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## City & Region

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### Developer seeks to redevelop 1490 Jefferson into museum, NAACP office and housing

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A prominent East Side address that once had thriving business activity in the heart of the Jefferson Avenue commercial district is about to get a new life after years of disrepair.

City approval is being sought to redevelop 1490 Jefferson Ave. into Bellamy Commons, a mixture of 30 low-income apartments, an office for the NAACP and a new museum dedicated to African-American success stories.

Developer David Pawlik's Creative Structures Services, in partnership with Belmont Housing Resources for Western New York and Herbert J. Bellamy Jr., seeks the approval.

It's a well-known location within the community, Pawlik said, having once housed a bank branch, a 40-year-old community archive and the local office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"It was always a paramount building in its heyday, and what we're trying to do is bring back that vibrancy and economic life to the building," Pawlik said of the 113-year-old edifice. "We want to build on some of the successes popping up around the East Side of Buffalo."

And it's next door to a new 50-unit senior housing project and not far from a 30-unit townhome development and community center at 858 E. Ferry St. that Pawlik completed a month ago.

Pawlik said he and Bellamy, who have known each other for 25 years, conceived the project after about a year of discussions about how to stabilize and revive the building, which "just fell into so much disarray over the years."

Bellamy, a prominent East Side businessman and son of a former City

Council member, runs community-based social services organizations and housing for senior citizens and disabled people, and "has continued his father's legacy in and around the area," Pawlik said.

"I owed it to Herb Bellamy Jr. to really look at it and see how viable it was," he said. "It meant a lot to us to look at it, and we're fortunate because we have had a lot of very successful projects."

In turn, Pawlik engaged Belmont, and began discussions with city officials.

"It's a project that they looked at and got extremely excited about," he said. "They are very supportive and very encouraged about what we are trying to do and achieve with this project."

The current 66,000-square-foot cultural, educational and social services building sits just north of East Ferry Street.

The building, along with a nearby lot at 1484 Jefferson, was already acquired by Belmont, which is seeking to add a city-owned lot in between them.

Plans call for tearing down 70 percent of the two-story building and then putting up a mixed-use combination of one- and two-bedroom apartments, a community center and up to 3,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor that will house the NAACP and a new Buffalo Black Achievers Museum to showcase the winners of annual awards. The team is working with Silvestri Architects on the design.

"What we're going to do is have a museum that is actually highlighting the contributions that African-Americans have done in Buffalo," Pawlik said. "Building this project will complement the successes on Jefferson and the surrounding East Side. To be able to breathe new economic life into that building will be exciting."

As with Pawlik's East Ferry development, the new \$7.45 million project will rely on a construction loan and low-income tax credits from the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal, which can be sold to investment funds to leverage additional financing dollars. Officials have already completed the necessary market studies and other documentation for the state application, and hope to receive approval by March, Pawlik said. Empire State Development is also putting up \$500,000 for renovation of the commercial space.

"It's a complicated funding process," he said. "We are fortunate to be able to put a very competitive application in."

The proposal will be reviewed by the Buffalo Planning Board on Tuesday at its 8:15 a.m. meeting. If approved, work would begin in September 2014 and wrap up in August 2015.

Also on Tuesday's agenda is a \$40 million plan by Frank Chinnici's Legacy Development for construction of a 250-unit apartment complex at 39-89 LaSalle Ave., near William Price Parkway. The proposal calls for market-rate housing, aimed specifically but not exclusively at students, on about 10 acres near the LaSalle Metro Rail station. Townhouses and single-family homes are also in the works.

Founded in 1998 and solely owned by Chinnici since 2003, Legacy developed the Autumn Creek apartments on North French Road in Amherst, and also has residential and commercial projects in Amherst, Clarence, East Aurora and Tonawanda.

The Planning Board will also review proposals for the Flying Bison Brewery, with tasting rooms and patios, at 840 Seneca St.; Resurgence Brewing Co., with outdoor patio tasting rooms, at 1250-1270 Niagara St.; and Big Ditch Brewery, with a tasting room, at 337 Ellicott St.

Additionally, D'Youville College, in conjunction with Stieglitz & Snyder architects, is seeking permission to convert the 65,000-square-foot former Gateway Longview facility, on 0.85 acres at 605 Niagara St., into new science center labs.

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