



# SCHAGHTICOKE FIRST NATIONS

To: Meeting of the City Council Planning Committee on Thursday, August 27, 2020

Re: Discuss and act on this agenda: <http://www.troy.ny.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CCPlanningAgenda082720.pdf>.

Respectful greetings:

My name is Roberto Múkaro Borrero and I am sharing this testimony on behalf of Sachem Hawk Storm of the Schaghticoke First Nations and the Schaghticoke First Nations, Inc.

The Schaghticoke are an Indigenous Peoples of this region who are opposed to the development and rezoning proposal for 1011 2nd Street due to a number of factors, but among the most important, is the historic significance of this land.

This property has great historic and cultural significance for the Indigenous Peoples of the Mahicantuck River Valley including the Schaghticoke First Nations, as well as the Munsee, Mahican, and Lenape Nations. This land was a permanent and semi-permanent settlement of various groups of Algonquin-speaking indigenous Peoples and included a critical ceremonial ground. The land was also a quarry for the production of tools and weapons, particularly arrowheads and still contains a significant portion of indigenous artifacts. According to the statements made by the developer during the May hearing of the Planning Commission, a majority of test wells produced a significant amount of artifacts.

The property's historical-archeological significance is reaffirmed by several studies, including historical and cultural assessments connected to the GE remediation (see Decision 2002), a recent study and report conducted by Hartgen Archeological Assoc, a study in 2015 by Ann Morton, and long-running explorations, studies and examinations by Hetty Jo Brumback. All these studies identify the entirety of the property waterfront as bearing key archeological artifacts. There are strong indications that despite the rest of the property not having been independently examined, important artifacts and archeological potential remains for the rest of the property and beyond.

Despite these verifiable privately contracted surveys, research in association with these reports indicate inadequate assessment and archeological recovery on this site. The development of the site and space can negatively impact and threaten the cultural and historical heritage, as increased foot traffic, artifact-hunters, and pollution all can contribute to major disturbances and irrevocable loss.

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Additionally, it is also important for the Council and community members to note that according to state and federal law, a DEC SPEDES permit is necessary associated with the ground disturbance of this project exceeding one acre. Other state and federal agency permits or funding may also trigger SHPO involvement. A coordinator of the Archeology Unit Program confirms this in official correspondence with a member of the Friends of the Mahican tuck from August 12, 2020 regarding the site, and states:

“Given the archaeological sensitivity of 1011 2nd Street, the SHPO will likely request an archeological survey to document archaeological sites that are located within this project area, if a survey has not already been undertaken.”

Schaghticoke First Nations is aware that there is a wide scope of legal grounds for why the requested change in zoning code cannot be granted, as stated in written supplemental evidence submitted by the Friends of the Mahicantuck prior to this hearing. Further, we are also aware that there are other locations in the area that could be better suited to the development being submitted.

Finally, Schaghticoke First Nations has communicated with a representative of the property owner. We understand that if the Council does not approve the rezoning and development request, this land will remain in with the current owner. The property owners are open to preserving this land and exploring a larger, more community-oriented vision.

In closing, we call upon this Council to consider that instead of destroying the last tract of forest on the waterfront in Troy, we could work together in collaboration with property owners, and local community groups toward providing a unique opportunity for racial and environmental justice, education, and sustainable tourism in the area.

Respectfully submitted,  
Roberto Múkaró Borrero,  
On behalf of Sachem Hawk Storm  
and the Schaghticoke First Nations, and  
Schaghticoke First Nations, Inc.