



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

CITY PLANNING BOARD
ROOM 304, WATERTOWN CITY HALL
245 WASHINGTON STREET
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380
(315) 785-7740

MEETING: October 6, 2015

PRESENT:

Sara Freda, Chairperson
Michelle Capone
Larry Coburn
Anthony Neddo
Steve Rowell

ALSO:

Michael A. Lumbis, Planner
Jeffrey Polkowski, Planner
Geoffrey Urda, Planner
Brian Drake, Civil Engineer II

ABSENT:

Linda Fields
Neil Katzman

The October 6, 2015 Planning Board Meeting was called to order at 3:07 PM by Planning Board Chair Sara Freda. Ms. Freda called for a reading of the Minutes from the August 8, 2015 Planning Board Meeting. Mr. Coburn made a motion to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neddo and all voted in favor.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL 1445 WASHINGTON STREET – PARCEL # 13-22-208.000

The Planning Board then considered a request for site plan approval submitted by Timothy Titus of Aubertine and Currier, PLLC on behalf of 1445 Washington Street, LLC for the construction of a 2,110 square foot building expansion and a 10-space parking lot expansion to the Watertown Animal Hospital building at 1445 Washington Street, Parcel Number 13-22-208.000. Mr. Titus and Dr. Gary Babcock were in attendance to represent 1445 Washington Street, LLC before the Planning Board.

Mr. Titus began by saying that the existing main entrance to the animal hospital on the west side is scheduled to be enclosed and will become a small entrance for staff only. Mr. Titus then explained that the south side of the building will serve as the new main entrance. Mr. Titus noted that the existing parking on the south side of the building near the new southern entrance will now have 17 spaces.

Mr. Titus said that there will be interior renovations throughout the entire building, and the remodeled building will have of four exam rooms. Mr. Titus then explained that the additional exam rooms are possible because of a zone change from Neighborhood District to Commercial in June.

Mr. Titus said that the water and sewer systems come through the existing buildings and the addition will be served by those facilities. Mr. Titus then said that stormwater will be captured and brought into the existing stormwater system on Washington Street. Mr. Titus said that there will be one additional pole mounted light fixture and one additional wall pack light fixture in addition to the existing wall pack lighting.

Mr. Titus then addressed the issue of the parking spaces, explaining that he was one space short. He said the plans he originally submitted to the City included parking spaces on the north side of the building at a size of 10ft. x 20ft. He said he was able to re-adjust these parking spaces to 9ft. x 18ft. to match the space size on the rest of the site and is now able to provide a total of 30 parking spaces. He will submit a revised plan that illustrates this change.

Mr. Titus then addressed the Staff's concern with how close the newly installed storm drain will be to the existing sanitary sewer line. Mr. Titus explained that the new storm drain will be 4' apart from the established sanitary sewer line, as the sanitary line is 8' deep. Because of this distance, introducing frost to the sanitary sewer line will not be an issue.

Mr. Titus then acknowledged the need for a Maintenance and Protection of Traffic plan to their submission and to include a City curb replacement detail at the request of City Staff.

Mr. Titus then referenced the summary item on Staff's memorandum requiring an additional street tree. Mr. Titus remarked that the owner of the property has agreed to add a street tree within the required front yard buffer area south of the northernmost entrance drive.

Mr. Titus then acknowledged that the Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) that he had submitted did not include a brief description of the conveyance systems that stormwater discharges will be directed to and that the EAF was not signed or dated. Mr. Titus then handed an updated EAF to City Staff.

Mr. Titus also acknowledged that the EAF that he had submitted to the City indicated that the project area is located within an archeologically sensitive area. Mr. Titus then handed to City Staff a "No Impact" letter from the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

Mr. Titus then noted the summary item on the Staff's memorandum that the applicant should delineate an area for snow storage. Mr. Titus described to Staff's satisfaction the areas set aside for snow storage and indicated that these would be delineated on the official set of plans that Mr. Titus will submit prior to his application being heard by City Council.

Ms. Freda then referenced the summary item on Staff's memorandum requiring proposed hours of operation for the facility.

Mr. Titus replied that the facility would be open on Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM and on Saturday from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Ms. Freda then asked Staff about the proposal to make the parking spaces on the site 9ft. x 18ft. Mr. Drake noted that the City prefers 10ft. x 20ft parking spaces, however the City has no adopted guideline or required standard size and the 9ft. x 18ft. parking spaces are acceptable.

Ms. Freda then asked if the animal hospital accommodates larger animals that are not domestic. Dr. Babcock replied explaining that only domestic animals are looked after.

Ms. Freda then asked if there was a reason why the EAF required a letter from the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

Mr. Lumbis explained that the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has moved to an electronic system for completing the Environmental Assessment Forms. There must be something of significance within a certain radius of the project area, which triggered that particular box to be checked on the form and therefore required the consultation with the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

Ms. Freda then asked if anyone knew what it was that had triggered the program. Mr. Lumbis said that he was not sure.

Ms. Freda mentioned that she did not think this was required during the Nice N Easy development located across the street that was recently brought to the Planning Board. Mr. Lumbis stated that he did not remember for sure, but thought that there was a "No Impact" letter from the New York State Historic Preservation Office during the approval of the Nice N' Easy development. Mr. Lumbis then said that when the electronic form is submitted it is common for several additional requirements to be made such as this.

Ms. Freda then stated that many of the contingencies in the Staff's memorandum must be kept until a final site plan is submitted to the City, although some have been addressed.

Ms. Capone then made a motion recommending that City Council approve the site plan submitted by Timothy Titus of Aubertine and Currier, PLLC on behalf of 1445 Washington Street, LLC for the construction of a 2,110 square foot building expansion and a 10-space parking lot expansion to the Watertown Animal Hospital building at 1445 Washington Street, Parcel Number 13-22-208.000 contingent upon the following:

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 in the Review Memo 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 add a delineated snow storage area to the site plan.
6. 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.
7. The applicant shall add a Maintenance and Protection of Traffic plan to their submission and include a City curb replacement detail.

The motion was then seconded by Mr. Neddo and all voted in favor. Ms. Freda then said that the application would go before City Council on October 19, 2015 for their consideration.

ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION

The Planning Board then heard a presentation from Geoffrey Urda, Planner for the City of Watertown. Mr. Urda opened by saying that he was asked by Ms. Freda to be put on the Planning Board agenda to explain to the Planning Board the purpose of an Analysis of Impediments document and why the Board needed to know about it.

Mr. Urda gave a brief history of both state and federal fair housing laws. He then explained that the purpose of this analysis was to review a jurisdiction's regulations, assess how they affect local housing, assess how housing conditions affect fair housing choice for all protected classes, and assess availability of affordable, accessible housing in a range of unit sizes.

Mr. Urda then drew the Planning Board's attention to several maps of the City of Watertown that displayed the City's population by race, income, age, disability, and school district. Mr. Urda also showed several maps and figures to display to the Planning Board an inventory of the City's housing stock.

Mr. Urda then said that the document identified four impediments to fair housing. They are:

1. The influence of Fort Drum and the military's Basic Allowance for Housing makes it difficult for low-income, non-military families to find affordable housing in the City of Watertown and creates a bias where landlords are eager to rent to the military.
2. The City's aging, substandard housing stock limits housing choice for households with small children or people with disabilities.
3. Voucher use is concentrated in parts of the city with the oldest housing stock and highest poverty rates.

4. A general lack of knowledge about Fair Housing rights, among both tenants and housing providers, enables the persistent imposition of undue hardships on disabled residents.

After the presentation, Ms. Capone asked if the City Council and Citizens Advisory Board would receive a similar presentation. Ms. Capone went on to say that it would be very beneficial for the City Council to see something similar. Mr. Lumbis agreed.

Ms. Capone then said that this presentation will generate additional discussion for Low-Moderate Income target areas.

Ms. Freda then asked if Mr. Urda has any intention of sharing this presentation with the School Board.

Mr. Urda stated that he would share the finalized Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing document with Ohio Elementary School Principal, Mark Taylor upon its completion and submission to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Ms. Capone then suggested that the presentation and the completed document be made public online through the City's website.

Mr. Coburn then moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neddo and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 PM.