



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 304, WATERTOWN, NY 13601
PHONE: 315-785-7740 – FAX: 315-785-7829

TO: Planning Board Members

FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planner

SUBJECT: Site Plan Approval – 1240 Arsenal Street

DATE: February 25, 2016

Request: Site plan approval for the construction of an approximately 5,996 square-foot building and a 30-space parking lot located at 1240 Arsenal St., Parcel Number 8-53-118.000

Applicant: Ryan G. Churchill of GYMO, DPC on behalf of Patrick Donegan of VDI Properties, LLC

Proposed Use: Goodyear automotive services building

Property Owner: VDI Properties, LLC

Submitted:

Property Survey: Yes	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: Yes
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: No	Construction Time Schedule: Partial (Spring 2016 start)
Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Uses are described. Hours and traffic volume are not.

SEQRA: Unlisted

County Review: Yes

Zoning Information:

District: Commercial	Maximum Lot Coverage: N/A
Setback Requirements: F: 20', S: 5', R: 25'	Buffer Zones Required: Yes

Project Overview: The applicant proposes to demolish the former Blockbuster Video building and construct a Goodyear automotive services center in its place. The proposed Goodyear building would be approximately 5,996 square feet, and would consist of a 1,616 square foot showroom, and an approximately 4,380 square foot, 7-bay drive through service area. Since the proposed building will be larger than the existing building to be demolished, the applicant also proposes to reconfigure the parking lot by eliminating the row of parking spaces on the western edge of the site. In order to accommodate the drive through service area, the applicant also proposes to eliminate most of the spaces adjacent to the southern edge of the building footprint, except for two accessible spaces that would be adjacent to the showroom entrance.

Parking and Vehicle/Pedestrian Circulation: There are, and will continue to be, four vehicular access points to the site; a driveway connecting directly to Arsenal Street at the southwest corner of the site, two connections to the private street to the east identified on the site plan as Gaffney Drive, and a connection at the northwest corner of the site to the adjacent parking area for the neighboring Pearle Vision. While some spaces will be lost because of the reconfiguration described above, the applicant still proposes 30 parking spaces. Since the square footage proposed to be occupied by the drive through service area does not count towards the site's parking requirement, the Zoning Ordinance only requires nine spaces for this site plan. The applicant proposes exceeding the required total due to the needs of the business.

Although drive lane arrows, crosswalks and other pavement markings are shown on the site plan, a Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan was not included as part of the site plan submission. The City's site plan application requires the applicant to show all vehicular and pedestrian traffic circulation on the site. The applicant must therefore provide a Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan. This plan should clarify the vehicular movements of cars being serviced, noting whether vehicles will drive in one side and out the other, or whether they will back out of the same bay that they entered. This plan should also include the anticipated traffic volume that a Goodyear would generate, and it should show the turning movements of a City fire truck and a delivery or refuse vehicle entering and exiting the property. The applicant may contact the City Engineering Office for details on the required Fire Truck if necessary.

The pedestrian connection depicted from the City sidewalk to the showroom entrance is laudable and demonstrates a clear concern for pedestrian safety and a priority given to establishing pedestrian connections to neighboring businesses. This connection should remain exactly as proposed. However, since the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), and not the City, maintains Arsenal Street, the applicant must obtain permission from NYSDOT to perform this work within the State-controlled right-of-way.

Landscaping and Buffers: In Commercial Districts, the Zoning Ordinance requires a strip of land at least 15' in width in any required front yard and 5' in width in any required rear and side yards, which shall be maintained as a landscaped area. The applicant meets these requirements for the rear and side yards. However, while there is over 20' of lawn area separating the parking lot from the sidewalk in the front of the parcel, the distance from the front edge of the parking lot to the parcel boundary is actually only 4.3' at its shortest point and 10.9 feet at its widest point. This is due to an abnormally wide NYSDOT right-of-way caused by the beginning of a right-turn-only lane in the westbound direction on Arsenal Street. The applicant applied for, and has been granted, an area variance by the Zoning Board of Appeals to vary the width of the required landscaped area.

The applicant proposes planting 12 new trees on the site, four trees each in the three lawn areas on the north, west, and south edges of the property. The applicant proposes a combination of evergreens and shrubs in the landscaping buffer adjacent to the east side of the proposed building. The proposed landscaping plan is generally in conformance with the Planning Board's adopted Landscaping and Buffer Zone Guidelines. For any proposed landscaping, including trees, within the NYSDOT drainage easement, the applicant must obtain permission from NYSDOT and forward appropriate documentation to the City Engineering Office.

Setbacks: The site plan, as submitted, fulfills all other setback requirements in Commercial Districts.

Signs: The Zoning Ordinance allows up to 200 square feet of signage and one freestanding sign for this property. There is an existing, 90 square-foot "Stateway Plaza" freestanding sign at the southeast corner of the site. A previous owner of this parcel granted an easement to the Stateway Plaza Shopping Center for this sign.

The applicant has not yet submitted a master signage plan. However, the applicant has appealed to the Zoning Board of Appeals for two area variances in order that this sign not count against the parcel's sign limitations. In the first variance request, the applicant has asked that the 90 square feet of this sign not count against Goodyear's allowed total of 200, and to vary the total allowed signage to 290 square feet so that Goodyear could still have the 200 square feet of signage that they would have been allowed if the Stateway Plaza sign were not there.

In the other variance request, the applicant has asked that a second freestanding sign be permitted on the parcel so that Goodyear could still have the single freestanding sign that they would have been allowed if the Stateway Plaza sign were not there. When Blockbuster Video occupied this property, they had a second freestanding sign, which was erected prior to the enactment of Section 310-52.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, which regulates signage, and thus was grandfathered.

The pole from Blockbuster Video's freestanding sign still exists on the site, and the City Code Enforcement Bureau determined that the applicant could have a second freestanding sign only if they used the existing pole and only if the Goodyear sign were not larger than the pre-existing Blockbuster Video sign. The applicant said that the existing pole was insufficient for their needs and requested the variance, although the applicant should clarify this on the Site Plan, as it still identifies the old Blockbuster Video pole as "Existing Pole for Signage."

The Zoning Board of Appeals has heard both of the applicant's area variance requests regarding signs, but has not made a decision on either request. The applicant shall submit a master sign plan that abides by the ZBA's eventual decisions prior to the issuance of any sign permits.

Parcel Identification: On the Site Plan Application form, the applicant identifies two different parcel numbers in the "Property Location" section of the form. Both of these numbers have been deprecated, as they are both historic parcels. The parcels were assembled in 2015 and assigned a new parcel number by the City, effective for Tax Year 2016. The new, correct number, which is used at the top of this memorandum, is 8-53-118.000. All parties involved should use the correct parcel number in all references regarding this project from hence forward.

SEQR: The State Environmental Quality Review Act requires that when a project requires multiple actions, such as variances and site plan approval, that all actions be considered in the aggregate as one cumulative project. Therefore, the applicant was required to submit a single SEQR Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) that applies to all applications related to this project.

In an Uncoordinated review for unlisted actions involving more than one agency, each agency may proceed as if it were the only involved agency. As such, each board or governing body only considers the environmental impacts resulting from the approval that it grants. In this case, the Zoning Board of Appeals considers the environmental impacts of granting the three variance requests, and the City Council considers the environmental impacts of granting site plan approval. However, if an agency makes a determination that an action will have a significant adverse impact on the environment, it must then coordinate with the other involved agencies.

Lighting: The existing conditions plan shows two existing light poles on the east side of the site to remain. There is also an existing light pole on the western property line that appears on the site plan. The applicant must include the light output of the existing light poles on the Photometric Plan. The applicant must also obtain permission from NYSDOT for any proposed light poles within the NYSDOT drainage easement, and forward appropriate documentation to the City Engineering Office.

Utilities and Hydrology: It appears that the proposed project will increase impervious area on the site. The applicant must obtain permission from NYSDOT to direct stormwater runoff to the NYSDOT-owned drainage system and forward appropriate documentation to the City Engineering Office. If the project requires any updates to existing Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs), the applicant shall perform these updates and submit them to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

The proposed building also appears to have roof drains. The applicant shall indicate the location of all stormwater tie-ins, including roof drains and foundation drains, on the Utilities and Grading Plan. In addition, all existing below ground features need to be labeled, including existing water and sanitary sewer mains with pipe sizes and materials.

Permits: The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to construction: Demolition Permit, Building Permit, Water Supply Permit, Sanitary Sewer Permit, General City Permit, Sign Permit and Fence Permit.

Miscellaneous: No hours of operation are indicated on the application. The applicant should indicate the proposed hours of operation. No areas for snow storage are identified on the site plan. The applicant should identify areas designated for snow storage.

Review by the Jefferson County Planning Board, pursuant to General Municipal Law Section 239-m, is required for this project. Staff referred the application for review at the February 23, 2016 County Planning Board meeting.

Other Engineering Comments: The City Engineering Department has the following additional comments and concerns, which need not be site plan contingent, but must be addressed prior to the issuance of the any permits:

- The applicant shall submit sprinkler design calculations.
- The water service to be abandoned shall be cut and capped at a location to be determined by the City Water Department. The proposed water lateral will be required to connect south of the hydrant gate valve to facilitate proper maintenance of the hydrant if required. An additional gate valve will be required on the new service.
- The applicant shall submit the design of the proposed grease trap to the City prior to the issuance of any Sanitary Sewer Connection Permit and/or Building Permit.
- A detail for a stop bar is included, but the site plans do not depict one. The applicant shall submit a corrected site plan or detail sheets.
- The square footage of the proposed showroom is labeled on the site plan, but the total square footage of the proposed building is not. The applicant shall label the total square footage of the proposed building on the site plan for a permanent file copy.

Summary:

1. The applicant shall obtain all necessary permissions from NYSDOT and forward appropriate documentation to the City Engineering Department.
2. The applicant shall provide a Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan that shows the movements of a delivery or refuse vehicle as well as a City fire truck, clarifies vehicular entrance to and exit from the drive-through bays and includes anticipated traffic volumes.
3. The applicant must revise the Photometric Plan to include the light output of the existing light poles located on the east side and west sides of the property.
4. The applicant shall perform any required SWPPP updates and submit them to the DEC.
5. The applicant shall indicate the proposed hours of operation.
6. The applicant shall identify areas for snow storage on the site plan.
7. The applicant must address all concerns listed in the “Other Engineering Comments” section of the February 25, 2016 Planning Office memorandum to the satisfaction of the City Engineering Department prior to the issuance of any permits.
8. The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to construction: Demolition Permit, Building Permit, Water Supply Permit, Sanitary Sewer Permit, General City Permit, Sign Permit and Fence Permit.

cc: City Council Members
Brian Drake, Civil Engineer II
Ryan Churchill, GYMO DPC, 220 Sterling Street, Watertown, NY 13601
Patrick Donegan, VDI Properties, LLC, PO Box 669, Alexandria Bay, NY 13607
Jennifer Voss, Jefferson County Planning Department