

Linda Puglisi

From: Debra Santucci <debrasantucci@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 4:10 PM
To: Linda Puglisi; Richard Becker; Frank Farrell; James F. Creighton; Debra Costello
Subject: 2064 East Main St. Property
Attachments: Main Street town board letter.docx

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Supervisor Puglisi and the Town Board Members
Attached please find a letter concerning our property at the above address.
Thank you,
Debra Santucci



+ copy me
J.P

LP.

cc: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

your check - for rec; file should TB
Tom W., MC
Michael P.

Debra and Dominick Santucci
15 Travis Lane
Montrose, NY 10548
914-325-6613
Debrasantucci@gmail.com

April 21, 2020

Dear Supervisor Puglisi and Members of the Town Board:

My Husband Dominick and I are the owners of the building located at 2064 East Main St., Cortlandt Manor, NY. The commercial/retail space on the first floor of the building is vacant. We have been told by real estate professionals this space will be vacant for years to come in light of the Covid 19 virus. We are writing to you for help with what is turning into a hardship with no end in sight.

History

The first floor of our building was used as a retail/wholesale auto parts store which we owned and ran from 1993 – 2002. The front portion was the retail space and the rear and basement were the parts storage rooms. We sold the business to another auto parts store. Back then the space was prime and commanded a substantial rent that included a triple net lease where the renter paid their portion of the taxes, electric, water insurance, heating, etc. The auto parts store was in there till, approximately, 2011. Knowing they were going to move out in the middle of the recession, we came to you and asked for help by allowing us to put a few apartments upstairs. Thankfully, we did that, because when they moved out, the space was empty for approximately 4 years. At least we had a little income to pay the expenses. In 2015, we ended up renting the front retail space to a State Farm Insurance Agent. In order to rent the space, we had to give two months free rent, greatly lower the rent, and were unable to get a triple net lease. In short, we took a large cut in rent and took on more expenses. The market had changed or the worse, but it was better than nothing. The insurance agent's lease ended on December 31, 2019. The agent decided to move to Peekskill because he needed walk in traffic which Route 6 doesn't have. We attempted to lower the rent but that didn't work. **In the meantime, we have never been able to rent the rear space and basement since 2011.**

Once we knew the insurance agent was leaving, we listed the entire vacant space with a broker back in October 2019. We did not have one person call with interest or come out to look at the space. In January, we contacted our broker to discuss changing the marketing plan for the space. The broker told us he had little hope to rent the space. With the shift from brick and mortar businesses to on-line and the ability for small offices to have their employees work from home, there is a glut of vacant office and retail space in our area, and all over the county. The old way of doing business was beginning to come to an end.

Then Covid 19 hit us. The virus has devastated the commercial real estate market and only reinforced the shift away from brick and mortar stores and the shift toward working from home. With our work turned upside down and so much uncertainty in the retail, office and small business world, in my brokers professional opinion, the space will not be rented for many years if ever. The commercial real estate market is in collapse and is not expected to come back any time in the future. We will not survive this while continuing to pay almost \$24,000.00 a year in taxes. This would cause us a great hardship. In these times we all need to reinvent ourselves personally and the way we do business. After many discussions, we feel we can make this work and would be able to pay the \$24,000.00 tax bill if you would allow us to put 4 apartments in the first floor vacant space. Many towns across the county have been making similar changes....Armonk and Harrison to mention a few. The towns in Westchester are recognizing the unprecedented need for apartments instead of not vacant commercial space. There were already so many empty stores fronts on route 6 before the virus, I can't imagine what it will look like going forward. We don't want to be one of them. We don't know what it would entail to get this done, but we also have faith that our town would want to help us get through these horrific times and transition into the new normal. We don't want to have to go through the process of grieving our taxes and have a building with an ugly vacant space.

We want to continue to be good citizens and taxpayers in the Town of Cortlandt as it is not only our place of business, it is our home. We have lived on Travis Lane in Montrose for 37 years which is in the Hendrick Hudson School District. In addition to the problem with our Main Street property, we are entering into the perfect storm with the closing of the power plant. The school taxes on our house are going to go up by a minimum of 1/3. As we are at retirement age, the income from these apartments will also help us to pay these higher taxes and continue to live in the Town we love.

We would appreciate if you would consider our request and are available to discuss this matter with you.

Sincerely,
Debra & Dominick Santucci