

Liverpool Lodging Ventures LLC
Public Hearing
April 3, 2025

The Public Hearing of the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency, held on this day, Thursday, April 3, 2025, at Clay Town Hall, 4401 State Route 31, Clay, New York 13041 was called to order at 3:01 PM by Public Hearing Officer Alexis Rodriguez.

ATTENDEES:

Alexis Rodriguez, Public Hearing Officer
Evan Carter, Onondaga County Economic Development Office
Ed Wisnowski, Town of Clay Councilor
Russ Mitchell, Town of Clay Planning Board Chairman
Janet Rathburn, Town of Clay Resident
Eugene Young, Town of Clay Councilor
Dave Capria, Town of Clay Councilor
Chelsea Cianc, Town of Clay Executive Assistant
Jill Hageman-Clark, Town of Clay Clerk
Damian Ulatowski, Town of Clay Supervisor
Dan Acherman, Town of Clay Resident
Noal White, Town of Clay Resident

The Public Hearing was conducted regarding the application and project described as follows:

Project: Liverpool Lodging Ventures LLC
Location: Clay, NY
Tax Map # 055.-01-01.1

Liverpool Lodging Ventures LLC, a New York limited liability company on behalf of itself and/or entities formed or to be formed on its behalf (the “Company”), has submitted an application (the “Application”) to the Agency, a copy of which Application is on file at the office of the Agency, which Application requests that the Agency consider undertaking a project (the “Project”) for the benefit of the Company, said Project consisting of the following: (A)(1) the acquisition of a leasehold interest in all or a portion of approximately 10.96 acres of land located on Pepperidge Way (now or formally tax map no. 055.-01-01.1) in the Town of Clay, Onondaga County, New York (collectively, the “Land”); (2) construction on the land of a four-story, approximately 103,673 square foot hospitality facility to be used as a dual-branded hotel, consisting of approximately 162 guest rooms and/or suites for extended and standard stay, with related interior and exterior amenities, including structured parking (the “Facility”); and (3) the acquisition and installation in and around the Facility and/or for use in connection with the Project of various fixtures, machinery, equipment, furnishings and other items of tangible personal property (collectively, the “Equipment”) (the Land, the Facility and the Equipment being collectively referred to as the “Project Facility”); (B) the granting of certain “financial assistance” (within the meaning of Section 854(14) of the New York General Municipal Law) with respect to the foregoing, including potential exemptions from certain sales and use taxes, real property taxes, real estate transfer taxes and mortgage recording taxes (subject to certain

statutory limitations) (the “Financial Assistance”); and (C) the lease (with an obligation to purchase) or sale of the Project Facility to the Company or such other person as may be designated by the Company and agreed upon by the Agency.

The Company will be the initial owner and/or operator of the Project Facility. The Agency has not made a decision with respect to the undertaking of the Project or the granting of the financial assistance.

A copy of the Application including a cost/benefit analysis is available at the Agency’s office and on the Agency’s website for review.

Alexis Rodriguez asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak in favor of the proposed project. No comments were made.

Alexis Rodriguez asked if there was anyone who would like to speak in opposition of the proposed project. The following comments were made:

Damian Ulatowski, Town of Clay Supervisor

“As Supervisor of the Town of Clay, I, together with my fellow Clay Town Board members strenuously oppose a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for a proposed hospitality facility offered by Liverpool Lodging Ventures.

In keeping with our commitment to our Clay taxpayers, the proposed venture is inconsistent with our long-term mission of accountable development. We are in unison without our rejection of a project that takes more tax dollars from the taxpayers than it gives in return. I see no benefit to the public endorsing a project that falls on their back while the developer is subsidized with local tax breaks. Responsible growth has long been the hallmark in Clay and to that end, we embrace those developers who believe in their projects and are willing and able to shoulder the weight of those projects.

We clearly understand that in order to grow responsibly, we must plan for the future and build upon foundations we are constructing today. We are therefore seeking to partner with those who share our vision and are committed to the Town of Clay and the opportunities that will evidence themselves as we move forward. Let us keep in mind that taxes are the fuel that propels our community by supporting essential services, infrastructure and education. A PILOT for this project would tip the scales in favor of a developer, allowing them to pay less and reap more at the expense of those who a full share.

With reference to the above, I ask that this testimony be entered into the public record to reflect the position of the Clay Town Board.”

Supervisor Ulatowski read the following written comments provided to him.

Joseph Bick, Town of Clay Deputy Supervisor (written comment)

To the Onondaga County Industrial development agency (OCIDA),

We are writing in strong opposition to the proposed payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for the proposed hotel project by Liverpool Lodging Ventures. As you know the town of clay has ALWAYS opposed pilot agreements for non-industrial projects proposed in the town. As the duly elected representatives for our taxpayers both in the town and Liverpool school district we want to enter our strong opposition into the record.

There is no public interest in subsidies to private entities in the tow. In fact, the one of the major benefits of growth in the town is the increase in tax revenue, that you propose to give away. Kindly enter this letter in the public record of this case. Know also that if this PILOT agreement is granted it will jeopardize the viability of this project being built in clay as we will use all legal means to protect our residents and taxpayers.

Ryan Pleskach, Town of Clay Councilor (written comment)

We are writing to express our unequivocal opposition to the proposed Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) agreement for the hotel project submitted by Liverpool Lodging Ventures.

The Town of Clay has consistently opposed PILOT agreements for non-industrial or commercial retail projects, and this proposal represents a clear departure from established precedent. As duly elected representatives of the Town of Clay – and by extension, the taxpayers of both the Town and the Liverpool Central School District – we urge you to reject this application.

There is no compelling public interest in subsidizing a private hotel development through the abatement of local taxes. In fact, one of the primary community benefits of responsible growth and development is the generation of new property tax revenue to support essential services, infrastructure, and education. This PILOT would directly undermine that benefit by shifting the burden onto existing taxpayers while enriching a private developer.

We respectfully request that this letter be entered into the public record. We will continue to strongly oppose this proposal and advocate on behalf of our residents and school district to ensure local tax dollars are protected.

Deborah Magaro-Dolan, Town of Clay Councilor (written comment)

By the way that Ryan has described the point of a PILOT, this project does not fit. I also agree that speaking out as a group would be good.

Noal White, Town of Clay Resident

“I just wanted to come today in opposition of this because as tax residents of the county and town we’ve already been burdened with the Micron situation, with this aquarium, with the Amphitheatre, with Shoppingtown mall, with the whole 81 project, we’re getting dumped on in taxes. We don’t need to give any more private businesses tax exempt status. They need to pay their fair share of taxes, they are a legitimate business, they need to pay their fair share of taxes.”

Eugene Young, Town of Clay Councilor

“I support everything that our supervisor said and all other council people. I’d like to point out that looking at this from a logical point of view, if we grant a PILOT to a hotel, which is basically a business, just a business, then we’ve set a standard for granting PILOTS to

commercial businesses and that is not a standard for a PILOT. To do it, there's going to have to be some, I don't know the exact words, but stretching of rules. But it will create a precedent for the northern half of the Town of Clay that is unacceptable. I'm sure that since OCIDA is selling the property to Micron and is intimately involved in the Micron project, that it will do everything that it can to see to it that there are whatever support to businesses like hotels and other things that are necessary to support Micron, but unfortunately that's going to hurt the rest of us terribly. We have the whole northern half of the Town of Clay developed. We've got a project going into the Great Northern Mall and the millions of millions of dollars, and if you allow a hotel here to have a PILOT, then you have to allow all their hotels over there to have PILOTs, and all the other apartment buildings, stores, and everything else, because you can't make the distinction. If you give it one, how do you not give it to all, and then there will be no tax base in the northern half of the Town of Clay. Looking at it logically, and I know that sometimes logic doesn't apply, looking at it logically, it's completely wrong and in nobody's interest, except Micron, and of course the people who are building the hotel. I think that it's unfortunate that OCIDA has to be the one to make these decisions. There's an obvious conflict of interest there, that you're selling the land to Micron, but be that as it may, I'm going on the record saying that this is wrong on so many levels that I would need a whole day to list them all, so I'm very opposed to this."

Dave Capria, Town of Clay Councilor

"I agree with everything that the town councilor just said. You're going to be setting a precedent here and ultimately the people who seem to be hurt are the residents of Clay and the County. Like the councilor said, if you do this for one, you're going to set this precedent and you're going to have to do this again in the future. I do not agree with it and I think it's going to hurt our taxpayers in Clay and the County, and I'm just totally against it, so I'd like to go on record just to show my displeasure with it."

Ed Wisnowski, Town of Clay Councilor

"With the arrival of the Micron project, the talk of incentives has made it to the forefront with regards to attracting additional business to the area. This is why the discussion of this PILOT program for a hotel in part of Clay. My understanding of a PILOT program is when it's given when a plan shows that it encourages economic investment and spur growth. A hotel, which is primarily transit in nature, shows how the attenuative of local government growth misperceives the town to be able to capitalize on. Questions in the value of a PILOT start the idea of stimulating long term growth and the effect it will have on the local infrastructure, roads, sewers, waters, etc. and how the town will be able to be compensated financially to afford these types of improvements that need to be made. A PILOT needs to incorporate the loss of the revenue, which most PILOTs don't. Same thing with sales tax, we don't see any return on that, so in turn a total negative. The construction of this hotel and loss of revenue undermines and helps reduce these increases. Let us not forget about the school districts, they also too have invested in interested in this PILOT, I'm surprised they're not here right now. Continued granting of PILOT programs needs to be attentive to the unfair burden that eventually is passed on to the residents of the town and businesses realize the financial gain. So until these concerns can be answered to a positive result for the residents of the town, I'm going to stand firm against issuing a PILOT for this hotel and also support everything that was previously presented."

Russ Mitchell, Town of Clay Planning Board Chairman

“Ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto. I would put a firm I’m against giving a PILOT to any residential properties going up in our town, period. I know that the PDD down on the corner of Henry Clay and Route 31, got a break as far as construction materials are concerned. I don’t mind that type of thing happening, but anything that’s going to take property taxes away from us residential wise, does not stand well with me. I just have a couple questions, I’m not sure if you’re going to be able to answer these for me. Just who is Liverpool Loding? Who owns the property? Now, I’m just going to give you one other observation. I get tired of coming to public hearings in the afternoons when only the gray-hairs can be here and the people in this building. These public hearings need to be put out there for the public to come, and when you have them, you need to have people here to answer questions, so that we know exactly what’s happening. There isn’t anybody here that we can talk to face-to-face knowing who’s going to be making the decision on this. You’re not going to be making a decision on this, you’re not going to be making a decision on this, somebody else is going to be making the decision here, just on the basis of what we’re hearing. You happen to be hearing from pretty much the whole Town Board, and one person from the Planning Board, and we’re all Clay. I’m going to tell you, I like to talk to people and see what their reaction is as I’m talking to them and see whether or not they’re dancing around or doing whatever, and that’s what I don’t like about the way the public hearings are conducted. I don’t like this one, the way that it was conducted, but I agree with everything that’s been said here. I’ll reiterate, I do not like putting a PILOT on residential properties, period. If we want to give somebody help on constructing, okay, but to take away our property taxes, no. The building that you’re talking about has an approved site plan, and nothing that I had heard about that’s in this public hearing is in front of us, and I asked people whether or not they were going to be looking for a PILOT. If you want to build a building in this town, you better be able to do the business, based on the way our ordinances and our laws are. Not to come and get help to where we end up being a free townie in the Town of Clay. People come to Clay, we don’t have to pay taxes. That’s ridiculous. I think I’m going to get Elon (Musk) to come up here and take a look at things.”

Alexis Rodriguez asked if there was anyone who would like to make general comments about the proposed project. No comments were made.

Alexis Rodriguez noted for the record that the Agency had not yet received public written comments on the project, with the exception of the written comments provided by Supervisor Ulatowski from his colleagues at the Town of Clay.

Alexis Rodriguez closed the public hearing at 3:21 PM.

Dated: April 7, 2025

ONONDAGA COUNTY INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

By: Alexis Rodriguez
Alexis Rodriguez, Public Hearing Officer