



**INTEROFFICE MEMO
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

DATE: August 8, 2025

TO: Samuel Thomas, ZBA Chairperson

FROM: Joseph Albinus, Planner

SUBJECT: 144 Eastern Boulevard
Parcel Number 5-16-320.100
Zoning – Commercial
Petition for a Use Variance to allow a Self Storage Facility
File #608

UPDATE (August 8, 2025): At the July 23, 2025 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, the applicant submitted a packet to the ZBA members documenting the upkeep costs and other costs for the property and reasons why he wants a Self-Storage Facility instead of other available options. According to the packet, the applicant posits that the current rental rates are not profitable and the benefit from Self Storage would be greater than other allowed uses of the property.

Additionally, the application appeared on the Jefferson County Planning Board agenda for its Tuesday, July 29, 2025 meeting, pursuant to Section 239-m of New York State General Municipal Law. At that meeting, the board was unable to establish a quorum for this project, meaning that it reverts to the local board, which is free to make its decision. A copy of the County's letter, which contains some advisory comments, is attached.

----- **TEXT FROM ORIGINAL JULY 3, 2025 MEMO** -----

This petition, presented by Randolph Soggs, is for a Use Variance to allow a Self Storage Facility at 144 Eastern Boulevard. According to Section 310-18, a Self Storage Facility as a primary use is prohibited in all districts except the Planned Campus District and the Industrial District.

The applicant states that they have been struggling to maintain tenancies at the property. The applicant has also stated that the world of retail has changed in the twenty years they have owned the property and that fewer retailers need brick and mortar storefronts. The applicant has provided a brief overview of the dilemma in the cover letter and has stated that he will provide additional information for the ZBA to consider.

Additionally, the applicant applied for a Special Use Permit in 2013 for a Self Storage Facility at the same property. The applicant was granted the Special Use Permit at the time. However, the Self Storage Facility was not opened on the property within a year under the old zoning ordinance and the granted Special Use Permit expired.

The property does not appear to provide pedestrian access from the city sidewalk to the main entrance. However, the structure was built prior to the adoption of the updated Zoning Ordinance in 2023, meaning that it would enjoy a legal nonconforming (“grandfathered”) status. All other aspects of the structure appear to conform with the Zoning Ordinance.

6 NYCRR Part 617 states that if an action is not listed as a Type I or Type II Action under Section 617.4 or 617.5, then the Lead Agency is to treat the application as an Unlisted Action. Unlisted Actions do not exceed the thresholds of the Type I Actions listed in Section 617.4.

At a minimum, the Lead Agency shall complete a Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) for Unlisted Actions. The Short EAF is attached for the ZBA’s review. After reviewing Part 1 of the Short EAF, the ZBA shall complete Part 2 and make a determination of significance prior to voting on the variance request.

cc: Dana Aikins, City Code Enforcement Supervisor
Tiffany Ponce, 7140 County Route 97, Adams, NY, 13605
ZBA Members
File



Department of Planning
175 Arsenal Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Michael J. Bourcy
Director of Planning

(315) 785-3144
(315) 785-5092 (Fax)

July 30, 2025

Joseph Albinus, Planner
245 Washington Street
Room 305
Watertown, NY 13601

Re: Randolph Soggs, Use variance for indoor self-storage, 144 Eastern Boulevard,
JCDP File # C 10 - 25

Dear Joseph,

On July 29, 2025, the Jefferson County Planning Board reviewed the above referenced project, referred pursuant to General Municipal Law, Section 239m.

The Board was unable to establish a quorum for this project. Despite the lack of quorum, the Board would like to forward staff review comments for informational purposes.

During the review, the Staff noted that for a use variance to be granted, all the tests found in NYS City Law for the variance must be satisfied prior to approval.

Furthermore, the Board has the following local advisory comments:

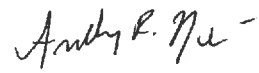
The local board should ensure any proposed signage or proposed lighting meets the City Zoning Ordinance requirements.

The local board is free to make its final decision.

General Municipal Law, Section 239m, requires the local board to notify the County of its action on this matter within thirty (30) days after taking a final action.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy R. Nevin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line at the end.

Andy R. Nevin
Senior Planner

Short Environmental Assessment Form

Part 1 - Project Information


Instructions for Completing

Part 1 – Project Information. The applicant or project sponsor is responsible for the completion of Part 1. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification. Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information.

Complete all items in Part 1. You may also provide any additional information which you believe will be needed by or useful to the lead agency; attach additional pages as necessary to supplement any item.

Part 1 – Project and Sponsor Information							
Northland Self Storage							
Name of Action or Project: Northland Self Storage							
Project Location (describe, and attach a location map): 144 Eastern Boulevard							
Brief Description of Proposed Action: Convert former retail space to climate control self storage							
Name of Applicant or Sponsor: Watertown Center Development, LLC		Telephone: 315.796.6562					
		E-Mail: r.soggs@soggs.com					
Address: POB 183							
City/PO: Clinton		State: NY	Zip Code: 13323				
1. Does the proposed action only involve the legislative adoption of a plan, local law, ordinance, administrative rule, or regulation? If Yes, attach a narrative description of the intent of the proposed action and the environmental resources that may be affected in the municipality and proceed to Part 2. If no, continue to question 2.			<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">NO</td> <td style="text-align: center;">YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	NO	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	YES						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
2. Does the proposed action require a permit, approval or funding from any other government Agency? If Yes, list agency(s) name and permit or approval: Use Vatriance			<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">NO</td> <td style="text-align: center;">YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	NO	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NO	YES						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
3. a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action?		17.4 acres					
b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed?		0 acres					
c. Total acreage (project site and any contiguous properties) owned or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor?		17.4 acres					
4. Check all land uses that occur on, are adjoining or near the proposed action:							
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural (non-agriculture) <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential (suburban)							
<input type="checkbox"/> Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic <input type="checkbox"/> Other(Specify):							
<input type="checkbox"/> Parkland							

5. Is the proposed action,	NO	YES	N/A
a. A permitted use under the zoning regulations?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is the proposed action consistent with the predominant character of the existing built or natural landscape?	NO	YES	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7. Is the site of the proposed action located in, or does it adjoin, a state listed Critical Environmental Area?	NO	YES	
If Yes, identify: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. a. Will the proposed action result in a substantial increase in traffic above present levels?	NO	YES	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Are public transportation services available at or near the site of the proposed action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
c. Are any pedestrian accommodations or bicycle routes available on or near the site of the proposed action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Does the proposed action meet or exceed the state energy code requirements?	NO	YES	
If the proposed action will exceed requirements, describe design features and technologies: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10. Will the proposed action connect to an existing public/private water supply?	NO	YES	
If No, describe method for providing potable water: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11. Will the proposed action connect to existing wastewater utilities?	NO	YES	
If No, describe method for providing wastewater treatment: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12. a. Does the project site contain, or is it substantially contiguous to, a building, archaeological site, or district which is listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, or that has been determined by the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places?	NO	YES	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Is the project site, or any portion of it, located in or adjacent to an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13. a. Does any portion of the site of the proposed action, or lands adjoining the proposed action, contain wetlands or other waterbodies regulated by a federal, state or local agency?	NO	YES	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Would the proposed action physically alter, or encroach into, any existing wetland or waterbody?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, identify the wetland or waterbody and extent of alterations in square feet or acres: _____ _____ _____			

14. Identify the typical habitat types that occur on, or are likely to be found on the project site. Check all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Shoreline <input type="checkbox"/> Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural/grasslands <input type="checkbox"/> Early mid-successional <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban		
15. Does the site of the proposed action contain any species of animal, or associated habitats, listed by the State or Federal government as threatened or endangered?	NO	YES
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Is the project site located in the 100-year flood plan?	NO	YES
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Will the proposed action create storm water discharge, either from point or non-point sources? If Yes, <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> a. Will storm water discharges flow to adjacent properties? b. Will storm water discharges be directed to established conveyance systems (runoff and storm drains)? </div> If Yes, briefly describe:	NO	YES
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18. Does the proposed action include construction or other activities that would result in the impoundment of water or other liquids (e.g., retention pond, waste lagoon, dam)? If Yes, explain the purpose and size of the impoundment:	NO	YES
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the location of an active or closed solid waste management facility? If Yes, describe:	NO	YES
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the subject of remediation (ongoing or completed) for hazardous waste? If Yes, describe:	NO	YES
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE		
Applicant/sponsor/name: <u>Watertown Center Development, LLC</u> Date: <u>June 23, 2025</u>		
Signature:  Title: <u>Authorized Representative</u>		