



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

Hoyt, Grisanti Announce Passage of Key Bill for Richardson Reuse

MARK GRISANTI March 14, 2011

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BUFFALO, NY – Assemblymember Sam Hoyt (D-Buffalo) and Senator Mark Grisanti (R- Buffalo) announce the passage of legislation (A371/S1406) important to the restoration of the H.H. Richardson Complex on Buffalo’s West Side. The Assembly vote was unanimous 121-0 and the bill passed the Senate last week, carried by Grisanti.

“I am pleased to see this legislation move through the Senate and Assembly with ease and I expect it to be signed into law by the Governor very soon,” Hoyt said. “The Richardson redevelopment initiative represents a great opportunity for our region to continue to showcase to the world the outstanding assets that we possess in Western New York. While much work has been done to stabilize the buildings, the passage of this bill will enable the project to move into its next phase.”

The legislation enables the transfer of 42 acres, owned by the State Office of Mental Health, to the Richardson Center Corporation, which is overseeing the reuse of the Richardson Olmsted Complex, the former Buffalo State Hospital. The architecturally significant campus, which is a former psychiatric facility with landscaping designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, has sat dormant for years. In 2006, Governor Pataki designated a board to oversee the reuse of the complex with an allocation of \$76.5 million in state funds.

“This building has been an eyesore in the community and this bill will allow a not-for-profit agency to rehab this landmark that sits right next door to Buffalo State College,” Grisanti said. “I am excited that like UB 2020, there was bi-partisan support for this bill which will tremendously help the Western New York region and the 60th District in creating jobs and bringing people back to the area.”

The first phase of the development will start with a mix of uses – a Buffalo Architecture Center, regional Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau Center, boutique hotel and event/conference space – in the Towers building and two flanking former wards. Landscape and circulation improvements to the site will start with “re-greening” the historic South Lawn to create a welcoming public space for gathering and recreation.

Howard Zemsky, President of the not-for-profit Richardson Center Corporation said, “The board is thankful to Assemblymember Hoyt and Senators Grisanti and Kennedy for their focus and hard work in passing this legislation. Ownership of the Richardson Olmsted Complex and grounds will enable the new uses to move forward, renewing and transforming the complex.”