

MEETING MINUTES

JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

November 29, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Prosser, Chairman, Lisa L’Huillier, Vice-Chairman, Deb McAtee, Donna Dutton, Art Baderman, Randy Lake

STAFF PRESENT: Andy Nevin, Senior Planner
Sara Freda, Community Development Coordinator

PUBLIC PRESENT: Mr. Puccia, Pete’s Restaurant
Anthony Fiorentino
Craig Fox, Watertown Daily Times
Sandy Torres, WWNY TV7

CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM: Chairman Prosser opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and stated that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE August 29, 2022 MEETING MINUTES: Chairman Prosser asked members if they had any comments or changes to the August 29, 2022 meeting minutes. A motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by Chairman Prosser, seconded by Lisa L’Huillier, and carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS: Chairman Prosser asked if there were any outside communications. Andy stated there were none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (OTHER THAN AGENDA ITEMS): Chairman Prosser asked if there were any public comments (other than on agenda items). There were none.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. General Municipal Law, Section 239m Referrals:

1. City of Watertown, Pete’s Restaurant (Thomas Ross, Storino Geometrics), JCDP File # C 10-22.

Sara presented this project to the Board. She showed the location on a map and then on an aerial photo and described the neighborhood. She described the project, an approval for a paved parking lot expansion and associated landscaping at Pete’s Trattoria. She then reviewed several site photos taken the previous week indicating the features relevant to the project.

Sara said the local board should require the applicant to depict the snow storage and dumpster location on the site plan.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only was made

by David Prosser, seconded by Art Baderman, and carried.

2. Town of Watertown, Dicks Sporting Goods – Area Variance for front yard setback, JCDP File # T Wa 15a - 22

Andy presented the project to the Board. He showed the location map, aerial photo, site photos, and site plan. He said that the Board reviewed the site plan review last month. The building will not meet the required front yard setback of 40 feet along the side of the building (along a private street that is open to the public), so the proposed setback is 24 feet.

He said the project is the same as last month, with the exception of the need for the variance that was discovered during the local board meeting.

Andy said that in reviewing the area variance, the local board should consider the benefit to the applicant as weighed against the detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the community using the five factors for an area variance as stated in NYS Town Law.

Comments made regarding the previous site plan review related to pedestrian safety and ADA accessibility between Target and the proposed Dicks Sporting Goods store should be incorporated. They included a crosswalk with striping and handicapped-accessible curbing between Target and Dicks. Similarly, to further support walkability and pedestrian safety, the local board should consider a pedestrian connection to the Ulta, Michaels, and Old Navy plaza.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only for the project was made by Chairman Prosser, seconded by Deb McAtee and unanimously carried.

3. Village of Adams, Davit Ghazaryan, Site Plan Review to convert a former restaurant to a retail store, JCDP File # V Ad 1 - 22

Sara presented the project to the Board. She showed the location map, aerial photo, site photos, and site plan. She stated that the applicant proposes to convert a former restaurant to a retail store and smoke shop with related gifts.

Sara described the site including the new stairs/loading ramp as well as the municipal parking lot next to the building.

She said the use requires one off-street parking space per 200 square feet of retail space plus one space per employee. The local board should ensure parking is adequate.

4. Town of Cape Vincent, Use Variance to construct three self-storage buildings, JCDP File # T CV 1 - 22.

Sara presented the project to the Board. She showed the location map, aerial photo, site photos, and site plan. She stated that the applicant proposes three self-storage buildings on NYS Route 12E. She continued by saying that the site is located across from NYS Park Cedar Point and is on The Great Lakes Seaway Trail which is a designated NYS Scenic Byway. The local board should ensure that any future development be adequately landscaped from the road.

She then stated that the local board should only approve a use variance after the applicant submits documentation to the ZBA that the applicable zoning regulations and restrictions have caused unnecessary hardship. In order to prove such unnecessary hardship the applicant shall demonstrate to the board that for each and every permitted use under the zoning regulations for the River Front Zoning District:

(1) the applicant cannot realize a reasonable return, provided that lack of return is substantial as demonstrated by competent financial evidence,

(2) that the alleged hardship related to the property in question is unique, and does not apply to a substantial portion of the neighborhood or district,

(3) that the required use variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood,

(4) that the alleged hardship has not been self-created.

Alternatively, the local board could consider the merits of changing the zoning along this side of the state highway for the existing non-residential properties in the area.

If the local board makes the determination that the applicant has properly addressed each of the four tests for a use variance, and subsequently grants such use variance, the Town should require a site plan review for this project. The review should address landscaping and buffering, highway access, drainage, building design, signage and the potential lot dimensional discrepancies between the submitted survey and the schematic site plan to ensure the project is feasible as proposed.

5. Town of Clayton, Grindstone Group, LLC, - Site Plan Review for two self-storage buildings and one climate controlled building, JCDP File # T Cl 5 - 22.

Andy presented the project to the Board. He showed the locator map, aerial photo, site photos, and site plan. He said that the applicant proposes two 40 foot x 100 foot self-storage buildings and one 50 x 50 foot climate-controlled building. He pointed out the location of the sign, driveway, retained landscaping, and row of proposed evergreen trees.

Andy said the local board should determine whether the proposed row of trees and retained brush area to the north are an adequate buffer for the project.

6. Town of Watertown, Widricks Auto - Site Plan Review for two self-storage buildings, JCDP File # T Wa 16 - 22.

Andy presented the project to the Board. He presented the locator map, aerial photo, site photos, and site plan. He said that the applicant proposes two 30 foot x 100 foot self-storage buildings.

Andy said a Jefferson County Building Permit is required.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only for projects 3 - 6 was made by Chairman Prosser, seconded by Charlene Mannigan and unanimously carried.

Intergovernmental Reviews

2022 – 9 The Village of Clayton is seeking \$13,469,144 in funding from the USDA – Rural Development for water system improvements.

Funds will be used to replace the main water intake in the St. Lawrence River, a series of water distribution mains throughout the Village, and associated valves, hydrants, and water services along the segments of water main replacement.

The Board resolved to support the funding request.

Dave Prosser made a motion, seconded by Deb McAtee, for sending a letter of support for the project funding request.

Adjournment

Lisa L'Huillier made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:35 p.m., seconded by David Prosser, and it was unanimously carried.