



Allegany County Industrial Development Agency

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February 16, 2021

Melodie L. Farwell
Councilperson, Town of Cuba
4552 Route 305
Cuba NY 14727

Attention: Melodie L. Farwell

This letter is a response regarding your letter and the follow-up to the public hearing held February 9, 2020 regarding the relocation of Great Lakes Cheese to the Crossroads area. Thank you for recognizing our efforts at retaining Great Lakes Cheese for Allegany County. As you noted losing them entirely would be a devastating blow to all residents.

The current format of how public hearings are held is under review, but for the most part the questions and answers were heard, and the recording is available on our website if anyone would like to listen. A transcription will be posted when complete. Any written comments are sent to the full board as part of the public hearings. Please note that the next public hearing notice was already published and therefore cannot be altered. As always, if further questions, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Below are your questions with responses to the questions

- You have begun the process of acquiring the Mr. Bares land by eminent domain but there are many areas of concern pointed out in the NYS DEC's letter regarding the SEQR application. Is the acquisition of the land going to be contingent on a negative SEQR declaration?
All actions by any public body, including the potential eminent domain, require the completion of the SEQRA process first, be it by either negative declaration or a finding statement after an Environmental Impact Statement is prepared. This would be the case for Mr. Bares property, or any other in New York.
- GLCs application for IDA assistance states 0% of the funding will come from bonds. Where will the money come from? If it is indeed bonding, will that be subject to a permissive referendum? What is the plan if that is voted down at the polls?
The question refers to the ACIDA's authority to issue bonds. The ACIDA is an authority and is not subject to permissive referendum, as in the case of the municipality. In any case GLC has not requested that bonds be issued for the project at this time. The project is slated for private financing by the company.
- GLC owns over 350 acres on the tax rolls in Cuba. What portion of those are they considering "giving to the IDA" - just the acres where the plant sits?
Such discussion is in the very preliminary stage and we need to discuss further with Great Lakes Cheese. No discussions about transfer of property will go forward without input and comments from the Cuba community.

- The current facility, in their own words, is near the end of its useful life span, and will be even more so by the time they are ready to leave it. How can giving it to the IDA be considered a benefit for Cuba when we already have the Stauffers, Tracewell, and Acme buildings vacant and, in your own words, it is “very difficult to attract manufacturing to our area”? In my opinion, the IDA and GLC have a moral and ethical obligation to not hurt Cuba any more than they already are by moving their facility out of our community. “Giving” it to the IDA takes that burden off their backs and transfers it to the town of Cuba taxpayers. GLC should be required to decommission and tear down their own outdated and unusable structures and put the land back on the tax rolls.

ACIDA, GLC have made considerable efforts, with the assistance of municipal officials to find an acceptable site within the Cuba borders, delaying project efforts for six months. Unfortunately, for many reasons, none of the Cuba sites were deemed acceptable. Only GLC makes the determination of final site selection, The ACIDA and GLC are limiting the impact to the community by preserving local jobs, many of which are residents of Cuba, by keeping the plant close to Cuba within Allegany County. The ACIDA is also requiring use of local labor for as much of the construction as feasible.

GLC is not opposed to decommissioning and tearing down the facility, if that is what the community wants, if there is another purpose Cuba or the ACIDA had for the building and land, GLC would be willing make a donation. The property is now on the tax role and the building would only come off of the tax roll if it were to be donated to a tax-exempt entity. Such discussions have not yet started.

- According to the public hearing, Great Lakes Cheese is only going to be using 50 acres to build on at the present time, yet they are seeking to acquire 247 acres? Since this plant is already going to be a “mega-site” – in fact their largest facility - that seems like a lot of farmland being taken from an unwilling seller for possible (but unlikely) future expansion.

The total land acquisition proposed is for 210 acres of the parcels indicated, of which 120 acres are useable for construction; that is the land that will be used for current and future facilities. The rest of the land is wooded and, in the floodplain, remaining for the most part as they are today. Regarding acreage, the construction footprint is planned for 50 acres, with a total disturbed area of approximately 90 acres including storm water ponds, the waste water plant, parking, driveways, and so on.

Thanks for your questions, GLC has looked at over seventy sites since before June 2019 and worked with the ACIDA since November 2019. We are very fortunate that GLC has a commitment to their current employees. Site selection included working very hard last year on Cuba sites. Most companies would have probably left the area and not looked at sites in or close to Cuba at all, let alone for that length of time.

Sincerely



Craig R. Clark

Executive Director

cc Dave Decker, Mike Healy, John Ricci, Skip Wilday, Curt Crandall