

IDA OKs \$500K for food plant

Goshen in running for Amy's site

BY JESSICA DINAPOLI
Times Herald-Record

NEW WINDSOR – The Orange County Industrial Development Agency on Thursday approved giving \$500,000 to Amy's Kitchen for infrastructure work at the 200-acre site in Goshen the company has selected as a possible location for a natural-food manufacturing plant.

The money from the IDA piggy-backs on \$800,000 New York state plans to give Amy's Kitchen for infrastructure work, including modifications of an intersection on Route 17M and other roadwork, according to a letter the company sent the IDA last week. Amy's announced last month that it would employ 681 people in a 350,000- to 500,000-square-foot natural foods manufacturing plant it proposes to build in the Town of Goshen.

Other sites

The California company has been considering other sites, but the \$500,000 helps Amy's advance in Orange County, said IDA Chairman Robert Armistead.

IDA Executive Director James Petro said after the meeting that Amy's asked the IDA to cancel a public hearing that had been scheduled several weeks ago because the process of building the plant was moving too fast and they were still considering other sites.

Tax, payback plans

Now that the IDA has moved forward with the funding, it plans to set a public hearing for the other benefits Amy's has requested, includ-

ing a \$4.5 million property tax abatement, \$420,000 in mortgage tax exemptions and \$6.5 million in sales and use tax exemptions.

The resolution the IDA passed Thursday states that Amy's would have to pay back the \$500,000 if it ends up not coming to Goshen. Armistead said Amy's would not start the infrastructure work until it decides for sure to build the \$95 million plant in Goshen.

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STEVE NEUHAUS
County executive

Additionally, the money will be paid to vendors completing the work. It will not be given directly to Amy's itself, Petro said.

County Executive Steve Neuhaus, who attended Thursday's special meeting, said the money would ensure Amy's lands in Goshen.

"What you guys did today makes it a done deal," Neuhaus said.

Neuhaus said after the meeting that he was confident the other sites Amy's was considering would be crossed off their list by Thursday afternoon.

IDA board member John Steinberg said the positive aspects of the Amy's project were sufficient justification for the board "to stick its neck out" with the \$500,000. Goshen Supervisor Doug Bloomfield said the family-owned company treats its employees well, and Neuhaus added that the project will help local farmers.

Labor force

Representatives from local labor groups attended the meeting to ask about whether or not the IDA will require that Amy's use tradespeople from



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The money helps Amy's advance in Orange County, said IDA Chairman Robert Armistead, who spoke on Thursday about the funding and potential tax breaks during a meeting in Goshen.

the Hudson Valley to build the plant. The IDA's Governance Committee has been working on a local labor policy, but it is unclear if it will be in place before the Amy's project is approved, Armistead said.

"We will be emphatic they use local labor," Armistead said.

Todd Diorio, the president of the Hudson Valley Building

& Construction Trades Council, said he doesn't want to see Amy's grandfathered into the IDA's current local labor policy. He added that he has emailed and written letters to Amy's, but hasn't heard back.

"If this goes bad, we will be on the street yelling," Diorio said.

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