

**City of Schenectady
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2021**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Wallinger called the meeting to order at 6:05 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; Andrew Healey; Jason Bogdanowicz-Wilson; Christine Primiano, Principal Planner; Jennifer Mills, Secretary

EXCUSED: Richard Ferro; Andrew Koldin, Corporation Counsel

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST CHECK

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Beach, to approve the Minutes of the February 17, 2021 meeting as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. RANDY DINARAM requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 A and J and a Special Use Permit pursuant to Schedule B of a proposal to operate an automobile repair business at 112 Henry Street, tax parcel # 49.75-2-19.1, located in an “R-1” Single Family Residential District.

Randy Dinaram presented the proposal.

Mr. Dinaram briefly reviewed the revised site plan and highlighted the changes that have been made and are proposed for the property. He noted that the violations on the property had been addressed, specifically that all of the unlicensed vehicles have been removed from the site and the lighting corrected so that it shines only on the property and does not disturb the neighbors. City Planner Primiano confirmed that the previous violations have been addressed.

The Commissioners discussed the conditions for the Special Use Permit and determined that the allowed hours of operation for the business

should be noted, as should the number of vehicles allowed to be stored on the lot at any one time. They also noted that all work must be performed inside the building and that customer parking spaces must be available on the site so that the customers do not park in the street.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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

SEQR RESOLUTION

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

Motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPROVAL

Motion by Commissioner Beach, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, 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 hours of operation for the business will be limited to 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. As discussed at the meeting the number of vehicles stored on the lot at any one time will be limited to eight, with two parking spaces remaining available for customer parking on site.
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 applicant will install privacy fencing and landscaping to mitigate any negative impact on the surrounding residential properties.
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. All work on vehicles will be performed inside the building.
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. All employee and customer vehicles will be parked on site and not in the street.

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. The proposed sign is small and attached to the building, and the building is set back on the site and comparable in size to other adjacent structures.
6. The proposed building or use complies with all additional requirements imposed on it by the provisions of this chapter. No variances are required, and the proposal meets the standards set forth in Section 264-107.

Motion carried unanimously.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL

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

1. The address will remain prominently displayed so that it is easily visible from Henry Street.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars are not permitted on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. The applicant will install the permanent landscaping and solid vinyl fencing shown on the revised site plan by June 1, 2021.
4. No more than eight cars will be stored on the property at one time. Two parking spaces will remain open for customer use.
5. The hours of operation for the business will be limited to 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. MARIA CHICAIZA requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 M of a proposal to operate a unisex hair salon at 1833 Broadway, tax parcel # 48.52-2-26.1, located in a “C-2” Mixed Use Commercial District.

The building owner was scheduled to appear at the meeting but communicated to City Planner Primiano during the meeting that he was having technical problems and was not able to attend via WebEx. The Commissioners subsequently decided to table the proposal until the April 2021 meeting.

MOTION TO TABLE

Motion by Commissioner Bailey, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, to table the proposal due to the landlord’s stated inability to access the meeting via WebEx.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. YOUNG PARENTS UNITED requests a recommendation to the City Council regarding a change of zoning at 502, 506, and 510 McClellan Street and 1563 Bradley Street, tax parcel #'s 49.36-3-65, 66, 67, and 49.44-3-1 respectively, from "R-1" Single Family and "R-2" Two Family Residential, to "I" Institutional District.**

Rabia Shinaishin, architect from Hyman Hayes Associates, and Ginni Egan from Young Parents United presented the proposal.

Ms. Shinaishin briefly reviewed the site plan and explained how the proposed use will relate to the surrounding properties. Ms. Egan explained the history of Young Parents United and gave a brief overview of the intended use of the site, which will offer transitional housing and services to young single mothers and their children.

The Commissioners discussed the site plan and the project's appropriateness for the Institutional Zoning District. They determined that the proposed use meets the criteria for the proposed zoning change. City Planner Primiano noted that the Department of Development believes that the Institutional Zoning District will be the most appropriate for the proposed use in this location.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

A letter from Linda Kelleher, resident of 1601 Bradley Boulevard, was read into the record. Ms. Kelleher questioned the need for a facility such as this one, stating that she believes that similar services are already offered by other programs in the City. She also communicated concerns regarding security on the site.

David Hogenkamp of Metroplex Development Authority, spoke in favor of the proposed use and zoning change, stating that this project will be an excellent use of the site and will fit well with both the Institutional Zoning District and the neighboring residential districts.

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

RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL

Motion by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Healey, to recommend to the City Council that the zoning be changed from "R-1" Single Family and "R-2" Two Family Residential to "I" Institutional, based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed zoning change is in character with the surrounding neighborhood. The St. Clare's campus adjacent to the property is an "I" Institutional District.

2. The proposed use of the property is in character with the surrounding neighborhood. The property use will be residential, similar to that of the surrounding residential properties, but will have an institutional setting, also in keeping with the Institutional District.
3. The proposed zoning district is the most appropriate for the proposed use.
4. The proposed use will not have any negative impacts on the surrounding properties.
5. The location for the proposed use is adequate to serve the needs of the proposal.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. NATIONAL GRID requests a Special Use Permit pursuant to the City Code Chapter 257 Wireless Telecommunications Facilities, to install a microwave antenna on a newly installed 100-foot-tall utility pole at 19 River Street, tax parcel # 39.48-1-2, located in a “C-3” Waterfront Mixed Use District.

Ben Weisel, attorney for National Grid, presented the proposal.

Mr. Weisel briefly reviewed the project, explaining that National Grid has been using Verizon’s underground telecommunications system for their emergency communications system for many years. Recently Verizon has informed National Grid that they are retiring this system, so National Grid is constructing their own network for communications. The microwave antenna will be a necessary part of this new operating system.

City Planner Primiano noted that the Planning Commission would only be declaring lead agency at this meeting and would not be able to vote on the proposal until the April meeting. She encouraged Mr. Weisel to submit drawings and/or photos prior to that meeting that are to scale and show what the antenna will look like and where it will be located on the site.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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

MOTION TO DECLARE LEAD AGENCY

Motion by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Beach, to declare the Planning Commission’s intent to act as lead agency and

commence notification to all interested and involved agencies of this intent, allowing all interested and involved agencies the required thirty-day comment period.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. NATIONAL GRID requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 I of a proposal to upgrade and enlarge the existing substation at 1700 Brower Street, tax parcel # 49.80-1-38, located in a “C-2” Mixed Use Commercial District.

Ben Weisel, attorney for National Grid, presented the proposal.

Mr. Weisel reviewed the site plan and explained that this substation was originally constructed from 1947 to 1960, and it is nearing the end of its functional life. He explained that National Grid plans to reconstruct the substation to modern standards and noted that they have received the necessary area variances from the BZA for the increased fence height and the barbed wire top portion of the fence.

The Commissioners discussed the landscaping and the screening of the site. It was decided that the required trees may be planted after the majority of the construction has been completed, therefore giving them the best chance for survival. Commissioner Wallinger noted that should a later planting time become necessary the applicants may request an extension of the deadline.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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

SEQR RESOLUTION

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

Motion carried unanimously.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL

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

1. All necessary permits will be obtained by the applicant prior to doing any work on the property.
2. Three (3) street trees will be planted to provide a visual buffer. One tree will be planted to the left of the driveway and the other

two will be planted to the right of the driveway, evenly spaced and between the fence and the sidewalk. The trees will be planted by October 22, 2022.

3. The applicants will coordinate with the City Engineer to finalize the plans for the sidewalk and driveway.

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

None.

VIII. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Beach, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.