

# With apartment plans withdrawn, Batavia looks at future of Campana Building

Girardi, Linda

[ProQuest document link](#)

---

## ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

Evergreen Real Estate Group recently withdrew plans to convert the historic Campana factory on the border of Batavia and Geneva into a mixed-use, mixed-income development with 80 market-rate and income-restricted apartments. The outcome, he said, is bothersome, particularly since a land owner to the immediate east filed a written protest that required a two-thirds vote of the City Council — 10 aldermen — voting in the affirmative to pass the project. Uher had safety concerns over the proposed traffic patterns on the property and the developer's request for variances from the city's parking requirements.

## FULL TEXT

With plans withdrawn for redevelopment of the Campana Building, Batavia aldermen are pondering the future of the historic facility.

"It's difficult to say what the city lost. Oftentimes when one door shuts, another one opens," Ald. Nick Cerone said. "I am disappointed for the people who were looking forward to possibly living there. It looked like a unique design and something beneficial. I hope something else comes to fruition and the building will be maintained."

Evergreen Real Estate Group recently withdrew plans to convert the historic Campana factory on the border of Batavia and Geneva into a mixed-use, mixed-income development with 80 market-rate and income-restricted apartments.

The Batavia City Council Committee of the Whole on Oct. 9 voted 9-5 to recommend the proposal to the full City Council. Subsequent discussions and a written protest resulted in delays that lasted into late November.

The Batavia City Council voted 8-6 Nov. 20 to have the developer return Feb. 5 to present a redesign of the plans to address issues that opponents had with the project. Before the meeting could be held, the developer withdrew the proposal.

"I wish the project would have gone further," Ald. Alan Wolff told The Beacon-News.

Wolff, a proponent of the project, thought it would have brought different housing types to Batavia and restored a historic structure. The outcome, he said, is bothersome, particularly since a land owner to the immediate east filed a written protest that required a two-thirds vote of the City Council — 10 aldermen — voting in the affirmative to pass the project.

The developer said the plans were withdrawn because the company believed it couldn't get more than nine votes on the proposal.

Ald. Mark Uher was among aldermen who didn't agree with granting all of the variances requested by the developer.

"I would have liked to see the whole process play out," Uher said.

Uher had safety concerns over the proposed traffic patterns on the property and the developer's request for variances from the city's parking requirements.

He also questioned safety issues with having a soccer field near the Route 31 and Fabyan Parkway intersection.

"They could have found a way to do the project without all of the variances. It might have been successful that way," Uher said.

Ald. Martin Callahan had hoped the developer would come back to the City Council with modifications to the plan.

"I was surprised the developer didn't present any changes," Callahan said.

Callahan was concerned whether there would be adequate parking for tenants and he objected to having cellular towers on the building. He said he didn't want the city to set a precedent and allow cell towers on a residential building, something that hasn't been done in Batavia.

"The parking and cell towers were completely curable by the developer. They have the ability to make changes," he said.

He said it was likely the modifications would have cost the developer extra money.

"I should not be waiving our zoning code solely on the financial concerns of a developer," Callahan said.

Callahan said it's possible the modifications the aldermen wanted didn't make it a viable project for the developer.

"If they ran the numbers and it didn't make sense that's a choice that I can respect and understand," he said.

Callahan said his concerns had nothing to do with the affordable housing component of the project.

"My concerns are to make sure whether it is high-income or low-income housing that we are not sacrificing our ordinances. None of our other residential units in town have cell towers. It has nothing to do with who is living there," he said.

Ald. Lucy Thelin Atac believes in the short-term the city lost an opportunity to preserve a historic building and fulfill a need for affordable housing. However, she also thinks the months-long process of discussing the project may have been a good learning experience for the council.

"It would be beneficial to have a discussion over what we learned or whether we would handle it differently if we were starting over," Thelin Atac said.

Ald. Dan Chanzit also said the situation should lead to some reflection for those on the council.

"Evergreen did a good job from the beginning of explaining the project. They weren't asking for unreasonable variances. I think we set ourselves up as a community. We're probably going to be before a judge at some point over fair housing issues," Chanzit said. "I am not pointing fingers at anyone. I think as a group we did a poor job of vetting this project."

*Linda Girardi is a freelance reporter for The Beacon-News.*

Credit: Linda Girardi

## DETAILS

<b>Subject:</b>	Site planning; Affordable housing; Councils; Cities
<b>Identifier / keyword:</b>	ABN; news; suburbs
<b>Publication title:</b>	Chicago Tribune (Online); Chicago
<b>Publication year:</b>	2018
<b>Publication date:</b>	Feb 7, 2018
<b>Section:</b>	Suburbs - Aurora Beacon News - News
<b>Publisher:</b>	Tribune Publishing Company, LLC
<b>Place of publication:</b>	Chicago
<b>Country of publication:</b>	United States, Chicago
<b>Publication subject:</b>	General Interest Periodicals--United States

<b>Source type:</b>	Blog, Podcast, or Website
<b>Language of publication:</b>	English
<b>Document type:</b>	News
<b>ProQuest document ID:</b>	1999195464
<b>Document URL:</b>	<a href="https://chipublib.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/blogs-podcasts-websites/with-apartment-plans-withdrawn-batavia-looks-at/docview/1999195464/se-2?accountid=303">https://chipublib.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/blogs-podcasts-websites/with-apartment-plans-withdrawn-batavia-looks-at/docview/1999195464/se-2?accountid=303</a>
<b>Copyright:</b>	Copyright Tribune Interactive, LLC Feb 7, 2018
<b>Last updated:</b>	2018-02-08
<b>Database:</b>	Global Newsstream

## LINKS

[Check for full text via OCLC Link Resolver](#)

---

Database copyright © 2023 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)