

**City of Schenectady
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2021**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Wallinger called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

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

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST CHECK

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Beach, seconded by Commissioner Ferro, to approve the Minutes of the June 16, 2021 meeting as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously, with Commissioner Lewis absent from the vote.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. CHARLES G. CRAFT requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 I of a proposal to construct a 4,225 square foot addition at 771 Albany Street, tax parcel # 49.25-1-23.11, located in a “C-4” Downtown Commercial District.

Charles Craft and Luigi Palleschi of ABD Engineers presented the proposal.

Mr. Craft explained that he had been granted the necessary variances at the July Board of Zoning Appeals meeting and had revised the site plan based on the discussions he had with the Commissioners during the informal review at the June Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Palleschi reviewed the revised site plan and pointed out the changes that had been made since their initial presentation, including the addition of more landscaping and the redesign of the Albany Street façade to include more windows at the street level.

The location of the dumpster was discussed, and it was decided that it should be moved across the parking lot towards the building, with the location of one of the proposed trees beings switched with it.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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

The Commissioners discussed the revised site plan and indicated that they had no objections to the proposal. City Planner Primiano noted that the lots must be consolidated prior to the beginning of construction.

SEQR RESOLUTION

A Negative Declaration was issued on June 16, 2021.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL

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

1. The new address of 760 State Street will be prominently displayed so that it is easily visible from State Street.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be placed on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. All lots used for the operation of this business will be consolidated prior to the new construction. The lots to be consolidated are identified as #'s 49.25-1-23.11, 46, 47, and 48. A lot consolidation map must be approved by the City Engineer and files with the County Clerk prior to the issuance of building permits.
4. As discussed at the meeting, the one of the new trees to be planted will be moved to make the new location for the dumpster.

Motion carried unanimously, with Commissioner Lewis absent from the vote.

B. CHARLES G. CRAFT requests a Special Use Permit pursuant to Section 264-611 of a proposal to install an Electronic Message Board sign at 771 Albany Street, tax parcel # 49.25-1-23.11, located in a “C-4” Downtown Commercial District.

Charles Craft and Carly Clark of AJ Signs presented the proposal.

Ms. Clark reviewed the revised sign drawings. She pointed out that as suggested by the Commission the materials used on the sign had been changed to more closely match the materials used in the new addition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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

The Commissioners discussed the sign design and indicated that they had no objection to it and believe it to be a marked improvement over the existing sign. The brightness and rate of the message changing were discussed, and it was determined that the sign should be static between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. and that the brightness of the sign should be dimmed at that time.

SEQR RESOLUTION

A Negative Declaration was issued on June 16, 2021.

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 use shall not substantially impact upon the nature and character of the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed electronic message board will be located on one of the City's busiest commercial corridors. The size and scale of the sign are appropriate to the site and the neighborhood.
2. The proposed 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 electronic message board will be located in compliance with the City's setback requirements and will not impact adjacent 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. This is a business sign that will be located on a commercial corridor with other businesses on adjacent properties.
4. The proposed 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. The proposed sign is replacing

- a 35' high pole sign, the appearance of which has more of a negative impact on the neighborhood than the new sign will.
6. The proposed use complies with all additional requirements imposed on it by the provisions of this chapter. All necessary variances have been obtained for this sign.

And with the following condition:

1. The message on the sign will remain static daily from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. and the sign will be dimmed at that time.

Motion carried unanimously, with Commissioner Lewis absent from the vote.

C. JASON SOMMER requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 H of a proposal to construct a self-storage facility at 1806 Erie Boulevard, tax parcel #'s 39.34-1-5, 39.34-1-4.1, and 3.1, located in an "M-2" Manufacturing and Warehousing District.

Norman Ward, landscape architect for Lansing Engineering, presented the proposal.

Mr. Ward reviewed the site plan and pointed out the revisions that had been made since the initial presentation. The Commissioners discussed the landscaping on the site and the elevation drawings. It was determined that the blue lines across the front of the building should be continued along the sides to add interest to those facades.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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

The Commissioners discussed the proposal and indicated that they had no objection to the revised plans. They decided that the final revised plans, showing the changes discussed at the meeting, could be submitted to Ms. Primiano for final review and approval.

SEQR RESOLUTION

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

Motion carried unanimously.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL

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

1. The address will be prominently displayed so that it is easily visible from Erie Boulevard.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be placed on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. As discussed at the meeting, the blue line on the front façade will be carried along the Seneca Street and Maxon Road sides of the building.
4. The utility door will be painted gray to match the building.
5. The applicants will submit the final revised site plans to the City Planner for final approval.
6. All changes must be submitted to the City Planner for review prior to making the site plan change. If the change is significant, the proposal will require further review and approval by the Planning Commission.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. 200 BRANDYWINE, LTD. requests a Special Use Permit pursuant to Section 264 Schedule B of a proposal to operate a car wash at 200 South Brandywine Avenue, tax parcel # 49.58-2-2.311, located in a “C-5” Business District.

Luigi Palleschi of ABD Engineers and Steve McMillan of 200 Brandywine LTD presented the proposal.

Mr. Palleschi reviewed the changes made to the site plan since the initial review by the Commission. He explained that he had explored moving the building to other locations on the lot but found that this location best worked with the traffic pattern and layout of the site.

The Commissioners discussed the potential noise from the vacuums, and it was decided that some landscaping, including evergreen trees, could be added to the Duane Avenue side of the vacuum row.

Commissioner Wilson stated that although the carwash is an allowed use for the site, he does not feel that it is the best use of this property, which is a prominent entrance into the City. Ms. Primiano stated that while it is an allowed use there are tools that the Planning Commission can use, such as conditions on the Special Use Permit, to mitigate negative impacts on the surrounding. The Commissioners agreed and discussed limiting the hours for the use of the vacuums.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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

SEQR RESOLUTION

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

Motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPROVAL

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

1. The proposed use shall not substantially impact upon the nature and character of the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed building will be located on one of the City's busiest commercial corridors with similar types of businesses, such as large gas stations, nearby.
2. The proposed 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. While there may be some traffic stacking on Duane Avenue during peak times, the proposed entrance and exit to the site are the best available options.
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 use not requiring a special use permit. The applicants have agreed to add landscaping to mitigate any noise impact from the vacuum area and have indicated that they have business practices in place that will ensure that customers who make excessive noise on the site will be removed.
4. The proposed use shall 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. The site will have the necessary areas for storm water management and for holding the wastewater from the car wash.
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 site is currently a vacant lot.
6. The proposed building or use complies with all additional requirements imposed on it by the provisions of this chapter.

And with the following condition:

1. The vacuums will only be available for customer use from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. 200 SOUTH BRANDYWINE, LTD. requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 I of a proposal to construct a 6,500 square foot car wash facility at 200 Brandywine Avenue, tax parcel # 49.58-2-2.311, located in a “C-5” Business District.

Luigi Palleschi of ABD Engineers and Steve McMillan of 200 Brandywine LTD presented the proposal.

The Commissioners continued to discuss the landscaping on the site, as well as the proposed fence and sign. It was determined that additional landscaping should be added to the South Brandywine side of the property, and that alternative materials similar to those proposed for the fence columns should be considered for the building and the sign base. The Commissioners indicated that they had no objection to issuing conditional site plan approval and allowing the applicants to return for consideration of the revised building and sign design.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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

SITE PLAN APPROVAL

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

1. The address will be prominently displayed so that it is easily visible from Brandywine Avenue.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be placed on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. Prior to the beginning of construction, the applicants will return to the Planning Commission for review of the final building elevations and sign design.
4. A sewer report will be submitted to the Water Department for approval prior to the issuance of building permits.
5. The applicants will submit the final revised site plans, showing the landscaping changes and the lighting plan discussed at the meeting, to the City Planner for final approval.
6. All changes must be submitted to the City Planner for review prior to making the site plan change. If the change is significant,

the proposal will require further review and approval by the Planning Commission.

Motion carried unanimously.

- F. JACK ZHENG requests final site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90 M of a proposal to operate a day spa, hair salon, and laundromat at 1833 Broadway, tax parcel # 48.52-2-26.1, located in a “C-2” Mixed Use Commercial District.**

Jack Zheng appeared before the Commission.

Commissioner Wallinger explained to Mr. Zheng that he was asked to appear before the Commission to address the outstanding site plan conditions that have not been met concerning his property. After some discussion it became evident that Mr. Zheng did not have any specific plans to address the outstanding issues, and thus the Commissioners decided to table the application to give Mr. Zheng the opportunity to consult with a professional and complete a proposal.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

MOTION TO TABLE

Motion by Commissioner Healey, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to table the application as incomplete pending the submittal of further information.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

Commissioner Wallinger noted that the Family Dollar on State Street has windows covered more than 20% with signs and that there is litter and dead landscaping on the site. Staff will follow up.

VII. MOTION TO ADJOURN

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

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.