

MEETING MINUTES (Virtual-Google Meet)

JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

January 26, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Prosser, Chairman, Art Baderman, Lisa L’Huillier, Dwight Greene, Clif Schneider, George Yarnall, Jon Storms, Deb McAtee, Randy Lake

STAFF PRESENT: Andy Nevin, Senior Planner
Sara Freda, Community Development Coordinator
Erin Ermine, Assistant Planner
Michael Bourcy, Director

PUBLIC PRESENT: Clint Mattson, Chick-Fil-A Applicant
Rob Osterhoudt, Chick-Fil-A Engineer
Tim Freitag, Chick-Fil-A Engineer
Geoff Urda, City of Watertown Planner
John Pirsos, Channel 7 News
Craig Fox, Watertown daily Times

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 DECEMBER 29, 2020 MEETING MINUTES: Chairman Prosser asked members if they had any comments or changes to the December 29, 2020 meeting minutes. A motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by Chairman Prosser, seconded by Clif Schneider, and carried unanimously.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE RESULTS: Clif Schneider thanked David Prosser for his time serving as Chairman of this Board and stated he would be nominating David Prosser to return as Chair and Lisa L’Huillier as Vice-Chair. A motion to accept the committee’s recommendation was made at that time by Clif Schneider and unanimously carried, with one abstention by Chairman Prosser.

COMMUNICATIONS: Chairman Prosser asked if there were any outside communications. Andy Nevin stated they received a late Intergovernmental Review and it would be discussed after the Section 239m referrals.

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, Site Plan Review & Area Variance, Clint Mattson/Chick-fil-A Inc., JCDP File # C 1/1a – 21.** Andy Nevin presented this project to the Board stating that the applicant proposes to demolish the former Ruby Tuesdays building and construct a new 5,000 square foot drive-thru restaurant. The Board is reviewing this due to its proximity to

NYS Route 3 and the municipal boundaries. ***Lisa L'Huillier stated she would be abstaining from the vote on this project.***

Andy stated a site plan review was submitted for a new drive-thru restaurant, and an area variance is requested for the menu board canopy. A 50-foot setback is required and a 31.8-foot setback is proposed. The project is located in the City Center Plaza in the old Ruby Tuesday's location, which will be torn down for the new restaurant to be constructed.

Andy reviewed the site plan and discussed the traffic circulation patterns. Proposed peak traffic would be increased by 45% from the previous traffic generated by Ruby Tuesdays, and so the local board and applicant should determine the best traffic option.

Lisa L'Huillier noted the reduction in parking and asked if there were designated places for snow storage and if there were anticipated dates for demo, construction and grand opening. Tim Freitag, engineer for the applicant, stated there was an increase in green space around the project site and that would be used for snow storage. He further stated the permit process would be lengthy so dates are incomplete at this time, but they are anticipating Fall 2022 for opening.

Clif Schneider mentioned it could be tricky for vehicles to exit from the drive thru and Andy agreed stating that would be addressed in the staff comments for the local board to consider.

County/State issues Andy identified included:

New York State Department of Transportation should be contacted to ensure drainage alterations would not affect Interstate-81 and NYS Route 3. In addition, the traffic light at the intersection of Arsenal Street and Western Blvd may need timing modifications due to the anticipated increase in vehicle trips from the west turning left onto Western Blvd.

In regards to the area variance, the local board should consider the benefit to the applicant as weighed against the detriment to health, safety and welfare of the community using the five factors for an area variance as stated in NYS City Law.

Andy then reviewed the following local comments:

From anecdotal information, it is understood that there is the potential for very long lines at the drive-thru as other Chick-fil-A locations experience. The local board should require that the applicant and plaza owner develop a plan to minimize congestion and impacts to adjacent businesses from drive-thru traffic queuing.

Similarly, queuing conflicts could occur between Chick-fil-A and Starbucks customer access at peak times.

In addition, access to the nine parking spaces to the east of the drive-thru window could become blocked by Starbucks drive-thru queuing during their morning peak hours. The applicant should consider the need for these spaces or identify them as employee parking which could minimize such conflict.

The local board should ensure the landscaping meets the City's PDD requirements. The site plan submitted has labels indicating proposed landscape areas without an outline of

the proposed plantings and species types. However, the new layout adds greenspace, replacing some existing paved parking areas.

The local board should ensure the City's lighting limits are met throughout the site.

The applicant should indicate anticipated snow storage areas.

Chairman Prosser read the staff recommendation that the County Planning Board pass a motion of local concern only, with the comments as stated above.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only was made by Chairman Prosser, seconded by Clif Schneider, and unanimously carried with Lisa L'Huillier abstaining.

2. Town of Watertown, Site Plan Review, BJA Watertown Real Estate, LLC, JCDP File # T Wa 1 - 21. Erin Ermine presented this project to the Board stating the applicant proposes to remove two existing buildings and construct a new 28,000 square foot automobile dealership building. The Board is reviewing this due to its proximity to US Route 11.

Erin showed the project location on outer Washington Street (US Route 11). She reviewed the submitted site plan highlighting the two buildings that are scheduled for removal and the location of the new dealership building. She stated one of the three existing entrances would be removed. Inventory parking and customer parking were also identified.

State/County comments included the procurement of two permits. A NYS Department of Transportation Highway Work Permit will be required. DOT is currently reviewing the proposed driveways. A Jefferson County Building Permit will also be required.

Erin reviewed the following local comments:

While the site plan does include buffering along the highway, it should also include screening or buffering from adjacent properties.

As per the sign law, the site plan should indicate details for any new signage that may be intended.

Pursuant to the town zoning code, the site plan should indicate that the new site lighting would be dark sky compliant.

Chairman Prosser read the staff recommendation that the County Planning Board pass a motion of local concern only, with the comments as stated above.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only was made by Chairman Prosser, seconded by Jon Storms, and unanimously carried.

B. Intergovernmental Reviews

1. Jefferson County, North Star Food Hub, Inc., JCDP File # 1 - 2021. The applicant seeks funding to establish a marketing person to work with food producers across rural areas of Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence and Oswego Counties to develop business and social media marketing plans to enhance local food sales. Total estimated cost is \$99,000.

Chairman Prosser made a motion, seconded by Lisa L'Huillier, to send a letter of support back to the applicant.

Adjournment

Lisa L'Huillier made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:44 p.m. and it was unanimously carried.