



## 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: September 3, 2013

PRESENT:

Sara Freda, Chair  
Larry Coburn  
Lin 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:

William Davis  
Pat Fontana

The September 3, 2013 Planning Board Meeting was called to order at 3:03 PM by Planning Board Chair Sara Freda. Mrs. Freda then called for a reading of the Minutes from the August 6, 2013 Planning Board Meeting. Mrs. Gervera made a motion to waive the reading of the Minutes and accept them as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Coburn, and all voted in favor.

### **SPECIAL USE PERMIT – AUTO SALES**

#### **816 COFFEEN ST – PARCEL 8-21-306**

The Planning Board then considered a request by Scott Gerni to operate an auto sales lot in a Neighborhood Business District at 816 Coffeen St, parcel 8-21-306.

Mr. Gerni approached the board to explain his request. He said that his proposal is not as bad as it sounded on the news. He would not be showing cars up front, he just wants to dabble in auto sales, and would have at most 3 vehicles with dealer plates, one of which he would be driving on a regular basis. It would not be a typical car lot.

Mr. Katzman asked if the appropriate permits had been acquired from the State.

Mr. Gerni replied that he needs to secure an approved lot before he can apply to the State.

Mrs. Freda asked if there would be three cars plus one to drive, or just three.

Mr. Gerni replied that there would be just three. He noted that sales would be conducted by appointment only.

Mrs. Fields noted that this is also the location of Mr. Gerni's real estate office, and traffic could be a concern.

Mr. Katzman agreed that it would increase the number of cars typically in the parking lot.

Mrs. Fields asked how long Mr. Gerni had been planning this project.

Mr. Gerni said that he had been thinking about it for about ten years, but he did not have this location in mind at the time of its recent zone change (from Residence B to Neighborhood Business, approved by Council on December 3, 2012).

Mr. Katzman asked Patrick Scordo, in the audience, for his input.

Mr. Scordo noted that he is a relative of the owner of 808 Coffeen Street. He said that he was initially opposed to this request but he was in attendance to ask a few questions regarding hours of operation, number of vehicles, lighting, and landscaping. Some of his questions had already been covered.

Mr. Gerni responded that no new landscaping or lighting would be installed. He was not intending to make any changes to the property, just park a few extra cars in the back.

Mrs. Freda noted that the property had been changed from Residence B to Neighborhood Business. She asked if this was the lowest level commercial district. Mr. Nichols replied that Limited Business is more restrictive.

Mrs. Freda asked why Limited Business was not used here. Mr. Nichols noted that there is no nearby land zoned under that district, so it could have been considered spot zoning. The area to the west was already Neighborhood Business, so the change was an expansion of an existing district.

Mrs. Freda noted that the real estate office is located in the garage, and asked Mr. Gerni if the house was occupied.

Mr. Gerni replied that the house is a 2-family rental.

Mrs. Fields said she is concerned about additional traffic in the area, noting that Coffeen Street is already congested. She thinks the existing sign for the real estate office looks out of place, and would not like to see the situation made worse with additional signage. She does not want the area to become more commercialized than it already is. She does not believe the site has enough space for the number of cars proposed.

Mr. Gerni noted that he has parking for 11 vehicles.

Mr. Katzman said that he also would not like to see auto sales here at this time. Depending on how the area develops, it could be an appropriate use in five years time, if Coffeen Street looks more like Arsenal at that time. Right now it is not appropriate.

Mrs. Freda noted that a letter in opposition to the request was received from Jon and Gail Sovie of 824 Coffeen Street. The letter is attached and made part of these minutes.

Mr. Katzman asked if repairs would occur at this location.

Mr. Gerni said that they would not; it would require a separate license.

Mr. Coburn noted that the Special Use Permit is specific to a single use as well.

Mrs. Gervera asked if the State required signage. Mr. Gerni replied that a single one foot square sign would have to be installed, probably on the outside wall of the garage.

Mr. Katzman said he thinks the sign is more like 3' x 3' in size.

Mrs. Freda asked Mr. Gerni to clarify the exact size and location of the sign before the City Council public hearing.

Mrs. Gervera noted that auto sales are more of a hard retail operation, whereas the real estate business is more similar to a professional office.

Mrs. Freda noted that it would be difficult for the City to enforce a limit on the number of cars for sale.

Mr. Katzman then moved to recommend approval of the request submitted by Scott Gerni to operate an auto sales lot in a Neighborhood Business District at 816 Coffeen St, parcel 8-21-306, subject to the following condition:

1. No more than 3 vehicles shall be offered for sale at one time.

Mrs. Fields seconded the motion. Mrs. Fields, Mrs. Freda, Mrs. Gervera, and Mr. Katzman voted in opposition. Mr. Coburn voted in favor. The motion was defeated by a vote of 4-1.

Mr. Coburn noted that he believes the operation is small enough that it would not have a negative impact on the neighborhood.

**ZONE CHANGE – PDD #3**  
**591 WELDON DR – PARCEL 14-49-102**

The Board then considered a request by Charlie Allen of Evergreen Partners to amend Planned Development District #3 to allow the construction of a community building at Maple Court Apartments, 591 Weldon Drive, parcel 14-49-102.

Nicholas Bouquet was in attendance to represent the applicant. He approached the Board to explain the request. He noted that Evergreen is a developer of affordable housing and has completed similar renovation projects in the past. They are currently in the process of applying for financing, and securing the zone change will help in the process. Currently the apartment complex has no community building, and the administrative offices are in the basement of one of the buildings. The new community building would have offices, a computer center, laundry facilities, and an area for general use by the tenants.

Mr. Katzman asked if the reduction in green space would affect the availability of play areas for children. Mr. Bouquet said that the property manager has said that the courtyard area is not used by children. New play areas will be added elsewhere as part of the renovation. He showed the board some photos of another recent project, and architect's renderings of the proposed renovations (on file in the City Engineer's office).

Mrs. Fields asked if landscaping and lighting would be altered. Mr. Bouquet said that there would be changes, and more information would be provided in the future.

Mr. Katzman asked if the sewer and water services could handle the additional load. Mr. Bouquet said the consulting architects thought there would be no problem.

Mr. Katzman then moved to recommend approval of the request submitted by Charlie Allen of Evergreen Partners to amend Planned Development District #3 to allow the construction of a community building at Maple Court Apartments, 591 Weldon Drive, parcel 14-49-102, with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall shift the building to meet the district setback requirements, and submit a revised district plan to the City Engineer.
2. The applicant shall correct the labels of Kieff Drive, Jewell Drive, and Weldon Drive on the revised district plan.

Mr. Coburn seconded, all voted in favor.

#### **SITE PLAN AMENDMENT – EXPRESS MART 1268 ARSENAL ST – 8-53-102.100**

The Board then considered a request submitted by Wendy Ferrie to amend the approved site plan to enlarge and relocate the drive-through window for the proposed Express Mart at 1268 Arsenal Street, parcel 8-53-102.100.

Paul Curtin of Shulman Curtin & Grundner, PC, and Patrick Hyde, Express Mart Facilities Manager, were in attendance to represent the applicant.

Mr. Curtin approached the Board to explain the project. He noted that a plan for the upgrade was originally approved in 2009, but now that they were ready to proceed with construction, some changes are necessary. In order to accommodate serving frozen drinks from the drive-through, the building area was being expanded. The driveway and parking layout

would also be altered. The new building's design has been altered, most notable to have a peak roof rather than a flat roof.

Mr. Katzman asked if the store would be similar to the location in Mattydale.

Mr. Curtin said that it would, and that the Fayetteville location is also similar.

Mrs. Freda asked if the 2009 plan had a drive-through.

Mr. Curtin answered that it did, along the back of the building. The new location would be on the side.

Mr. Wood noted that incoming traffic from the commercial development to the north would be a likely source of conflict where the drive-through and exit lane overlap.

Mr. Curtin said that the architect is working on a solution. The building might be shifted or rotated slightly. The new plans would be submitted as soon as possible, maybe by the end of the week.

Mrs. Fields asked if the lighting would be altered. Mr. Curtin said that there would be no more lighting than previously approved.

There was some discussion on whether the application should be tabled pending the updated plans. Mr. Wood said that the review should be simple and quick, but if the changes are major, staff would bring it back to the Planning Board.

Mr. Katzman then moved to recommend that City Council approve the site plan amendment request submitted by Wendy Ferrie to enlarge and relocate the drive-through window for the proposed Express Mart at 1268 Arsenal Street, parcel 8-53-102.100, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall adjust the drive-through layout so that the bypass lane is not obstructed by queuing vehicles.
2. The applicant shall provide a stop sign at the 4-way intersection to the north of the project site.
3. The applicant shall provide 2 sets of full-size revised plans to the Engineering Department, printed at their noted scale, with all of the graphical changes listed in the Staff Memorandum of August 28, 2013.

Mrs. Fields seconded, all voted in favor.

**SITE PLAN AMENDMENT – NORTH COUNTRY NEUROLOGY  
1340 WASHINGTON ST – 14-21-102**

The Board then considered a request submitted by Terry Wood to remove fencing along the southern property line from the approved site plan for North Country Neurology, 1340 Washington Street, parcel 14-21-102.

Mr. Terry Wood was present to explain the amendment. He said that the slope along the property line was steeper than expected, and large rock had been placed to prevent erosion. Because of the rock and the slope, it seemed pointless to install the fence. It would be too low to provide privacy, since the 6-foot fence would be at the bottom of a 3-foot hill, and it would not likely withstand the snow pushed against it by the plows.

Mr. Katzman said that the snow push would probably kill the trees in the vicinity too.

Mrs. Fields asked if it would be possible to install some kind of barrier in front of the trees. Mr. Katzman said that he doesn't know of any kind of barrier that would actually work.

Mr. Lumbis noted that the previous landscaped buffer survived the snow for many years, and was in a similar location compared to the old parking lot.

Mr. Katzman said that a solid hedge row would be better than a fence. Possibly cedar.

Mrs. Fields pointed out that cedar can have a negative effect on nearby fruit trees.

Mrs. Gervera said that Cavallario's had recently installed a hedge buffer, and something similar could be appropriate here.

There was some discussion about the enforcement of landscaping requirements. It was noted that Site Plan Approval resolutions are written so that landscaping must be installed prior to a final Certificate of Occupancy.

Mr. Katzman wondered if some extended warranty could be made by LUNCO on the survival of the landscaping, perhaps for 5 years.

Mr. Mix said that landscaping, like any other requirement of site plan approval, is an ongoing requirement. If plantings are not maintained, the owner can be cited just the same as if they failed to provide enough parking, constructed something without approval, et cetera.

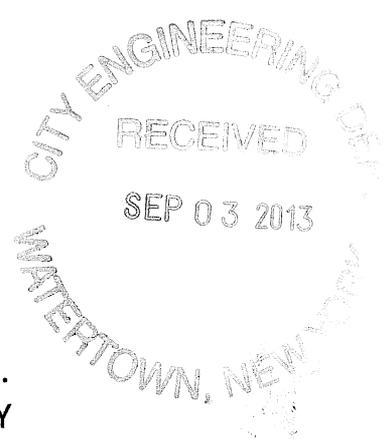
Mrs. Fields said that she would like to see more trees in the buffer, with the shrubbery removed.

Mrs. Gervera moved to table the application pending submittal of a revised plan that shows the following:

1. Location of the installed rock.
2. Proposed landscaping including species, installed size, and spacing.
3. Grading along the southern property line.
4. Delete the fence from the plan.

Mr. Katzman seconded, all voted in favor.

Mr. Katzman moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Coburn seconded, all voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.



Jon M. Sovie  
Gail M. Sovie  
824 Coffeen St.  
Watertown, NY  
September 2, 2013

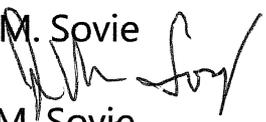
City Council Members:

We are totally opposed to the request for plans to have a used car sales lot at 816 Coffeen St. We do not believe it would add value to the neighborhood. We certainly are not at all opposed to businesses in the neighborhood, but only concerned that this type of venue would not be an aesthetic fit to a residential/family business neighborhood. There are many families still residing within the neighborhood.

We are questioning how many vehicles would be allowed for sale on the property at a time. Where will the vehicles be stored? Will there be any structural change to the property? Will the area have fencing and what type of landscaping will be utilized? We are also concerned whether there will be any mechanical repairs performed on the property and what type of effect that will have on the environment. If repairs were allowed to be performed, where on the property would that take place?

We hope that the members of the council take our questions into consideration when researching this request from the property owner at 816 Coffeen St.

Thank you and respectfully submitted by,

Jon M. Sovie  
  
Gail M. Sovie  
