



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 3, 2024

PRESENT:

Larry Coburn, Chairperson
Michelle Capone
TJ Babcock
Maryellen Blevins
Peter Monaco
Lynn Godek

ALSO:

Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community
Development Director
Geoffrey Urda, Planner
Meredith Griffin, Civil Engineer II

ABSENT:

Linda Fields

Planning Commission member and Acting Chairperson Michelle Capone called the January 3, 2024, Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Ms. Capone then asked for a motion regarding the minutes from the December 5, 2023 meeting. Peter Monaco made a motion to accept the minutes as written, TJ Babcock seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

**SKETCH PLAN APPROVAL – 312 GOTHAM ST
PARCEL NUMBER 11-02-224.000**

The Planning Commission then considered a request for Sketch Plan Approval submitted by Michael J. Contryman, to construct a two-story, 1,113 square-foot (SF) gross floor area building addition at 312 Gotham Street, Parcel Number 11-02-224.000.

Ms. Capone stated that the applicant had satisfied some of the summary items since the Planning Commission tabled this application at its last meeting on December 5, 2023. Ms. Capone then said the Zoning Board of Appeals granted the related Use Variance at its meeting earlier on January 3, 2024 and that there were no remaining concerns from Engineering.

Ms. Godek then asked about the status of the City's recommendation to reorient the garage doors. Ms. Capone replied that the Planning Commission discussed this topic at its previous meeting and stated that after a discussion with Mr. Urda, the applicant agreed with Staff's recommendation to change the location of the garage doors. Ms. Capone reiterated that changing the location of the garage doors was a Staff recommendation and not a requirement.

Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Capone asked for a motion for approval. T.J. Babcock made a motion to grant Sketch Plan Approval, waiving any further requirements of full Site Plan Review, for the request submitted by Michael J. Countryman to construct a two-story, 1,113

square-foot (SF) gross floor area building addition at 312 Gotham Street, Parcel Number 11-02-224.000, contingent upon the following requirements:

1. The applicant must fire-rate the northern exterior and eastern interior walls of the proposed addition and meet all other applicable building codes as a condition of obtaining a Building Permit.
2. The applicant must obtain a Building Permit prior to construction.

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

**SITE PLAN APPROVAL – 1067 MARBLE STREET,
VL-1 MARBLE STREET & VL-8 WATER STREET
PARCEL NUMBERS 4-27-330.000, 4-27-331.000 & 4-27-301.000**

The Planning Commission then considered a request for Site Plan Approval submitted by Mark Tompkins of G.Y.M.O. Architecture, Engineering and Land Surveying, D.P.C. (GYMO) on behalf of Stephen Hale of Hale’s Bus Garage, LLC to construct a 4,500 square-foot (SF) building addition and associated site improvements at 1067 Marble Street, VL-1 Marble Street and VL-8 Water Street, Parcel Numbers 4-27-330.000, 4-27-331.000 and 4-27-301.000.

Ms. Capone stated that several of the items requested to be changed or added by the Planning Commission have been addressed by the applicant since the previous meeting. Ms. Capone said that the Zoning Board of Appeals granted Area Variances for reduced ground-floor transparency and increased façade length at its December 20, 2023 meeting. Ms. Capone then said that based on Planning Staff’s updated memorandum, the applicant had satisfied 7 of the 12 original summary items, and identified the remaining five, which the applicant has acknowledged and pledged to adhere to but must remain as summary items.

Mr. Babcock made a motion to grant Site Plan Approval for the request submitted by Mark Tompkins of G.Y.M.O. Architecture, Engineering and Land Surveying, D.P.C. (GYMO) on behalf of Stephen Hale of Hale’s Bus Garage, LLC to construct a 4,500 square-foot (SF) building addition and associated site improvements at 1067 Marble Street, VL-1 Marble Street and VL-8 Water Street, Parcel Numbers 4-27-330.000, 4-27-331.000 and 4-27-301.000, contingent upon the following requirements:

1. The applicant shall either assemble VL-8 Water Street, or a portion thereof containing the paved drive aisle, with 1067 Mable Street, by way of a new metes and bounds description filed with the County Clerk or record an access easement guaranteeing access across the lands of VL-8 Water Street to the parking area on 1067 Marble Street.
2. The applicant should strongly consider including VL-1 Water Street in any parcel assemblage.
3. If the subject parcels are not combined by way of a new metes and bounds description, the applicant shall modify the lighting plan so that there is no more than 0.5 footcandles of light spillage across the property line.

4. The property owner shall hire a third party to perform annual inspections of the holding tank and submit an annual report to the City Engineering Department.
5. The applicant must obtain the following permits and other documentation, minimally, prior to construction: Building Permit, Water Permit, Sanitary Sewer Permit, Storm Sewer Permit, a Zoning Compliance Certificate and potentially an Outside Source Permit.

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

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPROVAL – 812 STATE STREET,
PARCEL NUMBER 12-06-323.000**

The Planning Commission then considered a request for Special Use Permit Approval submitted by Jie He of HSS RE Ventures, LLC, to allow an office in a Neighborhood Mixed Use District at 812 State Street, Parcel Number 12-06-323.000.

Mr. He began by saying that prior to acquiring the property, the property was vacant but that an accounting office had previously occupied the first floor and there was a residential rental use the second floor. Mr. He said that he proposes to use the first floor as a primary care physicians' office with five-to-six exam rooms that will accommodate two-to-three providers and the second floor will be used as a staff break room. Mr. He mentioned that there is an existing ramp for ADA accessibility in the front of the building.

Mr. He then said he would repurpose the previous sign for the accounting office for his requested use, but change the text to state the physicians names. Mr. He stated that there will be no change to the parking lot or front of the building and the interior renovations will help make the interior space more functional, as shown on the sketch.

Ms. Blevins observed that there are five-to-six exam rooms and two-to-three physicians, but Staff's memorandum stated that there were only eight parking spaces. She raised a concern about the amount of available parking for both staff and patients. Mr. He also clarified that there will also be one nurse for every two physicians and one receptionist, making a total of about four staff.

Ms. Blevins asked if each physician would have their own schedule and said that it would likely be a conflict for the nurse since the nurse will be tied up with one patient and not be able to bring another patient back. Mr. He clarified that the nurse will take a patient back, take their vitals, and then bring them to the exam room where they will wait for the physician while the nurse is working with the next patient, working their vitals. Mr. He stated that once a patient finished their appointment with the physician, the patient will check out with the receptionist, at which point the physician would then see the next patient waiting in the next exam room.

Ms. Capone then explained all office uses in a Neighborhood Mixed Use District require a Special Use Permit when being established under the City's new Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Urda then explained that the purpose of a Special Use Permit is to allow Staff and the Planning

Commission to have a little extra oversight for such requests, particularly because the NMU District typically backs up to Residential parcels. Mr. Urda then added that the NMU districts are typically found on the radial streets that radiate out like spokes from Public Square; for example, streets like Washington Street, State Street, Mill Street, etc.

Ms. Capone then reflected on and reviewed each of the Special Use Permit standards that Staff commented on and agreed with Staff's comments. Ms. Capone stopped at standard D. in the staff report and asked if Ms. Blevins was concerned with the applicant meeting the following standard:

“The overall impact on the site and its surroundings, considering environmental, social, and economic impacts of traffic, noise, dust, odors, release of harmful substances, solid waste disposal, glare, or any other nuisances.”

Ms. Blevins stated that she felt the applicant was not going to have enough parking for the use when considering the number of staff and patients being on the property at any given time.

Mr. Lumbis then clarified that the applicant did not report the number of spaces, but rather a site visit that Staff conducted revealed that there are possibly eight parking spaces, as some of the parking space lines were clear and others were faded. Mr. Lumbis explained there could be a chance for one more parking space in the front of the building and possibly a few spaces along the western property line. Mr. Lumbis suggested that if the Planning Commission wanted more information on a definitive plan, they should request that information from the applicant.

Ms. Blevins stated her concern with snow storage and how the narrowed driveway could be problematic when there is snow and cars are entering and exiting out of the same driveway.

Mr. Lumbis noted that the applicant provided a sketch of the building interior, but it was not a sketch of the full property (site). Mr. Lumbis then explained that the NMU District is very similar to the Neighborhood Business District under the previous Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Lumbis stated that the number of uses that require Special Use Permits has expanded since the adoption of the current Zoning Ordinance and explained that when a business abuts a Residential District, conflicts typically arise, so by having Special Use Permit Approval as a requirement, it triggers the requirement to have letters sent to property owners within a 200-foot radius of the site location as well as a Public Hearing at which neighbors and the general public could voice their concerns.

Ms. Capone asked if the Planning Commission would need to table application, since it requires a Public Hearing. Mr. Lumbis explained that the new Special Use Permit process requires the Planning Commission to deem the application complete or substantially complete, at which point the Planning Commission should adopt a motion to schedule a Public Hearing for February 6, 2024.

Ms. Capone then read through the summary items and Mr. He acknowledged each summary item, and specifically discussed medical waste. Mr. He explained that after discussion with a colleague, he will create a contract with Samaritan Medical Center for medical waste and take the medical waste to Samaritan Medical Center. Mr. He stated that for regular waste, there will be a dumpster at the rear of the parcel and he will hire a contractor to pick up the waste.

The Planning Commission unanimously agreed that the applicant would need to provide a detailed drawing of the entire property, and that the drawing must provide details on the proposed location(s) of any dumpster, property lines, where the building is located on the parcel, existing and proposed parking spaces, car circulation including larger vehicles like emergency vehicles and trash pickup vehicles, snow storage, and the additional tree plantings in the buffer zone in the southwest end of the parcel. Ms. Capone asked the applicant if there were any ADA accessible parking spaces and if so, to mark them on the new drawing.

Ms. Griffin asked the applicant if he could provide what water and sewer flow rates will be once the business is operational. Mr. He responded that less water and sewer will be used once the business is operational since there will no longer be a residential unit on the second floor. Ms. Griffin asked the applicant if he could provide the City with an estimated volume number. Mr. He replied that he would provide the numbers.

Ms. Godek made a motion to deem the application substantially complete and to direct Staff to schedule a Public Hearing for Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 6:05 p.m. to hear public comments on the request for Special Use Permit Approval for the request submitted by Jie He of HSS RE Ventures, LLC to allow an office in the Neighborhood Mixed Use District at 812 State Street, Parcel Number 12-06-323.000. Mr. Babcock seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

In addition it was noted that the following Summary Items must be addressed by the applicant:

1. The applicant should consider installing two signs, one on the western and one on the eastern side of the parcel for entering and exiting traffic that alerts motorists of two-way traffic with a narrow driveway.
2. The applicant shall provide a sketch of the entire parcel that depicts the following: details on the proposed location(s) of any dumpster, property lines, where the building is located on the parcel, existing and proposed parking spaces, snow storage areas, and the additional tree plantings in the buffer zone in the southwest end of the parcel.
3. The applicant shall plant 3-4 additional trees within the rear buffer area to supplement the existing tree and provide additional screening and protection for the abutting residential properties.
4. The size and composition of the existing buffer zone along the south side of the property must be maintained as a condition of approval.
5. The applicant shall obtain a Building Permit and a Sign Permit prior to any construction from the Bureau of Code Enforcement.
6. The applicant shall provide the expected flow rates for water and sewer when the structure is operational.

At 6:34 p.m., Mr. Babcock moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Blevins seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharlice Bonello
Planner