

**City of Schenectady  
Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
January 20, 2021**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Wallinger called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

*Due to the closure of City Hall because of the Covid-19 Virus, the meeting was conducted online via WebEx.*

**II. ATTENDANCE**

**PRESENT:** Mary Moore Wallinger, Chair; Bradley Lewis, Vice Chair; Ryan Bailey; Randall Beach; Richard Ferro; Andrew Healey; Jason Bogdanowicz-Wilson; Christine Primiano, Principal Planner; Andrew Koldin, Corporation Counsel; Jennifer Mills, Secretary

**III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST CHECK**

None.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Commissioner Ferro, seconded by Commissioner Bailey, to approve the Minutes of the December 16, 2020 meeting as submitted.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. JOHN MARCELLA requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 G of a proposal to demolish the existing building and build a new retail and warehouse building at 810 Crane Street, tax parcel # 49.46-5-29.1, located in a “C-2” Mixed Use Commercial District.**

Michael Roman of C2 Design Group presented the proposal.

Mr. Roman explained that Mr. Marcella had been in the process of renovating the site, formerly used as warehouse space and a scratch and dent retail outlet for his appliance business, when a fire occurred that resulted in a total loss of the building. He briefly reviewed the revised site plan and architectural drawings that had submitted, pointing out the changes made in response to the comments made by staff regarding the initial proposal submitted.

The Commissioners and the applicant discussed the revised design as well as the added landscaping on the site and the rear access to the loading docks. The Commissioners indicated that they were pleased with

the changes made to the building design and landscaping. Mr. Roman stated that his client would be happy to work with the City to finalize where they would like the curb cuts to be installed at the rear of the site. Because the site borders a residential neighborhood at the rear the Commissioners concluded that every effort should be made to soften the rear property line and buffer the site from the neighboring residential properties.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

A letter from Gloria DiBlase, resident of 822 Sargent Place, was entered into the record. Ms. DiBlase expressed concerns regarding the past maintenance of the rear of the site.

A letter from Pat Smith, President of the Mont Pleasant Neighborhood Association, was entered into the record. Ms. Smith stated that she is happy to see that the business will remain in the neighborhood but also expressed concerns regarding the upkeep and the safety and security of the rear of the site.

Seeing no further members of the public that wished to speak, Commissioner Wallinger closed the public hearing.

### **SEQR RESOLUTION**

Motion by Commissioner Beach, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, to accept the Negative Declaration.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

### **SITE PLAN APPROVAL**

Motion by Commissioner Ferro, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, to accept the proposal with the following conditions:

1. The address will be displayed so that it is easily visible from Crane Street.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be placed on any doors or windows in the future.
3. All building permits will be obtained prior to beginning construction.
4. The applicant will work with the City Planner and the City Engineer to finalize the curb cuts and traffic flow on the site. A final site plan will be submitted to the City Planner and the City Engineer for final approval.
5. The applicant will maximize the green space along Sargent Place and include an additional shade tree in the landscaping. A final revised site plan showing the landscaping and façade changes discussed at the meeting will be submitted to the City Planner for approval.

6. The color for the rear portion of the building will be submitted to the City Planner for approval prior to the start of construction.
7. A revocable permit will be required for any lighting or awnings that overhang the City right of way.
8. Prior to the purchase or fabrication of the sign(s), the applicant will submit the final signage plan to the City Planner for approval.
9. If during the course of construction changes to the approved site plan become necessary the applicant will return to the City Planner for approval, or if the changes are deemed significant, to the Planning Commission for amended site plan review.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

**B. STS STEEL requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 I of a proposal to construct a 4,453 square foot office building at 10 Rush Street, tax parcel # 39.49-2-8.1, located in a “C-3” Waterfront Mixed Use Development District.**

Glenn Tabolt, President of STS Steel, and architect Dan Sanders presented the proposal.

Mr. Tabolt briefly reviewed the proposal and explained that the new building will serve as office space for STS Steel. He stated that the inspiration for the design of the building came from the neighboring Dunkin Donuts and bank. The Commissioners discussed the landscaping on the site, and it was determined that some additional trees and shrubbery could be added around the new building. The applicant also agreed to work with the City Planner to replace the fence along the border of the property at Erie Boulevard.

Staff explained that because the site is in the 100-year flood plain the Negative Declaration for SEQR should be conditional on the building being built above the flood plain. Mr. Tabolt noted that the building is also on a former brownfield but that the necessary remediation has already been completed.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

Seeing no members of the public who wished to speak, Commissioner Wallinger closed the public hearing.

**SEQR RESOLUTION**

The property is located within the 100-year flood plain which means it must be constructed to DEC requirements and built at an elevation out of

the floodplain, therefore a conditional Negative Declaration has been proposed.

Motion by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Ferro, to accept the conditional Negative Declaration.

*Motion carried unanimously, with Commissioner Bailey absent from the vote.*

#### **SITE PLAN APPROVAL**

Motion by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to accept the proposal with the following conditions:

1. The address will be displayed so that it is easily visible from the street.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be placed on any doors or windows in the future.
3. The concrete sidewalk along the front of the building will extend along the western side of the building and connect to the crosswalk.
4. All building permits will be obtained prior to beginning construction. The applicant will obtain all necessary permits and permissions (as applicable) from the NYS DEC prior to the application for building permits. The building will be built at an elevation above the floodplain.
5. The applicant will work with the City Planner to coordinate the replacement of the chain link fence along the property line on Erie Boulevard.
6. A minimum of five shade trees will be planted on the site: two to serve as a visual buffer for the parking lot and three along the Erie Boulevard side of the site. As discussed at the meeting the applicant will work with the City Planner for final approval of a landscaping plan that will include plantings of shrubs or trees near the driveway area.
7. If during the course of construction changes to the approved site plan become necessary the applicant will return to the City Planner for approval, or if the changes are deemed significant, to the Planning Commission for amended site plan review.

*Motion carried unanimously, with Commissioner Bailey absent from the vote.*

- C. McDONALD'S CORPORATION requests site plan and special use permit approval pursuant to Section 264-90 G and Schedule B of a proposal to add a payment window and complete ADA improvements at 1675 Union Street, tax parcel # 50.13-2-17.1, located in a "C-2" Mixed Use Commercial District and "R-1" Single Family Residential District.**

Steve Wilson of Bohler Engineering presented the proposal.

Mr. Wilson briefly reviewed the site plan and explained that this is a much smaller project than the one previously proposed for the site. He noted that the adjacent building has been sold and McDonald's would remain solely on the existing property. He stated that they are proposing to add a third window to the drive thru, which will be for payment, while the second and third window will be for food pick-up, and customers waiting for larger or delayed orders, respectively.

The Commissioners discussed the traffic flow and landscaping on the site and determined that the proposed changes will potentially lessen the negative impact of the business operation on the neighboring properties.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

Seeing no members of the public who wished to speak, Commissioner Wallinger closed the public hearing.

#### **SEQR RESOLUTION**

Motion by Commissioner Ferro, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, to accept the Negative Declaration.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPROVAL**

Motion by Commissioner Beach, seconded by Commissioner Ferro, to approve the Special Use Permit based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed building or use shall not substantially impact upon the nature and character of the surrounding neighborhood. The added pay window will in fact lessen the impact of the drive thru on the surrounding neighborhood.
2. The proposed building or use will not have a substantial or undue adverse effect upon adjacent property, the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, parking, utility facilities, and other matters affecting the public health, safety, and general welfare. The proposed changes will improve the drive thru operation on the site by moving cars along more quickly and lessening the noise and exhaust fumes of queued cars, thereby reducing any negative impact on the neighboring properties and their residents. The additional trees will also improve the site significantly.
3. Operations in connection with the proposed use shall not be more objectionable to nearby properties by reason of noise, fumes,

vibration, or flashing lights than would be the operations of any permitted use not requiring a special use permit.

4. The proposed building or use will continue to be served adequately by essential public facilities and services, such as highways, streets, parking spaces, police and fire protection, drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewer, and schools.
5. The proposed building or use will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any natural, scenic, architectural, or historic feature of significant importance.
6. The proposed building or use complies with all additional requirements imposed on it by the provisions of this chapter.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **SITE PLAN APPROVAL**

Motion by Commissioner Ferro, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, to accept the proposal with the following conditions:

1. The address will be displayed so that it is easily visible from the Union Street.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be placed on any doors or windows in the future.
3. As discussed at the Planning Commission Meeting, the landscaping in the front island along the Union Street sidewalk will be updated and the two overgrown bushes will be removed and replaced. The dead tree in the utility strip along Dean Street will be removed and a minimum of three shade trees will be added in the utility strip. The striped asphalt area at the front corner of the parking lot will be removed and replaced with a landscaped area. The applicant will submit a final landscaping plan depicting these changes to the City Planner for final approval prior to the start of construction.
4. All building permits will be obtained prior to beginning construction.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

- D. YATES VILLAGE II LLC requests a site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 F of a proposal to renovate portions of the existing buildings and construct 15 new buildings at Yates Village, 2450 Van Vranken Avenue, tax parcel # 30.84-2-1.1, located in an “R-3” Multi-Family Residential District.**

Lee Jaffee of Pennrose Development, Alison Yovine of MJ Engineering, Misa Chen, landscape architect from WRT Planning & Design, Bruce Chamberlin, Project Manager from WRT, and Lizzie Rothwel, architect from WRT, presented the proposal.

Mr. Jaffee noted that since their last presentation before the Commission the project had received a variance from the BZA to allow for the number of parking spaces to remain the same.

The presenters reviewed the current progress on Phase I of the development and each gave a brief overview of their proposal for Phase II, which unlike Phase I will include the renovation of some of the existing buildings along with the construction of some new units. The Commissioners expressed that they are pleased with the project thus far and believe that it will have a positive impact on both the residents of Yates Village and the surrounding neighborhood.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Nick Falvo, business owner on Van Vranken Avenue, spoke in support of the project.

Seeing no members of the public who wished to speak, Commissioner Wallinger closed the public hearing.

Because they are still working with the City Engineer, OGS, and the City Planner to coordinate some utility details and other infrastructure issues, the applicants stated that they will return to the Planning Commission at a later date for formal site plan review.

#### **VI. MISCELLANEOUS**

None.

#### **VII. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Motion by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Healey, to adjourn the meeting.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.