

# Council president shares reasons for denying conditional use

**November 6, 2012**

By MARK MARONEY - mmaroney@sungazette.com , Williamsport Sun-Gazette

A leader of city government doesn't believe senior housing built in a high density retail area is a good idea.

"If a dense commercial retail district is what we want than we can hold out for that," said Council President Bill Hall, after voting against a conditional use permit Thursday as FORTUS Group of Fort Wayne, Ind., sought the application. The company wants to develop a four-story apartment complex on Via Bella and Mulberry street.

The building, if constructed, would hinder the view of Robert M. Sides Family Music Center, 201 Mulberry St., Hall said. He agreed with Sides founder, Pete Sides, it was not the best Hall said he while he understands Mayor Gabriel J. Campana's desire to put \$250,000, the price the city will receive if the sale goes through, toward the budget, he added the city has collected enough revenue from business privilege, mercantile and local services taxes over the year.

"We can afford to hold out for a retail development offer in my opinion," he said.

Also to clarify a decision on amending the contract, Hall said he approved the amended contract for the property because the proper name of the company must accompany the application for tax credits sought by the developer.

"It was a technicality matter," Hall said.

The next phase for the project developers would be seeking IRS tax credits in a competitive process through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency.

The city has two other housing complexes it wants to see developed by using similar tax credits, one at Brodart warehouse at Memorial Avenue and Oliver Street and one on Grove Street, Hall said.