

MINUTES OF CITY OF AUBURN PLANNING BOARD
TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022 6:30 PM
MEMORIAL CITY HALL
AUBURN, NY

Present: Crystal Cosentino
Theresa Walsh
Elizabeth Koenig
Jenna Powers

Absent: Andy Tehan

Staff: Stephen Selvek, Dep. Dir. Planning and Development
Gretchen Messer, Planner
Greg Gilfis, Traffic Officer

(Video recording of the meeting is available on the City website.)

Agenda Items:

Meeting Call to order: 6:30p

1. Agenda Item 1: Approval of March 1, 2022 Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Motion by: Elizabeth Koenig
Second by: Theresa Walsh
Abstained: Jenna Powers
None Opposed, Motion Carried

2. **Agenda Item 2: Staff Updates:** Two items initially on the agenda that had been introduced last month: the Cancer Center located on Lansing Street and the second project, the parking lot located on Osborne Street, will both remain tabled at this time as we are waiting for additional information. Once we receive that information, the Board will be able to proceed on these projects.

The Cancer Treatment Center is in the process of hiring a consultant to prepare a detailed parking study, and with respect to the Osborne parking lot, the issue of concern was the historic presence of the New Guinea Negro Settlement in the area of the parking lot. This issue has been sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for their review and comment. It is staff's intent to be able to bring both these projects back to the Board at next month's meeting.

3. Agenda Item 3: Application for Site Plan review for the construction of 2 fast food restaurants, each with drive-through service and parking, and the construction of a two-story residential building in the HC Highway Commercial zone along Grant Ave.

Applicants came to podium to present a concept plan for their development.

Brett Steenburgh, the engineer representing Liberty Restaurants presented the conceptual plan. The project is located at 153 Grant Avenue (4.46 acres in size), which currently supports 3 houses, 4 garages and a warehouse structure, with 4 existing curb cuts. These structures are all currently serviced by municipal water. The applicant has met with Planning staff to work to consolidate 6 lots into 3 parcels through lot line adjustments. The three lots would be 0.69 acres (this lot would support the proposed Popeye's restaurant). 0.62 acres, this site is located immediately adjacent to the existing Dunkin Donuts, and 3.12 acres located in the rear of the lot.

The applicant showed a front elevation of the Popeye's building, which is identical to their traditional building design. It would have a double drive through kiosk with a single pick-up window. The proposed design has more than the required 20% green space; it has 31% green space, which could be seen on the color rendering they showed the Planning Board. The second fast food restaurant, located on the northern parcel, is in similar design. It has 16 parking spaces, with a single drive through kiosk. This parcel has 38% green space, therefore both parcels meet the green space

zoning code requirement. Both buildings would be 12-15' in height, also meeting zoning code requirements. They currently do not have a tenant in mind for the second restaurant.

They are proposing a single access point for both restaurants and the building located in the rear of the property. There would be a separate egress on the southern portion of Popeye's to access Grant Avenue. Due to the traffic issues, they anticipate that this would be a right-turn only egress. Their plan will be reviewed by the NYS Dept. of Transportation for their comments regarding the location and number of curb cuts permitted for this project.

For the rear portion of this project, they revised their previous plan from residential to developing a 3-story interior, temperature-controlled storage facility. Part of this land use change reflects the issues associated with traffic production and flow. They are trying to coordinate shared access to Standard Ave with the adjacent landowner. This is in the early stages of negotiations. In looking at market demand, if they stayed with residential, they would most likely change to a 3-story facility. However, this again is limited by the existing traffic concerns.

In response, they are now proposing a 26,000 square foot footprint storage facility. The applicant handed out photographic images of typical designs showing the type of development they would consider. They believe a storage facility would provide greater flexibility in addressing traffic issues in accessing Grant Avenue.

Kevin Parisi, an agent for the developer, came to the podium to answer questions from the Planning Board.

Jenna Powers: What scale of storage would you be providing? Would tractor trailers be accessing the site?

Kevin Parisi: No, these are residential storage facilities – 10' X 10'. 10'X 12' in size. There would be a small freight elevator, and 6-20 parking spaces provided.

Theresa Walsh: Wanted to confirm that they would be doing the storage facility instead of the residential development.

Applicant confirmed that this would be what they would be moving forward with.

Elizabeth Koenig: Expressed concern that the existing Dunkin Donuts already has severe traffic issues with cars backing up along Standart, even with the control of a street light. She asked if they had considered allowing Dunkin Donuts to purchase some of their land so that Dunkin Donuts would have more room to help facilitate the existing traffic congestion.

Applicant: There was a significant grade change between the Dunkin Donuts and their property, and there is an existing retaining wall already to control the slope. The northern parcel fast food facility would have to install an additional, separate retaining wall to further support the change in grade between the 2 parcels.

Crystal Cosentino: Have you identified any concern from the inside of each restaurant site that the stacking could perhaps extend into the entrance area of each site.

Applicant: One resolution that Popeye's has developed is having the double drive through kiosk so that you can move more traffic away from the entrance area quicker. The developer feels confident that their existing design would not create such issues.

Crystal Cosentino: What is the number of cars that would be stacked at each of the restaurants?

Applicant: For the Popeye's site, they would be able to stack 12-14 cars.

Elizabeth Koenig: Reiterated the concern and worry of the traffic congestion already existing at the crossroads of Standart, Grant Ave., and Seward Ave. Having the additional traffic flow issues seems very problematic and she is very interested in knowing what the NYS DOT's comments were regarding this proposal.

Applicant: Reiterated that they are working with NYS DOT as well as the adjacent property owner regarding gaining access to Standart.

Crystal Cosentino: Asked whether the applicant would still be looking to gain access to Standart Ave. regardless of whether the rear parcel is used for residential or as a storage facility.

Applicant: Yes

Crystal Cosentino: If you do not get egress, would you still move forward or would you change your design of the space.

Applicant: We could continue with the project – we are moving forward already without approval of access.

Crystal Cosentino: Is the access to Standart through the Dr. office or the residential driveway?

Applicant: It is through the Dr. office property.

Theresa Walsh: Are these plans contingent on approval of the NYS DOT?

Applicant: The entire project is contingent on the approval of the DOT. To note however, we would be removing 4 curb cuts and replacing only 2. We hope that this is a preferred situation. Considers that the proposed development is a better situation than what the traffic conditions would be if the previous land uses were still being used.

Theresa Walsh: So this is merely a preliminary, conceptual design.

Applicant: Yes, we would like to hear the Planning Board's response to the idea and layout before moving to far forward.

Theresa Walsh: Requested clarification of blue area on concept drawing.

Applicant: Explained that this was a schematic of part of the stormwater management system. It is located in the lowest section of the parcel. Everything in the area, including parts of O'Reilly's, which is off the project site, drains to this area. The developer would have to design the stormwater management system to meet the DEC requirements of quality and quantity and not exceed the capacity of the existing stormwater management infrastructure.

Crystal Cosentino: Asked Steve Selvek if a traffic study would be required.

Steve Selvek: The need for a traffic study has not been determined at this time. There is much to consider besides just the turning lanes, such as the topography of having cars coming down hills, having blind spots, and considering the number of curb cuts already existing. The DOT's comments will be critical in dictating the density of the development that can occur on this site.

Theresa Walsh: What was the fire department's concern regarding this project?

Steve Selvek: The fire department wanted to guarantee that there was sufficient access all the way around the residential building as there are requirements associated with how close a truck has to be able to get to a structure.

Applicant: The design has been modified to allow a 20' driving area around the entire building.

Elizabeth Koenig: She is pleased to see the change from residential to a storage facility. Asked what would be occurring on the second floor.

Applicant: The second floor would be additional stacked storage, accessible via a freight elevator. The applicant reiterated that they are confident that this project can work and they are willing to move forward with it.

Crystal Cosentino: Noted that they still had to consider design and aesthetics beyond the traffic issue. Traffic is their greatest concern. She is interested in what the public has to say about this project.

Steve Selvek: Reiterated that the Planning Dept. would be working closely with the DOT and taking their recommendations very seriously.

Applicant: Stated they proposed a second fast food restaurant in order to propose a worse-case scenario from a SEQRA standpoint. If it was required to be reduced in scale, it would still be approved within the SEQRA process.

The discussion was opened for **PUBLIC HEARING**

No people came forward to speak.

PUBLIC HEARING WAS CLOSED

Staff Comments:

1. The application is not complete. Additional engineering and specifications are needed.
2. The Applicant and the Planning Board should consider the idea of phasing this project. The Planning Board has done this previously. Large, comprehensive plans are reviewed in their entirety with regards to SEQRA, but then the Planning Board is able to approve individual/separate sections of the plan while the rest of the plan is further flushed out in terms of final details. The environmental impacts would be considered for the entire development.
3. NYSDOT is a reviewing agency that covers all work within the Right-of-Way.
4. The DRC discussed the importance of a second entrance, especially with regards to fire department access.
5. The plan for the Popeye's parcel has been designed such that it provides 31% green space, which is more than what is required by the zoning code.
6. The stormwater from O'Reilly's, located to the south of this parcel, continues to support a previous stormwater management plan where its outlet was at the edge of this property. This situation creates a wet spot on this project's property, however the proposed stormwater management plan will have to take this situation into account and still meet all requirements.
7. The Planning Department did receive a letter from the general public, Dominic Gambini, regarding this application. His concerns address the loss of vegetation and natural habitat, the provision of additional fast food restaurants which he points out may not be the healthiest options, and he does support the proposed residential development towards the rear of this parcel. He further points out concerns with traffic currently stemming from Dunkin Donuts and how this would exacerbate that situation.

Steve Selvek: Recommended the Board table this application until the application is complete, and allow staff more time to review the proposal.

Theresa Walsh: Asked about the use of permeable pavement.

Staff: Presented the idea that permeable pavement was more often used to solve drainage problems rather than provide the sole source of stormwater management for a site. The idea of grass pavers around the residential/storage facility was also discussed.

There was a Motion to Table the Application

Motion by: Elizabeth Koenig

Second by: Theresa Walsh

All in Favor, None Opposed, Motion Carried

Adjournment:

The next Planning Board Meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2022 at 6:30 PM.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by: Elizabeth Koenig and Second by: Theresa Walsh

All in Favor, None Opposed, Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned: 7:15 pm

Minutes prepared by: G. Messer

DRAFT