



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

CITY PLANNING BOARD
ROOM 302, WATERTOWN CITY HALL
245 WASHINGTON STREET
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380
(315) 785-7730

MEETING: June 3, 2014

PRESENT:

Sara Freda, Chair
William Davis
Larry Coburn
Linda Fields
Lori Gervera
Neil Katzman

ALSO:

Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community
Development Coordinator
Michael Lumbis, Planner
Andrew Nichols, Planner
Justin Wood, Civil Engineer II

ABSENT:

Michele Capone

The June 3, 2014 Planning Board Meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM by Planning Board Chair Sara Freda. Mrs. Freda then called for a reading of the Minutes from the May 6, 2014 Planning Board Meeting. Mrs. Fields made a motion to waive the reading of the Minutes and accept them as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis, and all voted in favor.

SITE PLAN – ACCOUNTANT OFFICE

VL-9 COMMERCE PARK DRIVE EAST – PARCEL 8-50-101.150

The Planning Board then considered a request submitted by submitted by Christopher Todd of Aubertine & Currier, on behalf of Bowers & Company, for the construction of a 7,800 square foot office building, plus parking lot and landscaping, at VL-9 Commerce Park Drive East, parcel 8-50-101.150.

Matt Morgia of Aubertine & Currier approached the board to explain the project. He described the site layout, noting that USPS was nearby to the north, and Northern Credit Union was nearby to the west. He explained that this lot was subdivided as part of the commerce park development in 1985. Utilities are already extended to the site. He provided materials to the board which included written responses to the comments in the Staff Report.

With regard to staff comment #1, he explained that he would rather not eliminate one of the curb cuts, because it would make circulation more difficult for large vehicles, including the fire apparatus. He provided plans showing three alternative parking lot layouts.

Mr. Katzman asked if angled parking could be used to save space.

Mr. Morgia said that diagonal parking spaces cause new problems because they are wider and more difficult to back out of. He showed the board one of the alternative plans which eliminated one of the curb cuts, noting that the circulation was poor, and the parking lot was short of zoning requirements by 3 spaces.

Mrs. Freda asked whether utility and storage space had been included in the parking minimum calculation.

Mr. Morgia said that subtracting utility space would only reduce the square footage by 150, which would not alter the requirement.

Mrs. Freda asked if any of the other lots around the cul-de-sac were still open for development.

Mr. Morgia said that the lot to south was still available. His clients had looked at that property initially, but the current proposal seemed easier.

Mr. Davis said that the size of the island between the drives should be reduced and reconfigured so that cars can be guided to the best place. He said that the island should be designed and not just treated as a leftover.

Mr. Morgia said that the site is a bit constrained.

Mr. Wood said that the goal of the comment was to see alternatives that give more efficient access to the site. Ideally, no site would use more than one curb cut, but sometimes it cannot be avoided. The nearby vacant lot is a wild card, it could be developed as an intensive use, or not developed at all. He said that the green spaces separating the driveways should be increased as a minimum measure.

Mr. Mix noted that a one-way circulation pattern would help reduce the width needed for the curb cuts.

Mr. Morgia agreed, but noted that the one-way pattern is hard to enforce.

Mrs. Freda said that it sounds like the best option is to go with two curb cuts of reduced width, and expand the green space separating them. The board agreed.

Mr. Davis noted that the back corner of the island should be chamfered so that plows do not destroy it.

Mr. Morgia continued, saying that roof leaders would be added to reduce runoff exiting the site to the north. He also explained that the intent of the design was to use a swale along the parking lot edge to channel all of the parking lot runoff to the catch basin at the north east corner of the site. He said they may add a berm to ensure that nothing flows to the southeast.

He said that after construction, the utilities running along to the north side of the site would still have a normal amount of cover. For example, the storm line would have 8' max cover. They are cutting from the west and filling to the east, so the cover depth would become more consistent.

Mrs. Freda asked for Mr. Wood's opinion.

Mr. Wood said that the concern with the additional fill stems from issues regarding maintenance of the utility lines. Maintenance crews would have diminished access, would have to dig on a slope, and would have to remove and stockpile additional material in order to access the pipes. He asked that the board leave the condition in place so that the applicant could discuss the issue further with the Engineering Department.

Mr. Morgia said that lowering the finish floor elevation would be difficult, but perhaps the slope up to the floor could be flattened to 1:4 instead of 1:3.

Mr. Morgia then explained that a curb was being installed near Manhole 7A1, which is the reason for the 6" elevation change. The top of curb spot elevation would be added.

Mr. Morgia said that three additional trees were shown near the western property line. He said that they were left out initially because of proximity to utility lines.

Mr. Lumbis said that 10' of separation would be provided between the utility lines and the trees. He said the benefits the trees provide outweigh the chance of potential tree damage that would occur if future utility repairs were needed during the life of the tree. He said the potential risk is acceptable.

Mr. Katzman moved to recommend that City Council approve the site plan submitted by Christopher Todd of Aubertine & Currier, on behalf of Bowers & Company, for the construction of a 7,800 square foot office building, plus parking lot and landscaping, at VL-9 Commerce Park Drive East, parcel 8-50-101.150, as submitted to the Engineering Department on May 19, 2014, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall reduce the size of both curb cuts and increase their separation, and chamfer the back corner of the island to avoid plow damage.
2. The applicant shall include a City Curb Detail for the curb along the cul-de-sac.
3. The applicant shall include a City Asphalt Pavement Detail.
4. The applicant shall submit a separate photometric plan.
5. The applicant shall configure the roof leaders to minimize the amount of runoff exiting to the north, and depict the roof leaders on the site plan.
6. The applicant shall revise the parking lot grading so that all runoff is contained onsite or directed to a storm sewer.
7. The applicant shall revise the site grading to reduce the amount of additional cover over the city's sewer lines north of the proposed building.

8. The Engineering Report shall be revised to include drainage area maps and the correct site soil map.
9. The applicant shall delete "IF NECESSARY" from the note on CG-100 related to the saddle, corp stop, and curb stop for the water service.
10. The applicant shall lower Manhole SSMH-7A1 match the proposed grade.
11. The applicant shall add three additional large maturing shade trees along the western property line, spaced 40' on center.
12. The applicant shall maintain the existing 40' wide tree/brush area on the east side of the site to serve as a screen and buffer between the project and the residential use located to the east.
13. The applicant must provide an original survey map of the property, stamped and signed by a NYS licensed land surveyor, and a set of site plans stamped and signed by a NYS registered architect or engineer.
14. The applicant shall revise the site plans to show the correct setbacks.

Mr. Davis seconded, all voted in favor.

The board briefly discussed changing their meeting time. It was agreed that no change was needed.

The board then briefly discussed the recent rejection by City Council of the zone change for 111 Chestnut Street.

Mrs. Fields moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Freda seconded, all voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.