Date: 10/18/2022

Re: Response to Hill North Community Management Team & Hill leader’s Press Release

Catalina Buffalo Holdings LLC is a small family-owned developer that constructs and holds onto properties that it invests in. We own properties in Fairfield, Connecticut, South Dakota and southern California.

From its onset the Lockhart family (Owners of Catalina Buffalo Holdings) has been very excited about this project. We are excited to participate in the substantial growth of the City of New Haven and play our own small part in this new chapter of the City’s history. The project represents a substantial investment for our family.

For this project we have assembled a strong team which includes our architects and engineers. Our goal has been to do the most we can with a unique site.

We came with our best foot forward and in a spirit of true good faith. We listened to the community’s comments on the 13th of September, and when asked to delay our site plan application review on the 6th of October so an additional meeting with the community could be had on the 5th and time taken to consider that feedback we agreed to this request. We voluntarily delayed our application review until the 19th of October.

The feedback on the 5th of October was heard, and our best efforts to incorporate that feedback have been made. On October 13th when summoned by the Hill North leadership to present these efforts, we attended the requested meeting and presented. At that meeting we were honest and forthcoming in explaining the financial feasibility of our project and our capabilities as a family business.

That said, we will strive to create a project that will benefit the neighborhood and the City by generating more taxes, putting more eyes on the street, thereby making the Davenport/Congress Avenue neighborhood safer and creating more economic opportunities for the neighboring businesses. It is our intention to become part of the Hill neighborhood, because we plan to be at this location for the long term.
We have heard the neighborhood concerns and see the following ways in which we can collaborate with our neighbors:

- We understand that the neighborhood wants and needs affordable housing. We are one of the first projects to comply with the City’s new Inclusionary Zoning Regulations that require 5% of our apartments to be set aside for 99 years for individuals and families whose income is at or below the 50% Average Median Income for our area. We have looked carefully at providing more affordable units and have concluded that we cannot provide additional affordable apartments without jeopardizing our financing, because the margins are tight, interest rates are increasing and construction costs are rising.

- We are looking at other opportunities to provide affordable housing. We are discussing with Casa Otonal providing housing for its families and elderly clients, as it expands its services. We will also consider partnering with other supportive agencies in a similar way.

- We understand that the City has worked with other developers to create more affordable units when there have been governmental programs to support affordable housing. If such programs again become available, we will explore with the City our participation in these programs.

- We anticipate that the Project will create a number of construction jobs and subcontracts for Small Contractors. We will work with our General Contractor/Construction Manager to host a Jobs Fair and let the neighborhood know about these opportunities.

- We are committed to assisting the residential tenants in the two out of 6 buildings to be demolished in relocating to other housing. We will give everyone six months’ notice after we close on the properties, assist the tenants in finding alternative housing and pay for moving expenses and security deposits. These tenants will have the right to return to the property if they either qualify for the affordable units or are able to pay for the market rate units.

- We anticipate that approximately 5-6 permanent jobs will be created as a result of the project. We will ask our Management Company to notify the Hill North leadership of job vacancies.

In these ways, we will strive to be a good neighbor.

For any questions regarding this press release please feel free to contact me at my cell phone: 860-996-4650 or my email address: jlockhart@catalinabuffaloholdings.com

John Lockhart
Director of Investments and Operations