City of Auburn Planning Board

Wednesday November 4, 2020 6:30 pm

Memorial City Hall

Present: Andy Tehan, Crystal Cosentino (Chair), Theresa Walsh

Excused: Tina Tomasso, Elizabeth Koenig

Staff: Stephen Selvek, Office of Planning and Economic Development; Holly Glor, Secretary; Nate Garland, Corporation Counsel

**Agenda Items:**

1. Approval of the October 6, 2020 Planning Board Meeting Minutes

2. Application for Site Plan Review to demolish the existing building and construct a +/- 4,000 SF building and associated site improvements at 167/169 Grant Avenue. Applicant: Antonio Briseno for Cameron’s Bakery

3. PUBLIC HEARING: Community Development Block Grant PY 2021 Annual Action Plan. This public hearing will provide an opportunity to comment on the plan and priorities of the PY 2021 Community Development Block Grant. Tiffany Beebee, Senior Planner & Renee Jensen, Senior Planner

Items Approved: Agenda Items 1 & 2

Applications Denied: None

Applications Tabled: None

**Crystal Cosentino** 00:00

Sounds good. If I could call the meeting to order in if we could rise for the pledge (Pledge is made). If I could ask the Secretary to call the roll.

**Holly Glor** 00:28

Andy Tehan (Here). Elizabeth Koenig is absent this evening. Tina Tomasso is also absent this evening. Teresa Walsh (here). Crystal Cosentino

**Crystal Cosentino** 00:38

Here. The first item on the agenda is the approval of the meeting minutes for the October 6 Planning Board meeting. Is there a motion to approve the meeting minutes? Made by Andy. Second? I'll second. (Theresa abstains) All in favor, aye. Aye. Any opposed? Motion carried. The second item on the agenda is an application for site plan review to demolish the existing building and construct a 4000 square foot building with a drive thru at 167 Grant Avenue. Applicant is Cameron's bakery, and I'm gonna turn it over to Steve for comments.

**Stephen Selvek** 01:21

Last month, the applicant presented the site plan to the planning board for an initial look at it. Let's see if I can actually get that other screen back on or not, looking that way just drives me nuts. We were able to go through it there. There weren't any, like significant concerns when we went through it last month, the board had a good look at it. At that time. Unfortunately, the DRC had not had the opportunity to review it. So I asked that the planning board table this until the DRC had ample opportunity to review the site plan. And the DRC ended up with just a handful of comments on the site plan and if I can find them here I will share them with everyone. There was questions concerns comments regarding the proposed sewer connection in the grease trap, confirmation about the reduction of the impervious surface seen a request to widen the drive aisles. Confirmation regarding New York State DOT permitting questions about cross access between this parcel and the parcel to the south of it as well as maintaining the vegetation at the rear of the property line, as we know this backs up to Standart Woods Apartments. And finally then ensuring that the drive thru itself complies with some very specific code requirements. So, I provided all the information in substantial detail to the applicant and he went ahead and was able to, or the applicants architect was able to revise the site plans to incorporate and address all those items. So just quickly kind of going through what was changed on the site plan or, what was updated on the site plan, as you recall the area to the front of the building. I guess just as a quick recap the current building sits towards the street itself. The plan is to build behind that existing building, demolish the existing building, which provides space up front for parking as well as the drive thru that wraps all the way around the back. The drive aisles were initially proposed to be 20 foot wide drive aisles with one way circulation. This is Auburn, we don't care if it's one way or not, we're going to go two ways. So the request from the planning board or the design review committee was to widen those out to a standard 24 foot drive aisle on both sides, which would allow traffic to kind of circulate around the parking area if need be. And not just necessarily one way, what that allowed was some additional landscaping buffering along the right of way which is required as well as basically an offset with some additional impervious surface. The change there did reduce the number of parking spots from I believe 15 to 11. If I'm correct, they're 15 to 11. Ultimately, it still does comply with the requirements of the zoning code for the minimal number of parking. Additionally, there is employee parking at the rear of the site adjacent to the stream that runs directly behind this site. The other items that were just kind of clarified and cleaned up a little bit as the north side that buffers the liquor store, there's a requirement for a five foot planting bed between the drive lane and the property line itself, it was four and a half, they've increased that to five, they added a series of deciduous trees through that area as well, as required. Switching gears a little bit to the sanitary connection in the grease trap. The sanitary connection is shown on the plans now it'll connect via gravity to an existing line that does go through the site. There were changes made at one point in time, they had to put in a pump station for the existing building something that our department of Municipal Utilities does not like to see because it does create potential issues. So with the new building, they're able to go back to a gravity fed sewer system as well, as they have indicated on the front of the building where the grease trap would be on place. So that's a requirement as well. The there is a net reduction of the impermeable surface of 1400 square feet. So it's it does reduce the potential impact for storm water runoff as a whole. The right of way improvements are along Grant Avenue. They have to be permitted by New York State Department of Transportation, communication has been had with New York State Department of Transportation, and that work can be permitted via a perm 33 application with the state. I'll note that within the app, the resolution that we're approving this evening. The resolution approving the site plan is contingent upon DOT's approval of the curb cuts within the right-of-way itself, it's a typical way that we go about it because d o t does have final authority and jurisdiction over Grant Avenue in this area. See what else I have here. They've also noted on the plans itself, because this is adjacent to residential property and the apartment complex, and there is some significant vegetation along that rear property line, so they have noted on the site plan itself, the intent and the requirement to maintain the significant foliage that's along that rear property line at the top of the stream bank itself. The other item that I'll just mention with regards to the drive thru, as they have clearly indicated, via painting on the driveway itself, the entrance and exit that's part of the drive thru, as well as just kind of better defining that rear curve and ensuring that it's meets that 30 foot setback from the neighboring residential area. If the board has questions regarding those changes, the applicant is here this evening or the applicant’s representative. The architect is here this evening that he can probably better explain anything that I may have just gone over. I know that the board did not have any major concerns at the last meeting, but I want to make sure that if anything's popped up since then you do have an opportunity to get those addressed. Switching gears before considering the application, I do want to go back to the short environmental assessment form. I have drafted responses to the short environmental assessment form, indicating that there is no impact or that the impact would be small or moderate for all the applicable areas within part three. Let's see if I can get down to it here. I've noted that the new structure will have a gross floor area of 4033 square feet which just exceeds the 4000 square feet limit of a type two action. Ultimately, if the building was, I think three inches narrower it would be a type two action and there would be no further review needed under SEQRA. But as it is an unlisted action, we are going to process it that way. I've reviewed the New York State environmental resource mapper the New York State EFA mapper including the wetlands inventory, and the FEMA firm maps. I note within that part three that the proposed project is the redevelopment of an existing developed site in the highway commercial zone. The existing use, retail bakery, will continue with the addition of a drive thru lane to better serve their customers. The drive thru lane and stacking wraps around the rear of the building and the site entrance and exit. Clearly defined, minimizing potential for any traffic related issues. There will be a net reduction of impervious surfaces on the site to help minimize the potential for storm water runoff. And improvements are specific to the developed area of the existing site. The existing vegetation at the rear of the site along the brook will be kept. The location of the new building is not within the 100 year floodplain, significant impacts are not anticipated, significant governmental impacts are not anticipated. Again, if you have questions with regards to that information, I'm here to answer any of those questions. Staff is recommending based upon the plan sets presented last month, and the revisions that were made to them. The issuance of a negative declaration under SEQRA and approval of the resolution for site plan, review within that site plan review, just to highlight a couple items. The cross parcel access that's shown on the plans that was item requested by the DRC has been noted, it will serve as a placeholder. Ultimately, if the city deems it's necessary to provide that cross access, this applicant has agreed to allow that it would also require approval on a agreement on the behalf of the neighboring property owner. So we do want that placeholder noted as part of the plans. And then the city does require all commercial properties comply with our backflow requirements, so there will be a need to install the appropriate backflow mechanism. And I will let my department of municipal utilities determine what that is for this particular project. So again, the site plan approval is contingent upon just meeting the requirements per the city of Auburn water service. And finally, as I mentioned early or the application being contingent upon New York State Department of Transportation approval of the curb cuts. If there's questions, I'll be happy to address those. And as I mentioned, the applicant’s representative is here tonight that he can speak to any of the other site plan issues or concerns that the board may have or have come across or anything else.

**Crystal Cosentino** 12:44

Theresa or Andy, either of you have any questions? The only question I had was related to the crushed stone for what the employee parking is going to be that it's not intended to be paved because it looks like there's also going to be some crushed stone around the circular drive thru area in the back.

**Stephen Selvek** 13:06

At the very back portion there is crushed stone. The edges of the drive thru are indicated to be planted with grass and or ground cover that area at the very rear of the property, part of the intent behind it is to allow some level of infiltration because the brook does run right behind it. I mean, we'd typically like to see that paved but the crushed stone will slow the runoff into that brook. And it's, so it does provide some level of benefit in this particular case for that area. So the DRC wasn't opposed to having, in this very particular case, that crushed stone at the back.

**Crystal Cosentino** 14:02

So there's no other questions. I'm going to ask if there's a motion to adopt the SEQRA resolution issuing a negative declaration. Made by Teresa. Second by Andy. If I could ask the Secretary to call the roll.

**Holly Glor** 14:18

Andy Tehan.

**Andy Tehan** 14:19

Yes.

**Holly Glor** 14:21

Elizabeth Koenig and Tina Tomasso are both absent. Teresa Walsh

**Theresa Walsh** 14:25

Yes

**Holly Glor** 14:26

And Crystal Cosentino.

**Crystal Cosentino** 14:27

Yes, Motion carried. Is there a motion to adopt the resolution approving the site plan with the conditions listed? Made by Andy. Second by Teresa. Secretary, if you could call the roll.

**Holly Glor** 14:41

Andy Tehan.

**Andy Tehan** 14:42

Yes.

**Holly Glor** 14:44

And Elizabeth Koenig and Tina Tomasso are both absent. Teresa Walsh.

**Theresa Walsh** 14:48

Yes.

**Holly Glor** 14:49

Crystal Cosentino?

**Crystal Cosentino** 14:50

Yes, Motion carried. Thank you very much for coming out tonight. The third item on the list agenda is a public hearing on the CDBG annual action plan. The planning board is hosting the public hearing as an opportunity for the public, including board members to provide comments regarding the priorities of the CDBG plan. Tonight, we have city staff Tiffany Beebee and Renee Jensen, who will provide an overview to the program.

**Renee Jensen** 15:49

Good evening. Thank you very much for hosting the public hearing tonight. I know, the planning board members get to see a lot of development throughout Auburn. And we really appreciate you taking a look at our plans for the upcoming year with our federal funding, which may include some improvements to infrastructure, but also human service programming. So we really appreciate your time tonight. I'm Renee Jensen. I'm a senior planner with the Office of Planning and Economic Development. And with us tonight, we have Tiffany Beebee. She's also a senior planner, and we both administer the Community Development Block Grant. So the Community Development Block Grant has been part of the city of Auburn since 1994. We are considered what is called an entitlement community. Because of our population and our demographics, we receive federal funding from HUD in the form of Community Development Block Grant, on an annual basis. The amount we receive shifts every year, there's actually a formula that HUD uses and it's based on population and income within the city. We used to get well over a million dollars, but now it's between 800 and 900,000 a year. So with Community Development Block Grant funding, a lot of rules and regulations are put in place. One of the regulations that we must adhere to is the five year Consolidated Plan. Every five years, the City of Auburn really takes an in depth look of our community and our housing stock. And we develop a five year plan which was done this past year. Every subsequent year, we do what's called an annual action plan. So all of the goals and the programs in the five year plan, we follow up with an annual action plan. And that's what we're looking at tonight. It will be our annual action plan for 2021 to 2022. This document we'll prepare over the next couple of months with a lot of community input and then it will be in front of council for approval in February and then it goes to HUD for approval. There's a lot of input and a lot of shifting of things before it's finally approved by HUD. Now, what can this funding be used for? Well, as staff, we have to make sure that this funding meets HUDs national objective. It must be used to meet one of three national objectives must benefit low to moderate income persons in the City of Auburn, it can be used for the prevention or elimination of slums or blighted influences such as homes that may have had a fire and are extremely unsafe and unstable, we can use CDBG funds to address that, or an urgent need. Urgent need would be addressing a natural disaster, such as Katrina. We also must meet these three or one of three program goals with any funding that we have, which includes decent housing, suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. So with everything we fund we must keep these national objectives and program goals in mind. The way we look at CDBG funding is it can be used for low or moderate income persons in two ways on an area wide basis and direct benefit basis. Here we have a map of the city of Auburn, and you can see it's broken down into census tracks everything in blue is an eligible area, those blue areas are low to moderate income areas. So we're able to do a lot of improvements in the blue areas. And this data is based on census and American Community Survey data. The other way we are able to reach low to moderate income persons in the City of Auburn is through direct benefit. This is looking at an individual's or family's income. These are the income guidelines, which went into effect July 1, 2020, and are updated every year. Direct benefit programs would include, housing programs, Human Service Agency programs, things of that nature. We will get into a little more of that in a minute. But as I mentioned, the development of our plans for our budget and funding for these federal dollars is really dependent on community input, which is why we're here tonight. So we strongly encourage any input comments, and everything goes directly into the annual action plan and also helps us prioritize projects. We held a meeting last week, it was a virtual meeting, we actually had really good attendance about 20 people and heard a number of different priorities, everything from mental health to park improvements, such as Casey Park Skate Park, to housing. Tonight's public hearing, anything that is stated tonight during the public hearing will go directly into the meeting minutes and directly into our annual action plan. And then additionally, we have a comment period. This comment period happens in February when we have our annual action plan in draft form. So if you're interested, the draft form you can review and submit comments in, but that typically takes place in February. To get things going and discussion started we will highlight some past eligible programs that we have funded with CDBG dollars. Tiffany is going to highlight those programs and then we'll open it up to the public hearing for comments. Thank you.

**Tiffany Beebee** 22:37

Human service programs are designed to assist persons of low to moderate income here in the City of Auburn. Eligible programs include Child Care Services, youth programming, Senior Services, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, affordable housing, homelessness, transportation, workforce development, and emergency food. We have funded programs in the past, such as the Booker T Washington Center Awesome Youth Program, Rescue Missions Family Transitions, and also their youth program, Calvary Food Pantry, Aurora Senior Services, the Boyle Senior Center, legal services for domestic violence, and SCAT Van. These are just a handful of programs that we have funded and is not all of our programs. Please know our funding for Human Services is capped at 15% of our entitlement. So while we would love to put more money into our human services line, HUD says we're not allowed to. Our housing and neighborhood programs include the Home Repair Assistance Program. This is a combination loan grant program that completes home repairs to income eligible households. These repairs can include roofs, weatherization and health and safety issues. The program is administered by Homesite at 60 Clark Street in Auburn, so if you do know of anybody that is possibly income eligible and in need of repairs, they can give Homesite a call and Homesite will walk them through the application process and the documentation needed. There is a first time homebuyer program. This is a grant up to $4,000 to assist first time homebuyers in the City of Auburn. Participants are required to take a homebuyers education course and this really makes sure that they understand the home buying process and from finding a real estate agent to being able to budget for future home repairs. And this just ensures that they're going to be a successful homeowner in the future. The grant funds that they receive are applied towards closing costs. The Home Access Program is administered by Arise and it increases accessibility into a person's home. So if a person is disabled and needs an accessibility ramp, or a stair chair or some other minor home modification, then they can give Arise a call and through this program, they can receive those modifications at no cost. We also have the distressed property program. And this finds distressed properties in the city. And we work in partnership with Homesite to acquire and rehab this property and then sell it to an eligible home buyer. Not all properties are able to be rehabbed. So we also do work with our code enforcement office as well. And if a building is structurally unsound, then we can demo a building with the spending as well. We can also do neighborhood revitalization. We haven't really done a complete neighborhood revitalization project in the past. Previous example would be worked on in the Orchard Street neighborhood, which was done in conjunction with a number of partners but made a huge impact on that street. Public facilities and infrastructure include neighborhood park improvements, sidewalk improvements and streetscape programs. This past year we have been working on construction documents for Bradford Street Park. We hope to be selecting a contractor for the installation of the playground equipment early next week. And then we will also be doing additional improvements at that park in the upcoming program year. Sidewalks are currently being installed on Perrine Street, North division Street and Perrine Ave. We plan to finish sidewalk improvements on Perrine Ave and Case Ave in the upcoming program year. Our streetscape program this year includes new landscaping at Buonocore Park.

**Renee Jensen** 27:34

Just for people who don't know, Buonocore Park is the small park across from Wegmans. I don't know if people drove by today, but trees started coming down and we'll be replacing those trees with new ones.

**Tiffany Beebee** 27:52

We also do some economic development programming. The Small Business Program is a loan program administered by CEDA. It provides gap financing and as a result of the financing, jobs for persons of low to moderate income are created. We have recently assisted Moonflower Macaroons and Octane Social House. The Micro Enterprise program is a new program this year and it will be kicking off in the very near future as we finalize the details and begin advertising. This will assist three micro enterprise businesses with a grant of $5,000 after a series of training has been completed. This program continues to have a tremendous impact in our community and has been able to address critical needs identified that we would otherwise not be able to provide funding for. We would be happy to answer any questions and we would love feedback during the public hearing.

**Crystal Cosentino** 29:02

Great, thank you. So at this time, I'm going to open up the public hearing so anybody who wishes to speak if you could come to the podium, state your name and address so we have that for the record and Tiffany and Renee have that for the plan. That would be great.

**Karen Walter** 29:32

Good evening. My name is Karen Walter, 15 Case Avenue and I wanted to speak on behalf of the neighbors on Case Avenue who are awaiting the sidewalks. It is a welcome opportunity that the CDBG grant will afford us the work that's being done on Perrine Avenue and an North Division Street across from Falcon Park. Is, is really a breath of fresh air. And the work that was done, I believe it was probably two years ago, on York Street that just made such a difference. Really, really such a difference. So I wanted to thank the staff for including us in, in considering this as you go forward. Thank you.

**Crystal Cosentino** 30:30

Anybody else from the audience or board members that would like to? Well, I'll change my hats. You know, these guys usually know that I'll do that. And I actually left my office without my normal written comments, so I'll make sure that you get you guys have that. But professionally, I work with the folks at Cayuga County Homesite, my professional job is as the Deputy Director of Home Headquarters, but I live here at 121 South Herman Ave. For the record. You know, the Home Repair program is so vitally important. And I'll echo what Tiffany just said, so the folks in the audience are aware that if you know of anybody who is looking for home repair assistance, it really can be that bridge to get the roof or the sewer, or the electrical upgraded. And, you know, right now, we haven't seen a large need in the community. But we know we can drive around neighborhoods, and we can certainly see that there are people in our community that would benefit from it. And I don't know if it's the COVID world that we're living in, or, you know, the stress and uncertainty of, you know, economic job loss that we have, but I would urge individuals to give us a call. But we do truly appreciate, you know, this long standing support that the city has provided Homesite for many, many years, probably many decades to this point since the city became an entitlement. You know and just two days ago we got a call, for a first time homebuyer, the market is really awesome. Right now, for people looking to sell their home, it's not often the greatest market for those looking to buy, you know, affordable price perhaps. But that is saying a lot for people right now that while we can't seem to find a lot of people interested in buying a home, or I'm sorry, fixing up their home, we are seeing interest in in first time homebuyers wanting to buy here in the city, and really throughout the entire region. So we again appreciate the opportunity to partner with the city for a first time homebuyers program. And like I said, we have people who are calling us more regularly and participating in our first time homebuyer programming. So again, that's just two comments for tonight because I failed to bring my you know, pulled together comments, but we really appreciate it and you know, anybody that can share those words out in the community to have us call us would be great.

**Andy Tehan** 33:06

If we do know someone that you know was in need of, sometimes we being an insurance business, there may be things that can be done to a house that are covered by their insurance policy, but who would we direct them to look into getting some funds to maybe fix the home up or get some repairs?

**Crystal Cosentino** 33:23

Well, if they meet the income criteria, they could definitely call home site and you know, we partner, whether it's the city or the county, I mean, I know we're here to focus on city issues, but we also have other programming with home headquarters so they can you know, you can have them call me or have them call directly to the office and there are staff there that's dedicated to the Home Repair Program so but yeah, we get folks who have insurance is going to be cancelled because their roof is terrible, their foundation is falling in and we can help in those situations we often do. Alright, so if there's no other takers, wishing to speak on the CDBG program, I will ask for a motion to accept the motion because we're just gonna close the public hearing now and I'm going to ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Made by Teresa. Second by Andy. Our next meeting is December 1. It's hard to believe that we will be into December the next time we meet and we'll see you all then. Have a great Thanksgiving.

Respectively submitted by Holly Glor