

PUBLIC HEARING SCRIPT

Curtiss Buffalo, Inc. Project

Public Hearing to be held on June 2, 2014 at 8:30 a.m.,
at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency office
located at 95 Perry Street, Suite 403, Buffalo, New York 14203

ATTENDANCE

Mark Croce, Curtiss Buffalo, Inc.
Robert Knoer, The Knoer Group, PLLC
Sandy Nasca, The Knoer Group, PLLC
Karen Fiala, ECIDA
John Cappellino, ECIDA

☒ **1. WELCOME:** Call to Order and Identity of Hearing Officer.

Hearing Officer: *Welcome. This public hearing is now open; it is 8:43 a.m. My name is Grant Lesswing I am the Business Development Officer of the Erie County Industrial Development Agency, and I have been designated by the Agency to be the hearing officer to conduct this public hearing.*

☒ **2. PURPOSE:** Purpose of the Hearing.

Hearing Officer: *We are here to hold the public hearing on the Curtiss Buffalo, Inc. project. The transcript of this hearing will be reviewed and considered by the Agency in determination of this project. Notice of this hearing appeared in The Buffalo News on May 22, 2014.*

☒ **3. PROJECT SUMMARY:** Description of Project and Contemplated Agency Benefits.

Hearing Officer: *The proposed project (the "Project") consists of: (i) a leasehold interest in a parcel(s) of land located at 204-216 Franklin Street, City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York (the "Land") improved thereon with the 57,560+/- SF historic Curtiss Building (the "Existing Improvements"); (ii) the demolition of the adjacent 11,615+/- SF Continental Building and the construction, reconstruction and/or renovation, upgrading and equipping of the Existing Improvements on the Land to accommodate a high-end boutique hotel containing 67+/- rooms, a fine dining restaurant and lounge, one (1) residential unit, and a spa and fitness*

component (the "Improvements"), and (iii) the acquisition and installation by the Company of certain items of machinery, equipment and other tangible personal property (the "Equipment," and collectively with the Land, the Existing Improvements and the Improvements, the "Facility").

The proposed financial assistance contemplated by the Agency includes sales and use tax exemption benefits and mortgage recording tax exemption benefits (in compliance with Agency's uniform tax exemption policy).

☒ 4. FORMAT OF HEARING: Review rules and manner in which the hearing will proceed.

Hearing Officer: *All those in attendance are required to register by signing the sign-in sheet at the front of the room; you will not be permitted to speak unless you have registered. If you have a written comment to submit for the record, you may do so. Written comments may also be delivered to the Agency at 95 Perry Street, Suite 403, Buffalo, New York 14203 until the comment period closes on June 17, 2014. There are no limitations on written comments.*

☒ 5. PUBLIC COMMENT: Hearing Officer gives the Public an opportunity to speak.

Hearing Officer: *If anyone is interested in making a comment, please raise your hand, state your name and address; if you are representing a company, please identify the company. I request that speakers keep comments to 5 minutes, and if possible, 3 minutes.*

The Hearing Officer calls on those who raise their hand.

Robert Knoer - I am here on behalf of Buffalo Development Corporation and Curtiss Buffalo to introduce this project. It's pretty well laid out in the application and the cover letter so I am not going to repeat all of that. I do want to make sure the record reflects that this is a 100 year old building which has been vacant for a little over 12 years. It is a fully vacant building and this is an adaptive reuse of the building into a hotel project with a restaurant and some other hospitality. The building is within a block and within eyesight of the convention center. We have had a number of discussions with Visit Buffalo Niagara people who have advised us that this would be very helpful to them in being able to market conventions to out of town people which would mean that out of town dollars would come into the region.

The property is within a highly distressed census tract, and in accordance with state law and therefore, is eligible under the retail sales law amendments for public assistance. There will be a job creation number of at least 30 that is what we put in our application new full time permanent positions created by the project. The project does follow the principals of the Framework for Regional Growth as well as the

Buffalo Green Code for the City of Buffalo. The city itself is very much behind the project and has been of great assistance to us.

We are asking for ECIDA assistance in just two forms. One is mortgage tax abatement and the other is sales tax abatement. The abatement in taxes is due to a large part of additional costs involved in this adaptive reuse. We have lead paint abatement and asbestos abatement. We have to adapt the historic features into modern design and that includes such things as a new HVAC system, plumbing system, electrical system and public safety requirements that are now in the building code that was not there 100 years ago.

We are doing all of this within a tight construction site bounded on two sides by city streets and the other side by a building. This cost is significant and we have already incurred certain costs in regards to preserving the building over the last 10 years as an empty building, paying real estate taxes as well as maintenance and trying to keep it boarded up and protected for future use. So there has been a lot of money going into protecting this piece of historic fabric. This is one of only two pieces of historic fabrics left on the block of West Huron between Delaware and Main Street. It really does show the historic nature of the area in the city and we believe that it is important that it be saved. But it is very expensive to save in this configuration. We believe that there will be significant long term economic benefits from this project including sales tax, occupancy tax, bed tax and including new jobs. Not only the construction jobs over the next 12-16 months, but jobs at the hotel itself. We believe it will bring in dollars from outside the region which will be spent not only at our hotel, but in the entertainment district at Chippewa and other hotels and we really believe this is an appropriate use of public assistance.

☒ **6. ADJOURNMENT.**

As there were no further comments, the Hearing Officer closed the public hearing at 8:56 a.m.

**SIGN IN SHEET
PUBLIC HEARING**

June 2, 2014, at 8:30 a.m.
at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency office
located at 95 Perry Street, Suite 403, Buffalo, New York 14203
regarding:

Curtiss Buffalo, Inc.

Project Location: 204-216 Franklin Street, City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York

Name	Company and/or Address	X box to speak/ comment