



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN PLANNING OFFICE
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 304, WATERTOWN, NY 13601
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TO: Planning Board Members
FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planner
SUBJECT: Site Plan Approval – 1445 Washington Street
DATE: October 1, 2015

Request: Site plan approval for the construction of a 2,110 square foot building expansion and a 9-space parking lot expansion to the Watertown Animal Hospital Building located at 1445 Washington Street, Parcel Number 13-22-208.000.

Applicant: Timothy F. Titus of Aubertine and Currier, PLLC on behalf of Dr. Christopher Jank, DVM of 1445 Washington Street, LLC

Proposed Use: Animal Hospital and supporting office space and waiting areas.

Property Owner: 1445 Washington Street, LLC

Submitted:

Property Survey: Yes	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: Yes
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: No	Construction Time Schedule: No
Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Uses and Traffic Volume are included. It is not indicated whether operating hours will change or remain the same.

SEQRA: Unlisted

County Review: No

Zoning Information:

District: Commercial	Maximum Lot Coverage: N/A
Setback Requirements: F: 20', S: 5', R: 25'	Buffer Zones Required: Yes

Project Overview: The applicant proposes to expand the footprint of the current structure by constructing additions on the south and west sides of the building. The addition on the west side will be 500 square feet and will include a staff entry and locker room, a storage and receiving room, a break room and a staff restroom. The addition on the south side will include a new reception area with divided waiting areas for cats and dogs, each with

its own separate entrance. The addition on the south side will also include two new exam rooms and two new office spaces.

The proposed addition will bring the total number of exam rooms on site to four. At its June 2, 2015 meeting, the Planning Board voted to recommend that City Council change the approved zoning classification of the parcel from Neighborhood Business to Commercial and voted to recommend that City Council amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow Animal Hospital as a use-by-right in Commercial Districts without any limit on the size or number of exam rooms. At its July 6, 2015 meeting, City Council approved both of these changes in order that the proposed number of exam rooms could remain conformant to the Zoning Ordinance.

Parking and Vehicle Circulation: Access to the site will continue to be via the two existing driveways connecting from Washington Street. The existing site provides 20 parking spaces, which includes five parallel parking spaces along the west side of the entrance drive. The site plan proposes reconfiguring and expanding the parking area on the south side of the building to provide an additional nine spaces, bringing the aggregate site total to 29.

Section 310-47 of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Watertown requires five spaces for every 1,000 square feet of commercial floor space. Section 310-50 of the Zoning Ordinance states that, "The areas used for boiler room, heating facilities, utility facilities and storage shall not be included in the computation of floor area." The proposed expansion would bring the building footprint to 6,430 square feet, and the applicant has identified 585 square feet of utility and storage areas that do not count toward the parking requirement. Therefore, the remaining 5,845 square feet of applicable floor space yields 29.2 required parking spaces, meaning that the site plan, as proposed, fails to meet the parking requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.

The applicant should appear before the Planning Board with a site plan that meets the parking requirement of five spaces for every 1,000 feet of commercial floor space, or 30 spaces total. The applicant should either add one parking space to the proposed parking area or be prepared to clearly demonstrate to the Planning Board that the amount of proposed commercial floor space only requires 29.0 parking spaces or fewer. This will include clearly delineating the rooms designated as storage and utility areas and identifying the square footage of each room and their aggregate. In lieu of the above options, the applicant may apply for a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals to vary the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance by one space.

Lighting: There is one existing wall-mounted light on the north side of the building, three existing wall-mounted lights on the west side of the building and one existing wall-mounted light on the southwest corner of the building. The lighting for the north side of the site will remain unchanged but the west and south side building lights are scheduled to be removed. The site plan proposes one freestanding light pole on the south side of the expanded parking lot. The site plan provides lighting contours for this proposed light, and they reflect a maximum light level of 0.5 footcandles at the southern property line. However, the footcandle contours appear to have been shifted north from the depicted light source. The applicant should verify the accuracy of the provided contours and provide details of the proposed lighting fixture and pole. With the removal of the building's west side lights, there does not appear to be any proposed lighting to illuminate the parking spaces and driveway on the west side of the building. The applicant should verify whether or not adequate lighting levels will be provided in this area and whether or not additional wall-mounted or site lighting is required.

Drainage, Grading and Sewers: The applicant should provide a storm sewer catch basin connection detail. The applicant should also provide an invert of the sanitary sewer at the crossing with the proposed storm sewer and verify that adequate cover over the sanitary sewer exists to protect against frost. Once the storm sewer is installed, the potential for frost in the sanitary trench is introduced. The applicant should also provide MPT details for the connection of the storm system to the existing catch basin.

Finally, the applicant should provide a road repair detail for the trenching on Washington Street, which should include the repair of the concrete road base.

Landscaping and Buffers: The existing landscaping and green areas at the site consist of lawn areas around the perimeter of the building and parking lots along with a variety of trees, shrubs and brush areas. As part of the site development, most of the lawn area and two trees located to the south of the building will be removed for the expansion of the south parking lot. The proposed landscaping consists of adding four trees around the perimeter of the parking lot.

Since the property is located in a Commercial District, Section 310-59, Paragraph C of the Zoning Ordinance requires a 15' landscaped area in the front yard. Section 310-59, Paragraph A also requires a 5'-15' landscaped area wherever the property abuts a Residential District, meaning that a landscaped buffer zone is required along the north and east property lines. The front, side and rear yards on the proposed site plan meet the buffer zone width required in the ordinance.

The Planning Board's adopted Landscaping and Buffer Zone Guidelines supplement the ordinance and define the makeup of acceptable buffers in various situations. For a front yard buffer in a Commercial District, the buffer should consist of large deciduous trees every 40 feet or small to medium deciduous trees every 20 feet with planting beds in between. At a minimum, an additional street tree should be added within the front yard buffer area south of the northernmost entrance drive.

For required buffer zone areas between Non-Residential and Residential Zoning Districts, i.e. the north and east property lines, the guidelines recommend a 15 feet wide landscaped strip, with large deciduous trees every 35' or small to medium deciduous trees every 20 feet with planting beds in between. It is Staff's opinion that the combination of proposed and existing trees and the dense brush line along the north and east property lines satisfies the intent of the guidelines and no additional landscaping is needed.

When the Animal Hospital purchased the land and originally constructed their facility in the early 1970's, the Animal Hospital signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the St. Patrick's Orphanage. In the MOA, the Animal Hospital agreed to construct their building with certain architectural features, design it with soundproofing and provide certain site drainage and landscaping items as part of the site plan. The MOA is a covenant that runs with the land and applies to any future owners. Attached to this report is a letter that the applicant has provided from the Sisters of St. Joseph indicating that the convent is aware of the proposed building addition and they are satisfied that the applicant's project does not affect the basic intent of the original agreement.

Setbacks: The Zoning Ordinance requires a 25' rear yard setback from the property line for every building in Commercial Districts. The crematorium structure and shed, as well as part of a second shed, are all within 25 feet of the rear property line. However, Section 310-35 of the Zoning Ordinance permits accessory buildings in rear yards, provided that they not occupy more than 40 percent of any required rear yard, not exceed 20 feet in height and be not less than three feet from any rear lot line. All three of these accessory buildings meet all of the above requirements.

SEQR: The NYSDEC has an online tool called the EAF Mapper that assists applicants with compiling answers to Part 1 of the SEQR Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF). The EAF that was submitted for this project using the online tool identifies an area of concern. The Short EAF indicates that the project area is located within an archaeologically sensitive area. The applicant shall provide a "No Impact" letter from the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

In the answer to Question 17b, the applicant indicates that stormwater discharges will be directed to established conveyance systems. In this case, the Short EAF form requires a brief description of the adjacent conveyance system. The applicant should provide this description as required.

While the applicant submitted copies of the completed Short EAF form, none of them are signed or dated. The applicant should submit a signed and dated copy of the completed SEQR Short EAF form.

Signs and Other Permits: On the Exterior Elevations page, the West Elevation drawing refers to the Occupant Maximum Sign Surface Area for Neighborhood Business Districts. The applicant should revise this language to

refer to and reflect the allowances for Commercial Districts. All signage review and sign permitting will be performed as a separate process by the City of Watertown City Code Enforcement Bureau.

In addition, the property owner must obtain the following permits prior to construction: Building Permit, Storm Sewer Connection Permit, Sidewalk Permit, General City Permit and Sign Permit.

Miscellaneous: The applicant shall obtain a letter from the property owner authorizing the applicant to apply for a site plan approval. The applicant should indicate the proposed hours of operation. The site plan also does not delineate any areas for snow storage. The applicant should add snow storage areas to the site plan.

Summary:

1. The applicant must submit a site plan that meets the parking requirements that are identified in the Zoning Ordinance or indicate their intent to apply for a Variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
2. The applicant shall verify the accuracy of the lighting contours provided on the site plan, shall provide details of the proposed lighting fixture and pole in the south parking lot and shall address the apparent lack of lighting on the west side of the site.
3. The applicant must address all of the Engineering Department's stormwater design requirements and sewer-related comments listed above prior to the issuance of any City permits.
4. The applicant shall add a street tree within the required front yard buffer area south of the northernmost entrance drive.
5. The applicant shall address and provide additional data for all of the SEQR issues identified above prior to the City Council considering the site plan for approval.
6. The applicant shall add a delineated snow storage area to the site plan.
7. The applicant shall indicate the proposed hours of operation.
8. The applicant must obtain, minimally, the following permits prior to construction: Building Permit, Storm Sewer Connection Permit, Sidewalk Permit, General City Permit and a Sign Permit.
9. The applicant shall obtain a letter from the property owner authorizing the applicant to apply for a site plan approval.

cc: City Council Members
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney
Brian Drake, Civil Engineer II
Timothy F. Titus, Aubertine and Currier, PLLC
Dr. Christopher Jank, DVM, 1445 Washington Street, LLC