



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: February 3, 2026

PRESENT:

Michelle Capone, Chair

Scott Garrabrant

Lynn Godek

Maryellen Blevins

Peter Monaco

ALSO:

Michael Lumbis, Planning and Community

Development Director

Geoffrey Urda, Senior Planner

Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary

ABSENT:

Linda Fields

Planning Commission Chairperson, Michelle Capone, called the February 3, 2026, Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:18 p.m. Ms. Capone asked for a motion regarding the minutes of the January 6, 2026, meeting. Ms. Blevins made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Garrabrant seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

SUBDIVISION FINAL PLAT APPROVAL – TWO-LOT SUBDIVISION OF 202 MECHANIC STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 6-03-216.000

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by Scott W. Kolb, LLS, on behalf of Christopher Kampnich for a two-lot subdivision of 202 Mechanic Street, Parcel Number 6-03-216.000. Mr. Kolb attended to represent the request

Ms. Capone then 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. Hearing no comments, she then closed the public hearing at 5:21 p.m.

Mr. Kolb then presented the application stating that Mr. Kampnich owned both 202 Mechanic Street and the adjacent parcel at 511 Emerson Street. Mr. Kolb said that Mr. Kampnich wanted to Subdivide an eastern section of 202 Mechanic Street and assemble that subdivided piece with 511 Emerson Street.

Mr. Kolb then called the Planning Commission's attention to the existing property line, which was close to the house on 511 Emerson and marooned much of the driveway on the 202 Mechanic side of the property line. Mr. Kolb explained that Mr. Kampnich was in the process of selling 202 Mechanic Street and wanted to guarantee his ability to continue to park on 511 Emerson Street after the sale.

Mr. Kolb then described the new deeds that he had prepared on behalf of his client and asked if the Planning Commission had any questions.

Ms. Capone then asked about the first summary item in Staff's memorandum to the Planning Commission, which required the applicant to submit one (1) reproducible Mylar print and one (1) paper copy of the final plat for signature by the clerk of the Planning Commission. Mr. Kolb replied that he had the required drawings with him.

Ms. Capone then asked about the second summary item, which required the applicant to assemble the 0.015-acre subdivided section with the neighboring lot at 511 Emerson Street into a single parcel, by way of a new metes and bounds description that is filed with the Jefferson County Clerk. Mr. Kolb replied that he would file the new deeds as required.

Ms. Blevins then asked about Question 13b on the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF), which asked if the proposed action would encroach into any existing wetland or waterbody, and was left blank. After a brief discussion, Staff, the applicant and the Planning Commission all agreed that the answer was "No." Mr. Kolb updated the SEQR form accordingly.

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. Mr. Monaco then made a motion to issue a Negative Declaration pursuant to SEQRA. Mr. Garrabrant seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Ms. Blevins then made a motion to approve the request by Scott W. Kolb, PLS, on behalf of Christopher Kampnich for a two-lot subdivision of 202 Mechanic Street, Parcel Number 6-03-216.000, contingent upon the following:

1. After approval, the applicant must submit one (1) reproducible Mylar print and one (1) paper copy of the final plat for signature by the clerk of the Planning Commission.
2. The applicant shall assemble the 0.015-acre subdivided section with the neighboring lot at 511 Emerson Street into a single parcel, by way of a new metes and bounds description that is filed with the Jefferson County Clerk.

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

ZONE CHANGE – TO REMOVE VL-MAIN STREET WEST, VL-8, VL-6, VL-4, 476, 470, 444 and a 0.75-ACRE SECTION of 424 VANDUZEE STREET, RESPECTIVE PARCEL NUMBERS 1-19-103.000, 1-19-104.000, 1-18-105.000, 1-18-101.001, 1-18-104.000, 1-18-103.000, 1-18-103.001 and a SECTION OF PARCEL NUMBER 1-18-102.000, FROM THE WATERFRONT OVERLAY DISTRICT

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by the City of Watertown to remove VL Main Street West, VL-8, VL-6, VL-4, 476, 470, 444 and a 0.75-acre section of 424 Vanduzee Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 1-19-103.000, 1-19-104.000, 1-18-105.000, 1-18-101.001, 1-18-104.000, 1-18-103.000, 1-18-103.001 and a section of Parcel Number 1-18-102.000, from the Waterfront Overlay District on the approved Zoning Map.

Mr. Urda presented the Zone Change to the Planning Commission. Mr. Urda referred to the zoning map from the staff report to provide context and stated that the hatched area is the proposed area to be removed from the Waterfront Overlay. Mr. Urda said it would remain in an Urban Mixed-Use district but would be removed from the overlay.

Mr. Urda provided background regarding the reason for this proposed Zone Change, stating the city intended to sell a section of 424 Vanduzee Street to the adjacent landowner at 444 Vanduzee Street, so they can use the land to expand their parking lot to the east. Mr. Urda clarified the exact alignment is unknown at current, however, the current use is office use that would not be allowed to expand within the Waterfront Overlay.

Mr. Urda further explained that expanding the parking lot would require a Use Variance if it remained within the Waterfront Overlay, whereas if the Planning Commission agreed to remove the overlay, it would only require Site Plan Approval and Subdivision Approval.

Mr. Urda informed the Planning Commission the reason for including the entire hatched area was to avoid spot zoning of any parcels. Mr. Urda assured the Planning Commission there would be no interference with the intent of the overlay, as all parcels on the coastal or waterfront side of the street would remain within the overlay, and only inland parcels would come out from the overlay.

Mr. Urda then stated that the Planning Commission would be asked to vote to recommend that City Council approve the Zone Change, and to consent to declare the City Council the lead agency for the SEQR.

Mr. Monaco asked if it would make sense to take the entire Vanduzee site out of the overlay now as well due to rumors of DPW potentially moving there.

Mr. Urda responded that Staff evaluated that option, but the recommendation is to not take anything else out of the overlay since there is only potential for a move. Mr. Urda furthered his point that someone may want to come and develop that land into waterfront-enhanced commercial use, and that the City could always change the boundaries of the overlay in the future.

Mr. Monaco asked if the City would be allowed to develop anything there without changing the zoning if they had the desire to. Mr. Urda replied that while New York State is exempt from local land use controls, the City remains bound by its own Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Godek asked if the parcel at the Corner of Vanduzee Street and Main Street West should remain in the Waterfront Overlay, and if there was any advantage or disadvantage to doing that. Mr. Urda replied that the parcel is privately owned and his recommendation was to remove it. Mr. Urda then mentioned Mr. Lumbis had received inquiry about the property.

Mr. Lumbis informed the Planning Commission the property owner was relieved to learn that the change would remove restrictions and support the change. Mr. Lumbis elaborated more, stating the Zone Change would allow the offices in the hatched area to be conforming, but would also allow for more uses within the overall area.

Ms. Godek expressed concern about visual impact of the waterfront area. Ms. Capone mentioned there is not much that could be developed over there. Mr. Urda then provided a street

view visual for the Planning Commission and again assured the Planning Commission that there would be no compromise to the intent of the overlay.

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, and the Planning Commission as an involved agency.

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

Mr. Monaco then made a motion to recommend that City Council approve the request to remove VL Main Street West, VL-8, VL-6, VL-4, 476, 470, 444 and a 0.75-acre section of 424 Vanduzee Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 1-19-103.000, 1-19-104.000, 1-18-105.000, 1-18-101.001, 1-18-104.000, 1-18-103.000, 1-18-103.001 and a section of Parcel Number 1-18-102.000, from the Waterfront Overlay District on the approved Zoning Map.

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

Ms. Godek made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Garrabrant seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary