

My Barilla Story

by J. Lincoln Swedrock

In early 2005, we were working with private landowners (Client #1) to obtain Build Now-NY certification for their property. Having obtained the rezoning for an industrial use, we were working on concept plans and utility design for the property, when a site selection committee through NYSEDC identified the property for a potential food processing facility. Between October 2005 and January 2006, BME Associates provided property information, development concept plans, and guidance on potential approval procedures to the selection committee through the Livingston County Industrial Development Agency (Client #2). Throughout this process, the project and end user were only known as "Project Allegro", to maintain anonymity of the company. This presented some significant challenges to our ability to provide detailed answers to technical questions, and estimate regulatory approval schedules with limited knowledge of the user's building and manufacturing needs. It is difficult enough to estimate regulatory approval needs and timing in New York, when you have all the information you need.

It was apparent early on that the time frames estimated for approvals were unacceptable to "Project Allegro". We knew that it would take an extraordinary effort from many parties to get them to pick this site and obtain the approvals within the schedule they had required. On January 12th, a select group of the project team traveled to Barilla's Ames, Iowa plant for a tour of the facilities. After the plant visit, it was agreed that this company would be an excellent addition to the community, and a good use for the property. A select group now knew the identity of the company and we knew that Barilla was worth an extraordinary effort to bring them to Avon. We were also now in a position to identify project approval needs to the Village of Avon, NYSEDC, and other regulatory and service providing agencies. The team was able to commit to an acceptable schedule and delivery of infrastructure needs.

On January 24, 2006, with representatives of Barilla America, we rode a fully restored President's Pullman railroad car on the Livonia, Avon & Lakeville Railroad to the site. At the site, the proposed building location was identified with Italian and American flags hanging from utility poles. On March 10, 2006, Barilla America announced at a press conference that they had chosen the Village of Avon, N.Y. to construct their second Pasta Factory in the United States. BME Associates continued to prepare final subdivision plans, road and utility infrastructure plans within the Livingston Industrial Complex, to serve Barilla, for Livingston County (Client #3). We were also asked to provide services directly to Barilla America (Client #4) to prepare their final site plan and obtain their necessary approvals. One of the critical needs of the project is a rail siding, to deliver raw materials. For various aspects of the rail siding, BME provided services to Barilla, Livingston County, and the Livonia Avon and Lakeville (LAL) Railroad (Client #5).

It was March 2006 and Barilla America had chosen the site. It was time for the team to perform. Construction needed to start in June so that the site infrastructure could be substantially complete by the end of the weather-driven construction season. Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plans were submitted on March 15th. On May 3rd, final Site Plans were submitted for the Barilla facility. Interim submissions were also made for some necessary zoning variances and the SEQR procedures. On May 22, 2006, the Village granted Site Plan approval and issued a grading permit on June 12th. A design/build contract was awarded to Whiting Turner Contracting Company for the construction of the facility. BME has been providing services to Whiting Turner (Client #6) for continuing design and construction support.

Working on Barilla, for six different clients, hasn't been without its challenges. I don't know if you noticed, but it was one of the wettest construction seasons in measurable history. The combination of saturated soils and pressure to deliver infrastructure made for some interesting times. But, the team never lost sight of the mission - to bring this excellent company to this great area of our state.