

## NEWS

### **Village opts for brownfield study** *Board to work with IDA on grant application*

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ATHENS — Village officials have voted to join forces with the Greene County IDA to apply for a study grant that would look at local brownfields and make recommendations for what can be done with them.

The village will collaborate with the IDA to prepare a Step 2 Nomination Study grant application. The grant is administered under the New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area program, and would come at no cost to the village. It is a joint effort between the Department of State and the Department of Environmental Conservation.



Mayor Andrea Smallwood said the Greene County IDA wants to collaborate with the village to make recommendations to clean up brownfields on the waterfront. H-CN File

"The IDA wants to collaborate with the village to make recommendations to clean up brownfields on the waterfront," Mayor Andrea Smallwood said. "Their goal is to protect and preserve the waterfront."

One potential site that could come into play is the waterfront property which formerly housed Peckham Industries. A portion of their operations moved to the Town of Athens several months ago, and clean-up is pending on the site they vacated.

"The program is designed to assist communities to foster redevelopment and return dormant land into productive use while restoring environmental quality," reads a letter from Lisa Nagle of Elan Planning and Design. She called the brownfield grant program an opportunity to further implement the joint village/town comprehensive plan, without cost to the municipalities.

"This program provides resources for area-wide redevelopment planning, access to expert environmental and economic analysis, and environmental site assessment for strategic redevelopment parcels," the letter reads.

If granted, the program would reimburse the village and IDA for 90 percent of the project's costs. The remaining 10 percent of the matching requirement would be met "entirely through in-kind services provided by the IDA for mapping, inventory and facilitation."

There are essentially three steps to the brownfield program. The initial step is the pre-nomination study, which the village fulfilled when they adopted the comprehensive plan. Step 2 is the nomination study, which provides an in-depth description and analysis of existing conditions of the brownfield site and what can be done with it, including economic and market trends analysis. The third and final stage is the implementation strategy, which involves site assessment of contaminated sites, if necessary, and SEQRA requirements for their redevelopment.

With the grant providing 90 percent of the project's expenses and the IDA fulfilling the matching 10% with in-kind services, the program would cost the village nothing.

"It doesn't cost us any money, but it would open the door for us to apply to get money to clean up some of these sites," Smallwood said.

The Village Board unanimously passed a resolution in support of participating in the program. A public hearing will be scheduled shortly to gauge community input.

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