,000 people in Otsego County. Housing for our workforce has become a critical issue for our region. The City of Oneonta is the base of many of our members who represent diverse business sectors that generate job growth and contribute to a strong economic base. The availability of housing continues to be a barrier to growing our workforce due, in large part, to a lack of inventory of entry to mid-range housing. The Otsego County Chamber of Commerce supports the need for more mid-range housing options in order to recruit, retain and grow local businesses and a stable workforce. We support the opportunity for a larger presence of people downtown to assist with the growth of existing business and to create opportunities for new business.

The Dietz Street Artist Lofts Project appears to address these concerns, and we have sparked open dialogue with our members about The Dietz Street Artist Lofts residential development project that has been proposed by the Kearney Realty Group. In those conversations, long standing businesses have voiced some concerns about the project and have requested that the Chamber advocate on their behalf. Specifically, businesses have expressed concern about their parking needs for their employees and customers and have asked the Chamber to work in tandem with the developer and the City of Oneonta to address these concerns which include the following:

- Businesses expressed concern that the proposed footprint of the building alone will take up 84 spaces of current City of Oneonta public parking. The vehicles associated with the proposed 64 housing units in the project would require an estimated 93 additional parking spaces. Both the loss of parking for current downtown businesses and the additional parking needs of this project are concerns we believe need to be addressed.
- As we have discussed, the Chamber is willing to perform a parking needs assessment of the Dietz Street Lot to identify current use from the businesses during peak times, projected use with the new project, and to understand viable options for solutions for the existing businesses. The Chamber is not, however, in a position to fund such a parking needs assessment without support from either the developer or the City or some other source.

The Otsego County Chamber of Commerce looks forward to being fully engaged with the City of Oneonta and Kearney Realty Group in this process so that we can provide answers, details and solutions to these existing businesses and our membership as a whole as we support continued economic growth of all businesses in the City of Oneonta.

Thank you for your attention in listening to these needs that we consider as high priority by our members.

Sincerely,

Barbara Ann Heegan  
CEO  
Otsego County Chamber of Commerce

CC: Otsego County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors