



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

CITY PLANNING BOARD
ROOM 304, WATERTOWN CITY HALL
245 WASHINGTON STREET
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380
(315) 785-7740

MEETING: January 5, 2021

PRESENT:

Larry Coburn, Planning Board Chair
Michelle Capone
Michael Pierce
Neil Katzman
T.J. Babcock

ALSO:

Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community
Development Director
Jennifer Voss, Senior Planner
Geoffrey Urda, Planner
Michael Delaney, City Engineer
Leta Harp, Secretary

ABSENT:

Kerry Johnson
Linda Fields

Planning Board Chair, Larry Coburn, called the January 5, 2021 Planning Board meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Coburn then asked for a motion regarding the Minutes from the December 1, 2020 Planning Board Meeting. Mr. Katzman made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

ZONING DESIGNATION – 330 BRETT STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 11-16-128.000

The Planning Board then considered a request submitted by the City of Watertown to designate the zoning classification of a paper street known as 330 Brett Street, Parcel Number 11-16-128.000 as Residence A.

Mr. Lumbis gave a brief physical description of the parcel as a grassy area with some brush. He said the parcel has never been developed and there are no lots that front it, and it had become a maintenance headache for the City such as mowing, and upkeep, as well as complaints from neighbors. Mr. Lumbis said former City Engineer Justin Wood suggested that the City sell the property to neighboring owners and the process has continued with Mr. Delaney. Mr. Lumbis then said one person initially was interested in purchasing it, but then a second person became interested, and so now the parcel will go to auction, sold to the highest bidder.

Mr. Coburn asked if it was a paved or dirt access road. Mr. Lumbis replied that it was paved up to the point where it is marked on the map.

Mr. Coburn then asked if the intent was to sell it as one parcel, with all the existing properties abutting it. Ms. Voss replied that yes, it would be sold as one parcel.

Mr. Katzman asked if any of the adjoining owners wanted to purchase a portion of the parcel. Mr. Delaney replied that although certain abutting property owners wanted a portion of it, others did not, making it logistically impossible, a conclusion that the preceding City Engineer, Justin Wood, had previously reached. Mr. Delaney said they were trying to avoid land locked areas. He said that the City had reached out numerous times and there were some adjacent homeowners that had no interest in purchasing, and others did.

Mr. Katzman concurred that if each owner did not want an equal piece, there was no good way to divide the single parcel. Mr. Delaney reiterated that the City wanted to sell it as ONE single parcel.

Mr. Pierce asked if the parcel was wide enough to develop. Ms. Voss replied that it was not. Mr. Lumbis added that it was very wet area and that the parcel was only about 60 feet wide.

Mr. Katzman asked what the person that wanted to purchase the parcel planned to do with it, and if it was intended for extra income. Ms. Voss responded they intended to hold on to it for extra land.

Mr. Babcock asked if the lot was a legal sized lot. Mr. Lumbis said that if this lot was created through a subdivision process it would not be wide enough as the frontage was only 60 feet and 75 feet is the required minimum lot width in a Residence A district. However, since the lot was created by Council action to discontinue the street, it can be considered an existing lot and is okay with less than 75 feet of frontage.

Mr. Katzman said no person would put a million-dollar home on that parcel.

Mr. Pierce said the lot is not wide enough.

Mr. Lumbis said, that as an example, there were several City parcels that are 50' wide x 100' long which may be substandard in certain zoning districts but there is a provision in the Zoning Ordinance that permits building on any existing parcel, regardless of size, provided that all the required setbacks and certain other provisions are met. He said there would be no limitations to a structure that is taller than wider, because of the dimensions of the parcel.

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Pierce made the motion to designate the zoning classification of 330 Brett St, Parcel Number 11-16-128.000 as Residence A.

Ms. Capone seconded the motion, and all voted in favor, none opposed.

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT – 317 MEADOW ST NORTH,
PARCEL NUMBER 7-18-113.000**

The Planning Board then considered a request for a **Special Use Permit** submitted by Cary J. Parker of Lawngevity Lawn Service to allow two 10' x 12' storage buildings as the primary use in a Commercial District at 317 Meadow Street North, Parcel Number 7-18-113.000

Mr. Katzman stated that he attempted to view the property, but the coordinates in his GPS took him to another location. Mr. Urda gave more clear directions and location of the property to Mr. Katzman, and its proximity to The Brew Ha Ha coffee shop. Mr. Pierce said the directions and location were in the Planning Board Packet.

Mr. Urda said he had received a phone call from Teresa Macaluso, owner of The Brew Ha Ha, and she expressed her concerns about retaining the jersey barriers at the end of Meadow Street North, and that the potential sheds met setback requirements, and the new construction would not be closer than the existing shed is to her property line. Mr. Urda then said the jersey barriers were not being moved.

As the Planning Board waited for the applicant to arrive at the meeting, additional discussion ensued regarding the location of the property and directions, and if it was visible from Black River Parkway.

Mr. Pierce asked if the buildings being discussed were storage units.

Mr. Urda gave some background and said the applicant constructed the first of the two sheds without the benefit of a Building Permit. He said Staff became aware of this when the applicant submitted a request for a Zoning Compliance Certificate (ZCC) for the second shed. He then said the applicant identified the existing shed on the site drawing for the ZCC, and the City Code Enforcement Bureau was unable to find a permit on file for that structure.

Mr. Urda said that Planning Staff then informed the applicant of the Special Use Permit requirement in the official response to the applicant's ZCC request and directed the applicant to seek a Special Use Permit for storage as the primary use on the parcel, that would apply to both the existing and the proposed shed.

Mr. Katzman asked if there were any photos of the new proposed storage unit. Mr. Urda replied that he believed it would be identical to the existing unit.

Ms. Capone asked if Teresa Macaluso was satisfied with the setbacks. Mr. Urda replied that Ms. Macaluso wanted to be sure the new unit would not be built any closer to her property line than the existing unit, and that the jersey barriers would remain. Mr. Pierce then asked if the existing unit was the farthest from her property line on the application drawing. Mr. Urda replied in the affirmative.

The applicant, Cary Parker, then arrived at the meeting and introduced his Special Use application to the board.

Mr. Coburn said his Special Use Permit was for construction of two 10'x12' storage sheds.

Mr. Parker said they were not sheds per se, but storage buildings with double walled construction and metal roofs, railroad ties for the base, and set on concrete slabs. He said they were not mobile and could not be moved.

Mr. Coburn asked if this was in line with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Lumbis said the Comprehensive Plan is a bigger picture document and would not be that specific in terms of site design. Ms. Voss said getting down to the tiniest details was not the objective of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Urda said the City recently adopted a Downtown-Riverfront Connection Plan that included this area of the City and that plan's vision was for Meadow Street North to become a pedestrian promenade that would connect the surrounding neighborhood to the Black River. He then said that the City would not be able to close that street to vehicles and land lock Mr. Parker's property, without guaranteeing Mr. Parker some other vehicular access.

Mr. Katzman asked if the slab was concrete. Mr. Parker replied in the affirmative and said that there was formerly a garage on the property, and there appeared to be about one foot of concrete that he was able to secure and use. Mr. Parker then said he was under the impression that North County Storage Barns sets the structure and then files the permits, but then added that they dropped the ball and never provided a description.

Mr. Katzman asked about signage on the building. Mr. Parker replied that there would be no signage, except a small, inground realtor sign with his business name on it. Mr. Katzman asked if that type of sign was acceptable. Mr. Urda said that would be a question for Code Enforcement to answer. Mr. Parker said that he had spoken to Codes, and they said his sign was acceptable.

Mr. Coburn said according to Staff memo everything looked straightforward and he did not see any concerns.

Ms. Capone made a motion to recommend that the City Council approve the Special Use Permit request submitted by Cary J. Parker of Lawngevity Lawn Service to allow two 10' x 12' storage buildings as the primary use in a Commercial District at 317 Meadow Street North, Parcel Number 7-18-113.000 contingent on the following:

1. The applicant must obtain Building Permits for both sheds prior to any further construction.

Mr. Babcock seconded the motion, and all voted in favor, none opposed.

Mr. Urda said the recommendation now goes to City Council, and that at its January 19, 2021 meeting, the Council would set a Public Hearing for its meeting on February 1, 2021, after which it would be free to vote on the request. He then instructed Mr. Parker how to display the

Proposed Zoning Action Notice signage. He said it needed to be displayed for two weeks, then get an affidavit and bring the signed affidavit to City Council meeting on February 1, 2021.

Mr. Parker said he would comply with displaying the sign, and get his affidavit signed.

Mr. Katzman then moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Babcock seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.