



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

CITY PLANNING BOARD

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

MEETING: August 3, 2021

PRESENT:

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

ALSO:

Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and
Community Development Director
Michael Delaney, City Engineer
Michael DeMarco, Planner
Leta Harp, Secretary

ABSENT:

NONE

**** The Minutes are amended as of September 7, 2021, by Board Member Michelle Capone**

Planning Board Chair, Larry Coburn, called the August 3, 2021, Planning Board meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Coburn then asked for a motion regarding the Minutes from the July 6, 2021, Planning Board Meeting. Ms. Fields made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Mr. Babcock seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL – 1068 ARSENAL STREET PARCEL NUMBER 8-47-106.000

The Planning board then considered a Request for Site Plan Approval submitted by Robert Osterhoudt, P.E. of Bohler Engineering on behalf of ROC Wash Holdings LLC., to construct an approximately 4,553 square-foot (SF) car wash and associated site improvements at 1068 Arsenal Street, Parcel Number 8-47-106.000.

Mr. Tim Freitag, P.E., Project Manager, Bohler Engineering and Richard Schneider were present to represent the owner for the redevelopment of a parcel addressed as 1068 Arsenal Street.

Mr. Freitag noted that the site was zoned as a commercial district, and a Car Wash is permitted by right and they are seeking a recommendation to City Council. The property is currently vacant and formerly housed a car dealership. The parcel was subdivided in June of 2021, with the eastern half of the property described as 1.1 acres. The subdivision was contingent on the demolition of the existing structure.

Mr. Freitag noted that in July, this project was before the Jefferson County Planning Board – the County reviewed the project and issued their letter of concerns. He said they are submitting

their full Site Plan, narrative, operational plan, and Engineer Documents. He said they were proposing a car wash on the property. Mr. Freitag presented the drawings for a 4500 SF building centered towards the East. The project will include 25 parking spaces to the West of the building; the drive thru circulates counterclockwise from the SE corner wrapping its way to the Northern end of the building. Vehicles would enter the car wash through the Northern end of the building and exit out the (front) South end of the building and exit the property onto Arsenal Street. He said 19 of the 25 parking spaces are equipped with vacuums, so patrons could continue thru the Car Wash to vacuum out their car if they wish, with the option of bypassing the carwash if they wanted. He said they are proposing two curb cuts for access drives to facilitate drive-thru and parking/vacuum activity. Vehicles would be able to enter from, and exit onto Arsenal Street from both access points, and/or make a right turn to the parking spaces if desired. Furthermore, for access management, and future growth, the applicant is proposing a shared access connection to the vacant neighboring, parcel to the West.

Mr. Freitag said that the detailed plans showed enhanced landscaping, lighting, stormwater, and utility improvements for the property. He said these were some of the best properties to redevelop because they were able to improve the site by offering a 26% reduction of impervious area with proposed landscaping and other green space. This would also improve the snow storage area around the perimeter on site. He said the use is in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and there is no variance request as part of the project. He continued by saying that operations at this facility would be no earlier than 7am and no later than 9 pm. When the facility is closed, the vacuum stations would be non-operational, eliminating potential neighbor concerns. Mr. Freitag then addressed staff concerns identified in the report indicating he and his client had no objections to any of them.

Mr. Freitag noted the fire hydrants were located on the opposite side of Arsenal Street, 300 ft apart. He asked if this distance would be acceptable to Planning Board. He said they would reach out to the City Fire Department if the Planning Board desired.

Regarding site lighting spillage, Mr. Freitag said what the applicant is proposing was in excess of the .5-foot candle lighting of the City code. He said on the East and West side of the property, the LED light fixtures will have housing shields on the back which would prevent most spillage over the property line, although a small amount of light would spill over. Spillage does not appear to be of any detriment to the neighboring properties, which were both commercial businesses. Mr. Freitag noted that the applicant would try to maintain .5-foot candles for safety and security of pedestrians along the public sidewalk and vehicle access drives in front of the property.

Mr. Freitag stated that he and Mr. Lumbis have already addressed an additional staff concern regarding continuing the sidewalk through the access driveway. He said he has no objection to that recommendation.

Mr. Coburn ask the Board if they were okay with the applicant's explanation regarding the fire hydrant and the summary item that pertained to it. He noted the location being on the opposite side of the street. Mr. Delaney said the requirements are met by the 300' distance from the hydrant to the proposed building however it was across a main thoroughfare.

Mr. Freitag said the water main was in the center of Arsenal Street, and all the hydrants adjacent to other properties down Arsenal Street, including McDonalds, were on the South side of the street. He said they proposed to use the existing water service to the building. A general

discussion then ensued regarding all nearby fire hydrants located on the South side of Arsenal Street.

Mr. Katzman said he had knowledge that there was an 8"-10" water line servicing a sprinkler system in the existing building that was a previous car dealership.

Mr. Freitag indicated the utility survey investigation found three water lines coming into the proposed site, two for the applicant's use, and one for the adjacent parcel to the west. He said he could work with City Engineering and the Fire Department on this issue. Ms. Fields then said she would like to see the Fire Department get involved in this decision.

Mrs. Fields said she was concerned about ingress/egress issues that could cause immense back up of traffic onto Arsenal Street. She suggested that the western most exit become a right turn only. Mr. Babcock agreed noting that motorists could turn around further up the street at a traffic signal in order to head east.

Mr. Freitag said Arsenal Street was NYS Route 3, and they would be working with New York State Department of Transportation to ensure the site is compliant with the state. He said they are proposing a shared connection with the property immediately to the west, but they currently have no rights to connect farther down the street to access the traffic light. He said in addition to the lack of a right of way or easement to connect, the stormwater and drainage swale, as well as a steep grade differential would prohibit them from accessing the light at the Raymour and Flannigan Plaza.

Discussion ensued between Planning Board members regarding possible options for entering and exiting the property.

Ms. Capone said she wanted to know if the concerns of the Jefferson County Planning Department were addressed. She read from the memo that they had questioned curb cuts, traffic patterns and proximity of the car wash to the adjacent housing complex.

Mr. Freitag said that the Jefferson County Planning Department assumed that the proposed new building would sit back much further than the plans show. He said that the adjacent property actually wraps behind the car wash property, so the car wash building is not on the housing complex property line. He said the concern is no longer an issue.

Ms. Capone confirmed with Mr. Freitag that the two curb cuts were both ingress and egress designations for 2-way traffic. Mr. Freitag confirmed that they were ingress and egress and said that the 2-way traffic pattern was for the operational efficiency of the drive-thru car wash service. He noted two staging areas: one for vacuuming out vehicles, and the other for the drive thru Car Wash. Mr. Freitag made the point that the proposed car wash has a belt system and if internal traffic backs up and is unable to leave the site in a timely manner, the entire building would have to shut down to clear traffic. The second driveway relieves any congestion.

Mr. Katzman suggested that one entrance and two exists might be the best course of action for traffic control.

Mr. Coburn said he was unsure of the resolution regarding the fire hydrant and whether the landscaping summary item needed to be discussed. Mr. Freitag said that the site plan did include a landscaping plan. Mr. Lumbis stated the applicant had agreed to adding the two additional trees but did not indicate what the species would be.

Ms. Fields said she would like a summary item added regarding the ingress/egress, and then said summary item #4 was not addressed and she wanted to hear more information about the environmental effects of the Car Wash detergents.

Mr. Freitag said the trench drains were for stormwater collection going into the City sewer system, and any internal detergents were going to be collected and treated onsite and then would enter the City's Sanitary Sewer system. He said all products used are biodegradable.

Ms. Fields asked if Bohler was going to do an asbestos survey. She then asked when demolition would be commencing. Mr. Freitag confirmed that they would do an asbestos survey and said that the project is on schedule for construction in the spring following site plan approval.

Ms. Capone then made a motion to recommend to City Council the approval of the Site Plan submitted by Robert Osterhoudt, P.E. of Bohler Engineering on behalf of ROC Wash Holding to construct an approximately 4,553 square-foot (SF) car wash and associated site improvements at 1068 Arsenal Street, Parcel Number 8-47-106. 000, contingent upon the following:

1. Site Plan Approval is contingent upon the Subdivision Approval for 1068 Arsenal Street that the Planning Board granted on June 1, 2021, taking permanent effect following the demolition of the existing structure on the property no later than December 2, 2021, and upon the City Assessment Department's receipt of new deeds filed with the County Clerk that establish the two resultant parcels.

2. The applicant shall paint a stop bar in the westbound lane that enters the internal four-way intersection from in front of the car wash structure.

3. The applicant shall add a street tree in each of the landscaped areas located at the southwest and southeast corners of the site.

4. The applicant shall consult the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to confirm that detergent and other chemicals are acceptable to enter the sewer system and provide the City with proof of correspondence and the DEC's response.

5. The applicant shall work with the City Fire Department to determine if or where a fire hydrant needs to be added to the proposed work site.

6. The applicant or the current property owner must commission an asbestos survey prior to issuance of a Demolition Permit and perform subsequent abatement prior to demolition if the survey reveals the presence of asbestos.

7. The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to demolition and construction: Demolition Permit, Building Permit, Sanitary Sewer Connection Permit, and a Water Supply Permit.

8. The applicant must consult with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) regarding the proposed ingress and egress and obtain a Highway Work Permit from NYSDOT for any work to be performed within the Arsenal Street Right-of-Way.

9. The applicant shall modify the proposed western entrance/exit to allow for the continuation of the sidewalk through the driveway area.

Ms. Fields seconded the motion, all voted in favor.

**SITE PLAN APPROVAL – 901 RAIL DRIVE
PARCEL NUMBER 9-43-108.000**

The Planning Board then considered Site Plan Approval requested by Matthew R. Morgia, P.E. of Aubertine and Currier, PLLC on behalf of Renzi Foodservice to construct a 38,170 SF building addition, an aggregate 59,304 SF asphalt parking and loading area expansion and associated site improvements at 901 Rail Drive, Parcel Number 9-43-108.000.

Mr. Pierce, noted for the record that he would abstain from the discussion and the vote, as he had a family relationship with the applicant.

Mr. Matthew R. Morgia, P.E. of Aubertine and Currier, PLLC, was present to represent the project on behalf of Renzi Foodservice. He said the request for Site Plan Approval was for primarily site work that he indicated on the drawings. The new truck dock would serve as an addition to the current building and construction of a new access driveway off Bellew Avenue South. The access drive would cross over the newly positioned rail spur which was relocated in the winter of 2020. The new parking lot would enable the trucks more movement and flow backing in and out of the loading docks. He said there would also be office space parking for current use and future expansions on the property.

Mr. Morgia then said there would be three additional phases in the future; planned expansions would be freezer space, refrigeration space, and dry warehouse space. He said the site work proposed for this phase would include relocated electric, water, and fiber optic communication line. He noted that the current stormwater management areas would be improved to resolve some of the flooding issues on the site.

Mr. Morgia then addressed Staff summary items in the Memorandum. He said regarding item one, per city of Watertown zoning regulations, landscaped areas are required in commercial/industrial districts with required front, side, or rear yards. The Light Industrial zoning district has no required front, side, or rear yards therefore no landscaped areas are required in those areas. The zoning also requires a landscape buffer where a non-residential district abuts a residential district. The residential properties located along the western boundary of the property are screened by a 275 ft. wide section of wooded area. Further consideration can be given to adding landscaping/trees to the interior perimeter of the 40,615 SF asphalt parking loading area within the grass filter strip, if deemed necessary by the Planning Board.

Mr. Lumbis stated that he had an additional item for the Planning board to consider which was to require the applicant to keep the rail spur property owner, the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency in the loop regarding the project and to provide the necessary insurances

required during the property development. He then said the City will also need construction details showing the proposed grade of the road crossing of the rail spur.

Mr. Morgia said the owner, Mr. Renzi, was waiting for the property transfers to be finalized in the upcoming months. He said a formal easement across the rail spur property would be included which would address this issue.

Mr. Morgia then addressed summary item number two regarding perimeter landscaping. He said they were not considering any new plantings at this time, and there were already existing plantings along the access drive.

Ms. Capone said summary items one and two were satisfied and item number three regarding the size of disturbed boundary could also be stricken as the project would be reviewed as a Type I Action by City Council.

Mr. Morgia addressed summary item number four and said the applicant acknowledges compliance of obtaining all necessary permits.

Ms. Capone then made a motion to recommend to City Council Site Plan Approval to construct a 38,170 SF building addition, an aggregate 59,304 SF asphalt parking and loading area expansion and associated site improvements at 901 Rail Drive, Parcel Number 9-43-108.000 subject to the following:

1. The applicant must obtain, minimally, the following permits prior to construction: Building Permit and Water Supply Permit.
2. The applicant shall coordinate the construction of the new truck access drive with the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency (JCIDA), as the adjacent owner, prior to work commencing on the JCIDA property and shall provide the City and JCIDA a construction detail showing the proposed at grade road crossing of the rail spur.

Ms. Fields seconded the motion, all voted in favor. (Mr. Pierce abstained from the vote)

**ZONE CHANGE – 111 AND 145 CLINTON STREET
PARCEL NUMBERS 10-07-110.000 AND 10-07-112.000**

The Planning Board then considered a zone change requested by Lundy Construction, LLC on behalf of Watertown Savings Bank for 111 and 145 Clinton Street from Limited Business to Downtown.

Mr. Michael E. Lundy president of Lunco was present to explain the request. He said a preliminary meeting to discuss the Bank's project was underway when it came to their attention that the layout of the new proposal was not in line with the current zoning classification. He said the applicant decided to move forward with an application for the zone change request so the Site Plan submission would be valid. He said at the same meeting he became aware that the proximity of property lines would require them to meet with the Jefferson County Planning Board as well. He said the applicant was aware that some items were incomplete on the Site Plan application. He said they wanted to move forward and appear before the Planning Board and get their input as to what

they needed to submit to be prepared to appear before the City Planning Board at the September meeting.

Mr. Lundy then invited Mark R Lavarnway, President of Watertown Savings Bank (WSB) to give an overview of the project. Mr. Lavarnway said the existing Bank building was built in 2000 and the original plan was that it would be sustainable for the future, but unfortunately that time is now here, and expansion is inevitable. He said they are out of space, and their employees work at other WSB branches. He said over the last year they had looked at other options, such as renovating the old Redwood National Bank building that they own on Coffeen Street, building on Mullin Street, and renovating the current building at 145 Clinton Street. That building he said however was built around 1959 or 1960 and is not very efficient, or adaptable for such a significant renovation. He said although the new building would cost more, it was not very much more expensive than a total renovation of the 145 Clinton Street. Last of all he said the unfortunate events that occurred in the building last April made it easier to decide to move forward with the demolition of the building and create an addition on site. He said they felt it was important to connect the two buildings hence the bridge in the drawing. They were proposing to move all their lending personnel into the new building, which would free up space in the existing building so we can move employees back from other branches and allow growth for the next 20-25 years. He said they are simply out of space and after reviewing multiple options, they felt new construction on their current campus was their best option.

Mr. Lundy showed the C-103 drawing that depicted the view of the 'sky bridge' and the parking configuration. He said currently the site is zoned Neighborhood Business. He said the property to the West is the Clinton Center Development that he owns which is zoned Downtown. He said this Site Plan proposal does not work under that current zoning. The neighboring properties on the street are all zoned Downtown and it makes sense if WSB property could be zoned the same so the applicant could move forward with their Site Plan application.

Mr. Katzman asked if the Best Western on the corner of Clinton and Washington Streets was zoned Downtown Business District, and why not rezone the whole block.

Ms. Capone said she agreed with Mr. Katzman and the Planning Board should consider changing the zone for the entire block. Ms. Fields said she agreed as well.

Mr. Lumbis said the answer to Mr. Katzman's question was no, the property was zoned Commercial. He then said the Planning Board could recommend to City Council to change the whole Block of Clinton Street to Downtown Business instead of the two proposed parcels.

The Planning Board then discussed the recommendation for rezoning the entire block and if that would be in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan. They also discussed that the Zoning Rewrite committee was working on creating new maps including this block.

Mr. Lumbis said Limited Business does not allow parking in the front of the building. The current Bank location has parking because it was grandfathered in 20-25 years ago when the zoning ordinance was changed. Other properties to the West of the bank are zoned Downtown and they do not have that parking restriction. He said the Comprehensive Plan recommends all this area should be zoned Downtown.

Discussion continued regarding whether or not the Planning Board should recommend that the additional parcels be included in the zone change.

**** Ms. Capone stated several times her level of frustration with the outdated City Zoning map. She said she recognized the City Staff is currently in the middle of a Zoning Rewrite, but the updates were needed for the Planning Board to make informed decisions.**

Mr. Lundy said he understood their frustration, but this bank project cannot move forward without this zone change approval.

Ms. Capone then made a motion to recommend to that the City Council approve the zone change application to change the approved zoning classification at 111 and 145 Clinton Street, respective Parcel Numbers 10-07-110.000 and 10-07-112.000 from Limited Business to Downtown with the contingency:

1. The applicant must submit all the materials required on the Zone Change application in order to be considered a complete application. This includes a detailed cover letter, a metes and bounds survey and a tax map with the subject parcels highlighted.

Mr. Katzman seconded the motion, all voted in favor.

PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN REVIEW – 145 CLINTON STREET PARCEL NUMBER 10-07-110.000

Mr. Lundy said they had met previously with both Planning and Community Development and Engineering Departments, and they were aware of the information that was lacking such as the Stormwater Management Plan, and that has been reviewed. He said the applicant understands the other details that need to be completed to take their project before the Jefferson County Planning Board. He said their goal is to get a revised Site Plan together to be ready for the County in August, and then come back before the City Planning Board for their September 7, 2021, meeting. He said their intent for this meeting was to answer any questions the Board may have and get their input on the project to avoid any issues for the next meeting.

Ms. Fields questioned the timeframe of the project.

Mr. Lavarney said he had already served his tenants at 145 Clinton Street building with a notice to vacate the property by December 31st, 2021.

Mr. Lundy then said there was asbestos issues at 145 Clinton Street that needed to be resolved and that would take a couple months. He said the intention is to dismantle that building and break ground in the spring of 2022. He said the timeline for the project is approximately 12 months from the start of construction and should be finished by year end 2022.

Mr. Delaney questioned the status of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Mr. Lundy said their team had met and if both projects remain as planned, they were leaning toward an underground stormwater retention system.

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Katzman then moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Babcock seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m.