



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 305, WATERTOWN, NY 13601
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TO: Planning Commission Members
FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community Development Director
PRIMARY REVIEWER: Jennifer L. Voss
SUBJECT: Site Plan Approval – VL1, VL2 and a portion of VL3 Commerce Park Drive
DATE: July 5, 2023
Request: Site Plan Approval to construct a 115,063 SF, 120-unit, four-story apartment building at **VL1, VL2 and a portion of VL3 Commerce Park Drive**, Parcel Numbers 8-50-106.000, 8-50-105.000 and the northern half of 8-50-101.009
Applicant: DePaul Properties
Proposed Use: Multifamily Apartment Building
Property Owners: Watertown Commerce LLC

Submitted:

Property Survey: Yes	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: Yes
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: Yes	Construction Time Schedule: No
Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Yes

SEQRA: Unlisted

Jefferson County 239-m Review: No

Zoning Information:

District: Commercial	Maximum Lot Coverage: 90 percent
Setback Requirements: F: 10', S: 5', R: 10'	Buffer Zones Required: Yes

Project Update: The Planning Commission considered this application at its June 6, 2023 meeting and voted to table the application pending the completion of the SEQR Lead Agency 30-day review process.

SEQR: The proposed site plan and related subdivision are considered Unlisted Actions under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). SEQRA review for the site plan, subdivision, as well for the required area variances that the applicant is also seeking from the Zoning Board of Appeals should be completed in one review as a whole action to avoid segmentation.

The proposed project requires a permit, approval, or funding from several different agencies in addition to the Planning Commission such as the Housing Finance Agency, NYS DEC, NYS OPRHP (SHPO) and the Zoning Board of Appeals. As there are other involved agencies, a coordinated SEQRA review is being completed.

Staff sent a copy of the applications to the various involved agencies and asked for their concurrence with the Planning Commission being designated as the Lead Agency. Involved agencies had 30 days to respond and responses were received from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the City of Watertown Zoning Board of Appeals and New York State Homes and Community Renewal. All consented to the City of Watertown Planning Commission's assumption of lead agency. The Planning Commission can now designate itself as the Lead Agency and complete the SEQRA review.

Summary: The following items were discussed at the previous Planning Commission meeting and must be resolved prior to construction:

1. The applicant should provide crosswalks to the sidewalk on the opposite side of Commerce Park Drive in order to connect the pedestrian network. *As discussed at the previous Planning Commission meeting, Planning staff recommends the crosswalk placed on the north side of the project, due to close proximity to businesses as well as a safer location for pedestrians to cross.*
2. The applicant should consider the placement of a bus shelter along Commerce Park Drive for residents to allow them easier access to the Citibus, especially during inclement weather.
3. The applicant must obtain an Area Variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals granting relief from the transparency requirements in the Commercial District.
4. The applicant must obtain an Area Variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals granting relief from the required 100-foot between functional entryways on the front of the building.
5. The applicant shall review the planting schedule to ensure that the drawing accurately depicts the planting plan.
6. The applicant shall stagger the tree species along Commerce Park Drive so as not to create a monoculture.
7. The applicant shall replace the tree species proposed for the parking lot islands with a more salt tolerant species such as those suggested in the staff report above.
8. The applicant should consider the addition of lighting to the entrances to the building along the front and side for pedestrian safety.
9. The applicant must identify a snow storage area on the proposed plan and ensure the tree planting plan is amended so that the snow removal operations will not damage any trees.

10. The applicant shall assemble all parcels into a single parcel, as proposed, by way of a new metes and bounds description filed with the County Clerk.
11. The applicant must obtain the following permits and other documentation, minimally, prior to construction: Building Permit, Water Permit, Sanitary Sewer Permit, Storm Sewer Permit, General City Permit for work within the ROW and a Zoning Compliance Certificate.

Planning Commission Action: The Planning Commission must complete the SEQR process prior to taking action on the application. Once the SEQR process has been completed, staff recommends voting to approve the application contingent on the Zoning Board of Appeals approving the two area variance applications at their July 19, 2023 meeting.

cc: Thomas Maurer, Civil Engineer II
Dana Aikins, Code Enforcement Supervisor
Mark Fuller, DePaul Properties, 1931 Buffalo Road, Rochester, NY 14624
Dan Brocht, LaBella Associates, 300 State Street, Suite 201, Rochester, NY 14621