



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: June 2, 2020

PRESENT:

Michelle Capone, Acting Chair
Katie Dermody
Linda Fields
Kerry Johnson
Neil Katzman

ALSO:

Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community
Development Director
Jennifer Voss, Senior Planner
Geoffrey Urda, Planner
Michael Delaney, City Engineer
Benjamin Arquitt, Civil Engineer I

ABSENT:

T.J. Babcock
Larry Coburn

Acting Planning Board Chair, Michelle Capone, called the June 2, 2020 virtual Planning Board meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

Ms. Capone then asked for a motion regarding the Minutes from the May 5, 2020 Planning Board Meeting. Ms. Fields made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

**SITE PLAN APPROVAL – THE ARC OF JEFFERSON-SAINT LAWRENCE
420 GAFFNEY DRIVE, VL-2 GAFFNEY DRIVE, 234-238 GLENN AVENUE, 419 GLENN
AVENUE, 233 STANTON STREET, and M151 CARLTON AVENUE,
PARCEL NUMBERS 8-40-101.003, 8-40-101.005, 8-40-108.000, 8-19-206.100, 8-18-322.000,
8-19-207.100, and 8-18-303.000**

The Planning Board then considered a request submitted by Howard Ganter of the ARC of Jefferson-Saint Lawrence for the construction of a 47-space parking lot, a reconfiguration of the existing parking lot, including reconfigured traffic patterns, and associated site improvements at 420 Gaffney Drive, VL-2 Gaffney Drive, 234-238 Glenn Avenue, 419 Glenn Avenue, 233 Stanton Street, and M151 Carlton Avenue, Respective Parcel Numbers 8-40-101.003, 8-40-101.005, 8-40-108.000, 8-19-206.100, 8-18-322.000, 8-19-207.100, and 8-18-303.000.

Patrick Currier of C&S Companies and Robert Seeley of Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Services, D.P.C both attended the virtual meeting to represent the request.

Ms. Capone then noted that the applicant had previously appeared before the Planning Board to represent this project at the May 5, 2020 meeting, at which the Planning Board voted to recommend approval, contingent on nine summary items. She then explained that the applicant team subsequently communicated to Staff that they no longer proposed the northeastern vehicular access drive from Glenn Avenue and increased the proposed number of parking spaces to 47, and that these changes were significant enough for the project to return to the Planning Board.

Mr. Currier then discussed the concerns that arose at the previous Planning Board meeting regarding privacy and traffic flow and said that The ARC agreed that removing the access drive was the best way forward. He then said that without this access drive, there would no longer be a need for speed bumps, and they proposed removing those from the plans also.

Mr. Seeley then addressed privacy concerns and said that they added a wood fence to the plans along the northern property line, and echoed Mr. Currier's comments that the circuitous traffic pattern would discourage through traffic.

Ms. Capone then asked about one-way vs. two-way traffic on the proposed western internal drive aisle. Mr. Seeley replied that they would designate that drive aisle as one-way. He elaborated that they looked at ways to widen it to accommodate two-way traffic, but the distance from the building to the property line just did not give them enough space.

Ms. Capone then asked if the applicant wished for the Planning Board to remove the summary item regarding speed bumps. Mr. Seeley responded in the affirmative. Ms. Capone then asked if Staff or any other Planning Board members had comments. Mr. Lumbis replied that Staff was comfortable eliminating the speed bumps, but left that condition in the memo since the Planning Board had initiated the discussion that led to adding that summary item.

Mr. Urda then said that if the Planning Board wanted to formalize the condition regarding one-way traffic on the western internal drive aisle, that would need to be part of a motion, since the summary item in Staff's memorandum only stipulated that the applicant discuss the issue with the Planning Board. Ms. Capone acknowledged that and then listed the remaining summary items. Mr. Arquitt then asked the applicant to confirm the height of the proposed wood fence. After some brief discussion, Mr. Currier confirmed that it was six feet.

Ms. Capone then asked for a motion. Mr. Urda then said that before any motions, he wanted to note that Julie Williams, a neighboring property owner, was on the call, and asked if she wished to address the Planning Board. Mrs. Williams thanked the applicant and the Planning Board for listening to her and said that she and her husband were happy with the outcome. She then asked Mr. Currier and Mr. Seeley a few additional technical questions about the fence.

Following that discussion, Ms. Fields then moved to recommend that City Council approve the request for Site Plan Approval submitted by Howard Ganter of the ARC of Jefferson-Saint Lawrence for the construction of a 47-space parking lot, a reconfiguration of the existing parking lot, including reconfigured traffic patterns, and associated site improvements at 420 Gaffney Drive, VL-2 Gaffney Drive, 234-238 Glenn Avenue, 419 Glenn Avenue, 233 Stanton Street, and M151 Carlton Avenue, Respective Parcel Numbers 8-40-101.003, 8-40-101.005, 8-40-108.000, 8-19-206.100, 8-18-322.000, 8-19-207.100, and 8-18-303.000, as shown on the site plans submitted to the City on May 21, 2020, contingent upon the following:

1. The applicant must designate the internal western drive aisle that parallels Gaffney Drive for one-way traffic only and must label this designation on the final plan set.
2. The applicant must assemble all seven (7) subject parcels, as proposed, by way of a new metes and bounds description that is filed with the County Clerk.
3. The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to demolition and construction: Building Permit, General City Permit, Sanitary Sewer Connection Permit, Water Supply Permit and a Certificate of Zoning Compliance.

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

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT – 1348, 1352 and 1356 WASHINGTON STREET
PARCEL NUMBERS 14-21-106.000, 14-21-107.000, and 14-21-108.000**

Ms. Capone then stated that the next item on the Planning Board Agenda was a request submitted by Michael Altieri, P.E. of Bernier, Carr & Associates, Engineers and Land Surveyors, P.C. on behalf of Sundus and Sarah, LLC to allow a multifamily dwelling in a Neighborhood Business District at 1348, 1352 and 1356 Washington Street, Parcel Numbers 14-21-106.000, 14-21-107.000, and 14-21-108.000. She then noted that the Planning Board voted at its last meeting to recommend rezoning the property from Residence B to Neighborhood Business.

Mr. Altieri attended to represent the request, but said that City Council tabled his zone change request, so as he understood it, that meant the Planning Board would not be able to act on the Special Use Permit request. He then asked to address the comments in Staff's memorandum. Ms. Capone replied that he was welcome to go ahead.

Mr. Altieri began by specifying that the proposed number of apartment units was two, and that his clients prioritized the retail and professional office uses above the proposed apartments. Mr. Urda then said that a Special Use Permit only becomes a requirement when the proposed number of units is four or greater. He added that that a two-unit dwelling as an allowed use by right in Residence B Districts, which was the properties' current zoning.

Mr. Urda then additionally clarified that the City Council tabled the zone change request the previous evening because Council also tabled the SEQR Resolution for the project, which the Council needed to adopt before it could vote on the zone change.

Mr. Altieri thanked Mr. Urda for the information regarding the Special Use Permit threshold and moved on to the other comments. Mr. Altieri then said that his team would obtain all necessary permits and assemble the three subject parcels into one as the second and third summary items respectively required. Mr. Altieri then addressed the fourth summary item, which required the applicant to provide proof of ownership of the property at 1356 Washington Street. Mr. Altieri said that the closing date had been delayed due to the COVID-19 health crisis, but that he submitted supplemental information to Staff identifying a new closing date.

Ms. Capone thanked Mr. Altieri for the update and asked Mr. Urda to confirm that there was no action for the Planning Board to take now. Mr. Urda replied in the affirmative. He further elaborated that the applicant could actually withdraw the Special Use Permit application, and a Special Use Permit was not necessary for what his clients proposed. Following some subsequent discussion about SEQR review and the order of applications, Mr. Altieri concurred and stated that his clients would want to withdraw their Special Use Permit application based in the information that Mr. Urda just provided.

Mr. Altieri then discussed a previous development project that he said was similar, acknowledged that drainage and screening were both concerns, and wondered what specific concerns the Planning Board had. Following some additional discussion about the SEQR review, Mr. Urda said that he wanted to clarify that the City Council is the Lead Agency pursuant to SEQR for both the zone change and the anticipated site plan. Mr. Urda further explained that the City Council tabled the SEQR resolution, which was why it could not act on the zone change.

Mr. Urda then said that questions from Planning Board members and neighboring property owners should come next, but asked Mr. Arquitt to discuss for the benefit of all on the call what goes in to the drainage review that he performs for the Engineering Department. Mr. Arquitt and Mr. Delaney then described the details of the drainage review process.

Scott Connell, the neighboring property owner at 1357 Sherman Street, then said that he had both drainage and privacy concerns and said that he did not move into this neighborhood to live next to a business. Mr. Urda then elaborated on the City's buffering standards and the Planning Board's history of enforcing them. Mr. Arquitt then asked some additional questions about flooding history. Following some additional discussion about drainage, Ms. Fields said that she wanted to hear from more of the neighboring property owners on the call.

Technical difficulties ensued un-muting the neighbor that Ms. Capone invited to speak, so she moved on to the next person to raise their hand.

Christopher Dandrow identified himself as Mr. Connell's son-in-law and said that his kids used Mr. Connell's backyard all the time. He also emphasized the neighborhood's flood history and expressed concern about effects on property values.

Paula Trainham, the neighboring property owner at 1355 Sherman Street, then said that she purchased her house as a retirement home and that she loved the neighborhood and was concerned that the zoning could change. She then echoed all the previous concerns about drainage and flooding.

Mr. Lumbis then said that he also wanted to clarify that the zoning had not been changed yet. He explained that the City Council had to complete an environmental review before it could rezone any land, and that the Council tabled that environmental review, citing a need for more information.

Mary Connell, who identified herself as Scott Connell's daughter, then said that she and her fiancé would soon be looking for a house, and she felt that if the proposed development, if it went through, would make the neighborhood less attractive to young couples.

Further questions ensued about SEQR and public hearings. Mr. Lumbis reiterated that the City Council performs the SEQR review and he further explained what SEQRA law meant by a “whole action.” Mr. Urda then explained that a site plan would not trigger a public hearing like a zone change would, but that given the documented interest in this application, it would be appropriate for Staff to send out meeting notifications.

Mr. Dandrow then asked Mr. Altieri whether the project would require leveling the ground out. Mr. Altieri replied that he was not sure because he did not have a specific site design at this point.

Ms. Capone then said that with no further business, she asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lumbis then said before adjournment, he wished to recognize Katie Dermody for her service on the Planning Board and wish her well, noting that this would be her last meeting, as she was moving out of the area. Ms. Capone also expressed well wishes.

Mr. Altieri then asked if there was anything that would make the application more favorable to the Planning Board. Ms. Capone replied that she couldn't answer that because she hadn't seen anything, but she did emphasize the concerns the neighbors had raised, such as drainage and privacy.

Mr. Johnson asked whether the Planning Board should or could rescind its recommendation that City Council approve the zone change. Mr. Urda replied that procedurally, he did not think that was possible because it was moved, seconded and voted upon, and following a question from Ms. Trainham, clarified that City Council had not yet voted on the zone change.

After thanking everyone for their comments, Ms. Capone then asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Fields moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Dermody seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.