



## Three aim to develop ex-Bresee's site

— ONEONTA \_ The selection of a developer to transform the former Bresee's Department Store could be less than a month away. Michael A. Treanor & Associates, Homes-4-U Development of Miami and Ohio-based Bloomfield Schon responded to a request for proposals from the complex's owner, Otsego County Development Corporation, and the city of Oneonta, which leases the building from OCDC.

Under the request for request for proposal, or RFP, guidelines, proposals were due March 7.

A developer will be selected April 25, according to the timetable included in the RFP.

But before that, a development team consisting of OCDC and county Industrial Development Agency board members and city officials would review the proposals, OCDC Executive Manager Carolyn Lewis said Tuesday. "Once the development team has determined that each developer is a viable candidate, the Common Council will have the opportunity to meet and interview the candidates," Lewis said.

The OCDC Board of Directors would make the final selection, Mayor John Nader said earlier this year.

Neither Nader nor Lewis would release the actual proposals to The Daily Star.

Nader on Monday cited the need for confidentiality in order to provide a fair review process for each proposal.

All of the firms have performed work in upstate New York, he said Tuesday. The city is leasing the former Bresee's complex at 155-161 Main St. from OCDC for a \$1 a year after city and OCDC officials engineered a transfer-of-title agreement from a third party, the National Emergency Medicine Association.

The complex's former owner, Maurice Ramos, donated it to NEMA, a nonprofit medical education organization, in exchange for a tax break.

OCDC is composed of city and county officials, as well as members of the private sector and the county Industrial Development Agency.

City officials have said that the site will likely end up as a mixed-use location of commercial, retail, residential or office space, but the RFP leaves open the possibility of other re-use plans and concepts. Developers may seek to demolish parts of the building, officials previously said.

OCDC is the county's oldest nonprofit, an economic development corporation and during most of its history has handled small-business loans.

The OCDC Board of Directors includes President Doug Gulotty, Vice President Rob Robinson, Treasurer/Secretary Steve Gruver, Bob Harlem, Mike Pentaris, Jim Jordon and Joseph Bernier, who is a city employee and head of the community development and engineering departments. The development team includes Nader, Bernier, Gulotty, Robinson, Downtown Developer Jeff House, First Ward Alderman Maureen Hennessy, Jim Jordon, Lewis, Rachel Jessup and Jeff Lord.

Kevin McLaughlin of Empire State Development Corporation is providing consultation to the team, Lewis said.

“We understand the interest and excitement that surrounds the Bresee’s project, and it has been great to work with so many people who have pulled together to make sure the community’s needs will be met,” Lewis said.

The city has received a \$1 million City to City grant for the project from the Empire State Development Corporation, which is a state agency.

The 75,000-square-foot downtown landmark, which has sat largely vacant for more than 10 years, has significant roof damage and other problems.

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