

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

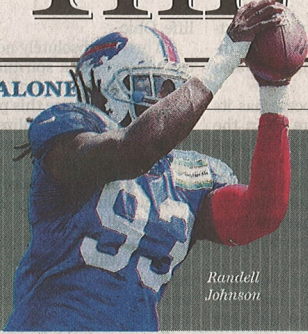
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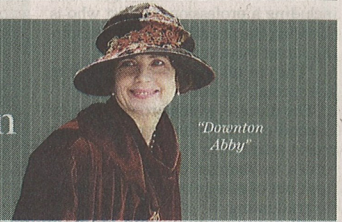


Randell Johnson

## JOHNSON FITS AT LINEBACKER

SPORTS, PAGE D1

TV viewers are turning on again. PAGE C1



"Downton Abby"

### WEST SENECA

## Housing plan moves ahead; another stalls

By JANICE L. HABUDA

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

A proposal for a 100-unit apartment complex in West Seneca to house primarily people living with mental illness moved forward Monday, while a plan for a patio home development was shot down by neighbors.

DePaul Community Services got the go-ahead, in the form of a special-use permit approved by the Town Board, for its project – a three-story apartment building at 2412 Seneca St., where a vacant department store now stands.

Of the 100 apartments, 75 would be eligible for on-site case management help from the Rochester-based non-profit social services agency.

"All units have an income restriction," said Gillian J. Conde, vice president of DePaul properties.

Conde reviewed the agency's process of engaging neighbors in its plans. There were four community meetings – including one at an existing DePaul facility on Seneca Street in Buffalo, and mailings to more than 800 neighbors of the proposed site.

"At all of the community meetings, DePaul has shared exactly how we do a full, six-point background check" on prospective tenants, Conde explained.

There were no comments from either the public or the Town Board during a public hearing on the requested permit, which was unanimously approved by lawmakers.

But it was a different story during a subsequent public hearing on a proposal to build 22 patio homes on a five-acre site spanning 3859, 3863 and 3869 Clinton St.

Michael Metzger, of Metzger Civil Engineering, spoke on behalf of developers seeking a zoning change for the property, which is opposite Northwood Avenue.

One-story, single-family homes would be built on individual lots on property that backs up to Buffalo Creek. The target buyer is empty-nesters, Metzger said.

"It's a growing segment of the residential market now. There's more and more people looking to downsize," he said, as well as reduce maintenance responsibilities.

Though the proposal is only in its preliminary stages, residents voiced their opposition.

Dennis Falzone, who lives nearby on Clinton Street, was among them.

"A lot of homes on a little piece of property," he observed, but his comments dealt primarily with traffic.

"Just trying to back out of a driveway on Clinton Street [is] dangerous," said Falzone, noting it has only two lanes.

Pat Bittner, who also lives on Clinton, concurred with Falzone's assessment on traffic.

"I can't begin to tell you how many cars I had on my front lawn, almost to my house," she said. "This is not the right place for it," Bittner said.

Another resident asked if the entire five-acre site would be cleared of trees.

According to Metzger, a biologist had been consulted.

"We did not find many trees of significance on this site," he said, adding that it is difficult to save mature trees amid the construction process. Metzger said that efforts could be made to save some of the natural vegetation.

The Town Board tabled the rezoning request – citing, in part, the lack of minutes from a Planning Board meeting on the proposal, and suspended the public hearing until a future meeting.

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