



# 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: January 6, 2026

PRESENT:

Michelle Capone, Chair

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

Peter Monaco

Planning Commission Chairperson, Michelle Capone, called the January 6, 2026, Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. Ms. Capone asked for a motion regarding the minutes of the December 2, 2025, meeting. Lynn Godek made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Maryellen Blevins seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

### **PUBLIC HEARING - SUBDIVISION FINAL PLAT APPROVAL – TWO-LOT SUBDIVISION OF 920 IVES STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 14-49-105.000**

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 5:20 p.m.

Nathan Halloway, Groundskeeper of Fairway West Townhomes, approached the Planning Commission and stated he was not opposed to the subdivision, but was concerned about the potential issues that may arise from future development of the proposed lot. He said that his two points of concern were the streetlight across from the entrance to the townhomes, and the possible future location of a driveway on the proposed lot.

Mr. Urda provided visual aids using a satellite view and street view to show the proximity of the properties to each other as well as the streetlight. Mr. Urda clarified that the Engineering Department would issue the Curb Cut Permit for any driveway on the newly created parcel after Planning issues a Zoning Compliance Certificate.

Ms. Capone asked who owned the property the streetlight was established on. It was clarified that it is on the Right-of-Way (ROW) and the streetlight was owned by National Grid.

Mr. Lumbis clarified that National Grid owned the street lighting and in the event of development occurring in the proposed lot, there would be steps and processes followed within the Planning Department, and other related entities. He said that should it come to the point of

needing to move or remove the streetlight, the Planning Department would work as a mediator between National Grid and the private party.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Capone closed the Public Hearing at 5:23 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING - SPECIAL USE PERMIT – ESTABLISH A MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, RETAIL USE AT 144 EASTERN BOULEVARD, SUITE 11, PARCEL NUMBER 5-16-320.100**

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 5:23 p.m. Hearing no comments, she then closed the Public Hearing at 5:24 p.m.

**SUBDIVISION FINAL PLAT APPROVAL – TWO-LOT SUBDIVISION OF 920 IVES STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 14-49-105.000.**

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by Zachary P. Scordo, PLS of GYMO, D.P.C., on behalf of Chandrala Chaitanya for a two-lot subdivision of **920 Ives Street**, Parcel Number 14-49-105.000. Austin Key of GYMO, D.P.C. attended to represent the request.

Mr. Key began by identifying himself and said that the proposed subdivision was very simple. The owner wants to split one hundred feet from the western side of their property for future use. Ms. Capone agreed that it was very straightforward.

Mr. Lumbis then provided an explanation of the process someone would go through should anyone want to construct a driveway on the proposed parcel in the future.

Ms. Capone then stated that the Planning Commission would need to consider the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF). The Planning Commission then proceeded to complete Part 2 of the Short EAF, answering “No” to all the questions contained in Part 2. Ms. Blevins 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 request submitted by Zachary P. Scordo, PLS of GYMO, D.P.C. on behalf of Chandrala Chaitanya for a two-lot subdivision of **920 Ives Street**, Parcel Number 14-49-105.000.

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

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT – ALLOW A MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, RETAIL USE IN A COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AT 144 EASTERN BOULEVARD, SUITE 11, PARCEL NUMBER 5-16-320.100.**

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by Kimberly Parker of Fall Leaves Please LLC to allow a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use in a Commercial District at **144 Eastern Boulevard**, Suite 11, Parcel Number 5-16-320.100. Ms. Parker attended to represent the request.

Ms. Capone stated this would require a 239-m review by the Jefferson County Planning Board. She then asked if Ms. Parker could explain what the use was for the proposed location. Ms. Parker began by stating this location was to be used as a retail cannabis dispensary which is the same as a retail store where everything comes in packaged and mandated by the State of New York.

Ms. Capone then asked if this was the first proposed location for Ms. Parker. Ms. Parker answered that she does own another location in the Town of Pamela, New York. Ms. Capone then referred to criteria to issue a Special Use Permit identified in Section 310-116 of the Zoning Ordinance. She stated that Staff reviewed the criteria and that it is also up to the Planning Commission to review the comments and criteria.

Ms. Parker then clarified that the request was indeed for Suite 11 and not Suite 2, as there had previously been miscommunication regarding the Suite number.

Ms. Capone then reviewed each of the Special Use Permit criteria listed in the Zoning Ordinance with the Planning Commission. Commission members discussed each of the criteria along with the conclusion reached by Staff that was listed in the Staff Report. The Planning Commission agreed with all of the conclusions and agreed that there would be no negative impact on the area, and that the proposed use met all the criteria for the Special Use Permit.

Ms. Capone then read a comment from Timothy Reardon, in support of the proposed Special Use Permit for 144 Eastern Blvd. and following that, she opened the floor for public comments.

Joyce Hale of Eastern Boulevard approached the microphone and spoke against the proposal and said she felt that it would negatively affect the nearby residential area and families that lived there.

William Jones of Eastern Boulevard spoke next, and spoke against the proposed store, stating it would have a negative impact on the already struggling area. He mentioned that it has been an area struggling for some years, and that it is currently a peaceful area with different daycare programs and does not want to disrupt the family friendly area of Eastern Boulevard. Mr. Jones also stated that the area where the retail store would go is highly trafficked by youth and he does not want it to disrupt or negatively influence the youth. Mr. Jones continued to speak against the use of cannabis and the negative effects it would have on the neighborhood and asked to move the location somewhere else in the City.

Ms. Capone then informed Mr. Jones that the City Council has already “opted in” to allow marijuana dispensaries in the City and that the Zoning Ordinance allows them in the Commercial District areas. She also stated that the retail store still must follow New York State Law, and the only item being looked at today was the approval of a Special Use Permit for a retail marijuana dispensary that is already permitted to be in that area by the City Council. She clarified that the role of the Planning Commission today was to review the permitted use, and then the State will follow their processes and procedures for the retail location. Ms. Capone thanked Mr. Jones for his comments.

Ms. Godek then made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit request submitted by Kimberly Parker of Fall Leaves Please LLC to allow a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use in a

Commercial District at **144 Eastern Boulevard**, Suite 11, Parcel Number 5-16-320.100, contingent upon the following:

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

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

**ZONE CHANGE – CHANGE THE APPROVED ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF  
430 STATE STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 12-03-220.200, 440 STATE STREET, PARCEL  
NUMBER 12-03-220.300 AND 454 STATE STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 12-03-201.000  
FROM DOWNTOWN TO URBAN MIXED USE**

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by Kayla J. Kibling of Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C. on behalf of 454 State Street NNY, LLC to change the approved zoning classification of 430 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.200, 440 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.300 and 454 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-201.000 from Downtown to Urban Mixed Use.

Ms. Capone clarified that the Public Hearing will be held by the City Council due to the City Council being the legislative body with the authority to approve Zone Changes. Ms. Capone then stated she will allow for public input after the applicant has presented their request.

Ms. Kibling said that the zone change request was to allow an accessory drive through as part of future site development. She stated there are properties nearby that are also within the Urban Mixed-Use District that demonstrate that the change would be consistent with the current land use pattern in that area. Ms. Capone asked if there were any questions from the Planning Commission, to which there were none. She then opened the floor to public comment.

Napoleon Dobbins came forward and identified himself as the owner of 342 State Street. He asked how this zone change would affect his business on State Street. Ms. Capone informed Mr. Dobbins that the only thing that would be affected would be the types of uses for the area. She also informed Mr. Dobbins that when the Zoning Ordinance was adopted three years ago, the City changed to Form Based Zoning. Mr. Urda said that Mr. Dobbins's property was not part of the Zone Change request. Ms. Capone further clarified this was not going to affect his membership of the Downtown Business Association.

Mr. Urda said that a potential buyer for one of the subject parcels wished to develop a drive-through use on the land, which the Downtown Zoning District does not allow, but Urban Mixed Use does. Mr. Urda said that drive-throughs were not allowed in the Downtown District primarily for pedestrian safety and to reinforce the pedestrian-oriented nature of downtown. Mr. Dobbins said that he appreciated the information.

Ms. Capone then noted that the Little Caesars at 426 State Street has an existing drive-through and suggested changing the whole block into Urban Mixed Use for the Planning Commission's recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Godek then asked what would happen should the Little Caesars business choose to leave that location. Mr. Urda said that it was grandfathered and could be reestablished by right within 12 months, but after that, it would require a Use Variance or a Zone Change to re-establish the drive through. Ms. Godek stated that long-term there could be advantages to leaving it or changing it.

Mr. Urda clarified that the boundaries on the Future Land Use map in the Comprehensive Plan are fuzzy on purpose and zoomed into the block on the map. Ms. Capone stated that the block would be three fourths Urban Mixed Use. Ms. Blevins commented that you are already going to have people driving in and out.

Mr. Garrabrant asked if the drive through at Little Ceasars was already there when the Zoning Ordinance changed. Mr. Urda stated he was not sure but clarified that the future land use plan was implemented as best as it could. The Planning Commission and Staff further discussed the Zoning Change and how it affects the future land use plan as well as the current zoning.

Mr. Urda then made the point that the Planning Commission is the body that is tasked with making the recommendation to City Council, and that City Council will make the determination to agree or disagree with any recommendations. Further deliberation between the Planning Commission and Staff continued while reaching a consensus on the recommendation. The Planning Commission ultimately had no objections to the Zone Change and stated that it wanted to add the additional parcel to the zone change recommendation.

Prior to making a recommendation on the zone change, Ms. Godek made a motion to acknowledge the City Council as the most appropriate body to act as Lead Agency pursuant to SEQRA.

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

Ms. Godek made a motion to recommend that City Council approve the request submitted by Kayla J. Kibling of Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C. on behalf of 454 State Street NNY, LLC to change the approved zoning classification of 430 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.200, 440 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.300 and 454 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-201.000 from Downtown to Urban Mixed Use with the additional recommendation to change the approved zoning classification of 426 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.100 from Downtown to Urban Mixed Use as well.

Mr. Garrabrant seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Ms. Blevins made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Garrabrant seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary