



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
ROOM 305, WATERTOWN CITY HALL  
245 WASHINGTON STREET  
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380  
(315) 785-7741

MEETING: October 7, 2025

PRESENT:

Michelle Capone, Chair  
T.J. Babcock  
Peter Monaco  
Scott Garrabrant  
Lynn Godek  
Maryellen Blevins

ALSO:

Michael Lumbis, Planning and Community  
Development Director  
Geoffrey Urda, Senior Planner  
Joseph Albinus, Planner  
Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary

ABSENT:

Linda Fields

Planning Commission Chairperson, Michelle Capone, called the December 2, 2025, Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:17 p.m. Ms. Capone asked for a motion regarding the minutes of the October 7, 2025, meeting. Lynn Godek made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Peter Monaco seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

**PUBLIC HEARING - SUBDIVISION FINAL PLAT APPROVAL – TWO-LOT  
SUBDIVISION OF 1611 COLUMBIA STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 5-13-203.000.**

Ms. Capone read aloud the public hearing notice for the above Subdivision Final Plat Approval that had been published in the *Watertown Daily Times* and opened the Public Hearing at 6:20 p.m. Hearing no comments, she then closed the Public Hearing at 6:21 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING - SPECIAL USE PERMIT – ESTABLISH A MARIJUANA  
DISPENSARY, RETAIL USE IN A COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AT 1222 ARSENAL  
STREET, SUITE 12, PARCEL NUMBER 8-53-121.000**

Ms. Capone read aloud the public hearing notice for the above Special Use Permit that had been published in the *Watertown Daily Times* and opened the Public Hearing at 6:22 p.m. Hearing no comments, she then closed the Public Hearing at 6:23 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING - SPECIAL USE PERMIT – ESTABLISH A MARIJUANA  
DISPENSARY, RETAIL USE IN A COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AT 1222 ARSENAL  
STREET, SUITE 13, PARCEL NUMBER 8-53-121.000**

Ms. Capone read aloud the public hearing notice for the above Special Use Permit that had been published in the *Watertown Daily Times* and opened the Public Hearing at 6:24 p.m. Hearing no comments, she then closed the Public Hearing at 6:25 p.m.

**SUBDIVISION FINAL PLAT APPROVAL - TWO-LOT SUBDIVISION OF 1611  
COLUMBIA STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 5-13-203.000.**

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by Patsy A. Storino on behalf of Vicki M. Phillips for a two-lot subdivision of **1611 Columbia Street**, Parcel Number 5-13-203.000. Ms. Phillips attended to represent the request.

Ms. Phillips began by identifying herself as the owner 1611 Columbia Street and that she intended to split her parcel into two and convey the rear section to an adjacent property owner, who would then assemble the subdivided section with his own property.

Ms. Capone then addressed the first summary item in Staff's memorandum to the Planning Commission, which required the applicant to provide a suggested description of Parcel A, which represents the remaining lands of 1611 Columbia Street, and which would retain this address. Mr. Urda then clarified that the surveyor, Mr. Patsy Storino, was aware and would be providing that information to the Planning Department.

Ms. Capone then addressed the second summary item, which required the applicant to assemble the 0.072-acre northern section (Parcel C) with Parcel Number 5-13-220.000 located at 215 Monroe Street (Parcel B) into a single parcel, by way of a new metes and bounds description that is filed with the Jefferson County Clerk. Ms. Phillips stated she believed everything was done. Mr. Urda clarified that Mr. Storino will file the new deed on behalf of Ms. Phillips with the County Clerk. Mr. Lumbis clarified that in addition to the map, the description had to be filed with the County Clerk. Ms. Phillips acknowledged the summary item in understanding.

Following the formal public hearing, Mr. Urda then stated that a nearby property owner had contacted the Planning Department stating opposition to the subdivision. Mr. Urda informed the Commission that the individual did not seem to understand that the proposed action was merely a land conveyance. Mr. Urda added that Staff did reach out in return but was unsuccessful in receiving a gainful response.

Ms. Capone then stated that the Planning Commission would need to consider the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR). The Planning Commission then proceeded to complete Part 2 of the Short EAF, answering "No" to all the questions contained in Part 2. Mr. Babcock then made a motion to issue a Negative Declaration pursuant to SEQRA. Ms. Godek seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Mr. Babcock then made a motion to approve the request submitted by Patsy A. Storino on behalf of Vicki M. Phillips for a two-lot subdivision of 1611 Columbia Street, Parcel Number 5-13-203.000, contingent upon the following:

1. The applicant shall provide a suggested description of Parcel A, which represents the remaining lands of 1611 Columbia Street and which would retain this address.

2. The applicant shall assemble the 0.072-acre northern section (Parcel C) with Parcel Number 5-13-220.000 located at 215 Monroe Street (Parcel B) into a single parcel, by way of a new metes and bounds description that is filed with the Jefferson County Clerk.

Ms. Blevins seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT – ESTABLISH A MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, RETAIL USE  
IN A COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AT 1222 ARSENAL STREET, SUITE 12, PARCEL  
NUMBER 8-53-121.000**

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by Preet Chohan of Dream Bridge, LLC to establish a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use in a Commercial District at **1222 Arsenal Street**, Suite 12, Parcel Number 8-53-121.000.

Kristin Jordan, legal representation for the applicant, Preet Chohan, approached the microphone to represent the request. Ms. Jordan stated she represents Canna Planet, a parent company to Dream Bridge, LLC. She then gave a brief introduction of herself and her qualifications in cannabis law while Staff opened her presentation.

Ms. Jordan then gave a PowerPoint presentation about Canna Planet as a company and the company's relationship with its licensees.

Ms. Jordan then went to explain that Preet Chohan was a generational retailer, who had experience with management and retail and would be managing the proposed location. She said that her client is compliant with the laws and regulations set in place for cannabis retail. Ms. Jordan then said that Canna Planet is expanding and discussed the design on the storefront and the interior space while giving examples of existing Canna Planet retailers.

Ms. Jordan then addressed the first summary item in Staff's memorandum to the Planning Commission, which required the applicant to provide details on how security will be implemented on site. She said that she did not have the security plan for the space but acknowledged the New York State Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) rules and regulations and stated that the information would be sent to the State, and she could supply it to the Planning Commission if requested. She also mentioned that there was no lighting for their exterior of the storefront, but that they would have lit signage for safety and comfort.

Ms. Jordan went to state that there is no dedicated parking at this location, but that it would not be a hinderance to their business, as the plaza had ample shared parking. She also stated that most customers are not there for longer than seven minutes and would even be able to pre-order online, meaning even less time parked.

Ms. Jordan stated that they planned on hiring local for the building that needed to occur with the interior as well as hiring a staff of 14-to-22 people. She then asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Garrabrant then noted that two applicants sought to open a Marijuana Dispensary in the same plaza and asked if the landlord or OCM would determine which applicant would be allowed to open at the site.

Ms. Jordan stated that in this situation the landlord will only sign one lease, and only one cannabis dispensary can open within that property. Ms. Capone stated that the Commission's purview is to look at this as a Special Use Permit application only.

Ms. Capone then returned to Staff's request to provide details on how security will be implemented on site, and if it would remain as a condition of final approval. Ms. Jordan stated if they are approved for the location, they will send the signed lease as well as the security detail.

Mr. Monaco then asked for clarity regarding if the Commission needed to speak on the specifics of the security plan. Ms. Jordan assured the Commission that they had a list of items the State required and that it would be unnecessary, but they were open to suggestions. Ms. Capone agreed and stated that it would be outside the Commission's purview to make comments as it was already determined by the State. Mr. Monaco agreed.

Mr. Albinus stated that it was a suggestion from Staff to explain how security would be implemented, and that it could be struck. Ms. Capone asked the Commission if they would like to keep or strike Summary Item one. Ms. Jordan said they had no issues with sharing the security details with Staff, if they are approved for the lease. The Planning Commission then agreed to remove Summary Item one.

Ms. Capone then stated that the Planning Commission would need to consider the SEQR review. The Planning Commission then proceeded to complete Part 2 of the Short EAF, answering "No" to all the questions contained in Part 2. Mr. Babcock then made a motion to issue a Negative Declaration pursuant to SEQRA. Ms. Godek seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Ms. Godek then made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit request submitted by Preet Chohan of Dream Bridge, LLC to establish a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use in a Commercial District at **1222 Arsenal Street**, Suite 12, Parcel Number 8-53-121.000, contingent upon the following:

1. The applicant shall obtain a Building Permit prior to any construction from the Bureau of Code Enforcement.

Mr. Babcock seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT – ESTABLISH A MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, RETAIL  
USE IN A COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AT 1222 ARSENAL STREET, SUITE 13,  
PARCEL NUMBER 8-53-121.000**

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by Laura Chesser of Chessworth Farms to establish a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use in a Commercial District at **1222 Arsenal Street**, Suite 13, Parcel Number 8-53-121.000. Ms. Chesser attended to represent the request.

Ms. Chesser began by stating that she believed they had a resolution for the approval of the lease and that she was already approved by the State for the retail location and listed as a retailer of that space by the OCM.

Ms. Chesser went on to speak about her business and her personal background. She said that she has a farm and has been cultivating cannabis since 2023, and stated her business encourages education. She added that she is a female U.S. Army veteran, and her business is classified as veteran and woman owned.

Ms. Chesser then stated that her business does third party testing for their products as required by the State.

Ms. Chesser then addressed the first summary item in Staff's memorandum to the Planning Commission, which required the applicant to provide details on how security will be implemented on site. She said that she had brought her standard operation procedure for her security operations and stated it has been implemented since the beginning of her business. She assured the Commission that she has the intention of making her retail space a safe and professional space that restricts the ability of underage purchasers to obtain her product from her location.

Ms. Capone asked if Ms. Chesser had mentioned how many retail locations she had opened already. Ms. Chesser replied that she does not have a retail location yet, as the business is still getting off the ground, and she only has one farm. Ms. Capone asked if the farm was in Jefferson County and Ms. Chesser replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Capone mentioned that their opinion is specifically for the Special Use Permit. Ms. Chesser acknowledged the statement.

Mr. Monaco then asked if Ms. Chesser had any plans to move to another location should she not be approved for this location. Ms. Chesser clarified that she has been looking for a retail space to open her business since October 2024 and has done a lot of heavy lifting for her business to get approval in this area. Mr. Monaco then noted that there were multiple vacant storefronts in the City that were also zoned Commercial, and clarified his question asking if her intention was for both applicants to be in this area. Ms. Chesser stated that she intended to open in this area.

Ms. Capone then stated that the Planning Commission would need to consider the SEQR review. The Planning Commission then proceeded to complete Part 2 of the Short EAF, answering "No" to all the questions contained in Part 2. Mr. Babcock then made a motion to issue a Negative Declaration pursuant to SEQRA. Mr. Monaco seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Mr. Lumbis then asked if there were any questions or concerns about the conclusions that Staff had reached and presented in the Staff report regarding each of the Special Use Permit criteria that are listed in the Zoning Ordinance that the Planning Commission is tasked with considering when reviewing a Special Use Permit. Members stated that there were no concerns, generally agreed with the conclusions and stated that the format in which the information was presented in the report was acceptable.

Mr. Babcock made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit request submitted by Laura Chesser of Chessworth Farms to establish a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use in a Commercial District at **1222 Arsenal Street**, Suite 13, Parcel Number 8-53-121.000, contingent upon the following:

1. The applicant shall obtain a Building Permit prior to any construction from the Bureau of Code Enforcement.

Ms. Godek seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Ms. Capone then suggested that a Staff report or presentation reviewing New York State's new wetlands regulations would be a good topic for a future Planning Commission meeting. The other Planning Commission members agreed with her comment.

Ms. Blevins then said that she wanted to formally thank Samuel Thomas for his over thirty years of service on the City's Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Babcock made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Monaco seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary