

Town of Watertown
Planning and Zoning Commission
Public Hearing
Special Permit #282/Special Permit #283

Time: 7:17PM
Date: October 7, 2009
Place: Watertown High School
Lecture Hall
324 French Street
Watertown, CT

1. Call meeting to order

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:17pm.

2. Roll call

The secretary executed the roll call.

Present: Chairman, Mr. David Minnich
Secretary, Mr. Michael Masayda
Mr. Ronald Russ
Mr. Carl Mancini
Mr. Jim Blais
Mr. Glen Duplissie
Alternate, Mr. Ray Rondeau
Alternate, Mr. Ken Demirs

Absent: Vice Chairman, Mr. Gary Martin
Alternate, Mr. Duane George

Also Present: Land Use Administrator, Ms. Ruth Mulcahy
Town Engineer, Mr. Chuck Berger
Land Use Secretary, Ms. Carol Allen

Ray Rondeau sat in for Gary Martin

3. Hearing of applications

- b. An application for Site Plan/Special Permit #282 for a parcel of land less than 5 acres and Site Plan/Special Permit #283 for a new auto sales with used auto sales located at 694 Straits Turnpike, Watertown, CT located in a B-SC Business Shopping Center District.**

Mr. Masayda read the notice of public hearing:

The Planning and Zoning Commission for the Town of Watertown, Ct. will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, October 7, 2009 at 7PM at the Watertown High School, Lecture Hall, 324 French Street, Watertown, Ct. on the following:

An application for Site Plan/Special Permit #282 for a parcel of land less than 5 acres and Site Plan/Special Permit #283 for a new auto sales with used auto sales located at 694 Straits Turnpike, Watertown, CT located in a B-SC Business Shopping Center District.

Jane Malloy – Attorney - 150 South Main Street, Waterbury

Ms. Malloy turned in the avadavat and the green cards. Ms. Malloy said we are seeking two special permits one for new and used cars sales and the other is the subject property is less than five acres. The building formerly housed a walk-in medical clinic and is located in a business shopping district which does permit new and used car auto sales. Ms. Malloy sited subsection 33.5.1 which does permit the sale of a parcel less than 5 acres by way of special permit.

Curt Smith – Smith & Company – Surveyor and Engineers

Mr. Smith had a set of maps with a revision date of August 28, 2009 which highlighted the changes since the last application; six trees along the western boundary are now retained. Pedestrian movement and traffic circulation has been addressed by revising the arrows on the plan to show the circulation on the western entrance on State Street will be one way coming in and the exit near Straits Turnpike is an exit only. We do have signage shown on the plans one way, do not enter, stop signs and a stop bar to implement the traffic circulation. We have a loading area to the north side of the building. We have added a dumpster detail with a fence around it on the west side of the building occupying two parking spaces if necessary. The coverage is a little over 81% this will be reduce to 80% which conforms to the regulations. The setbacks to the building are 50 feet in the front and 20 feet on the side which conforms.

Board Members Concerns:

Mr. Rondeau asked during the process of loading and unloading will there still be access from your entrance to exit.

Mr. Smith yes, you have a 15 by 40 loading space.

Mr. Minnich asked on the raised island adjacent to Straits Turnpike what would be your comment if we were to require that to be a planted island.

Mr. Smith replied it is proposed to be planted shown on the landscape sheet. There is a notation for loom and seed and in the center we will install mulch and shrubs 5 gallon size.

Mr. Minnich asked Mr. Smith to review the details of the sign.

Mr. Smith replied the free standing signs and wall signs are presently located at Valenti Motors it is proposed to remove these signs at that location and reinstall them at this site. There will be one Saab sign on the wall the dimensions are on the sheet. One freestanding sign using the existing Saab sign to the landscaped island.

Mr. Minnich asked there are several variances that we gave at the site and does it conform to our regulations.

Ms. Malloy replied there were variances granted in 2002 for 240 square feet on a pole signage and 241 square feet of wall signage and the signs that are moving are in compliance with your maximum sign requirements.

Mr. Minnich asked if Valenti is the owner of the same sites with the application before us as well as the one down the street the same owners.

Ms. Malloy replied they are different legal owners. This property is owned by Auto Corner L.L.C. legally and 600 Straits Turnpike is owned by Fred Valenti.

Mr. Minnich asked would the owners of Valenti where this sign is coming from have any problems reducing the variance to which they have been granted by the same amount.

Ms. Malloy replied if we deal with the signage on 600 Straits Turnpike; there is another application that is coming before you.

Mr. Minnich asked about the maintenance with the new car dealership?

Ms. Malloy replied all repairs will take place at another building which is down the street where they are now.

Mr. Minnich asked where the cars are going to be prepped for new car sales.

Ms Malloy replied yes new vehicles will be prepped at the original site and driven to this site delivery for customers.

Mr. Minnich asked the use of the interior of the building with regards to the showroom, how is that going to occur.

Ms Malloy replied there will be renovations to the building and the intent to have doors to drive in the new cars to display and set up desk areas for sales people.

Mr. Minnich replied this Commission has jurisdiction regarding the exterior of the building then why is the exterior changes to the building not part of this site plan application that you have submitted to us for review?

Ms. Malloy and Mr. Valenti said they were unsure of what the exterior renovations would be for Saab if it comes out of Chapter 11 they might have a new and different look for their dealership.

Mr. Minnich said one of the issues is indeed the concept of what is a new car dealership which has vehicles internal to the building and you say you going to do that. Preparing the design plans for this building at the time of submission for the exterior of the building that would address the issue one has with vehicles internal to the building. At some point you could provide original specifications that exist for Saab now assuming they are not going to make no changes so you are currently here for what site requirements are now for the building and the parking.

Mr. Mancini asked the signs that they are proposing to use do they conform to our regulations.
Ms. Mulcahy replied on this site plan the signs do comply with the square footage requirements.

Mr. Minnich asked the issue of the 5 acres what is your position for the record why we should grant this.

Ms. Malloy replied Saab is a much smaller dealership; they average 2 to 3 people at the dealership a day vs. the larger dealerships. This dealership requires fewer cars, fewer customers and again the servicing is off site.

Mr. Minnich asked the site plan approval is one of what is in the regulations and a special permit in its language and in its conditions for the special permit are separate under law from the site plan. If one could take the conditions of the site plan and put them in a special permit in the language that is necessary for that, and it is the language in that special permit that would limit the future use of the property to be more intense. If you could help us with that special permit language together that would be helpful.

Mr. Blais asked where you are going to unload the new cars and load old cars.

Ms. Malloy replied all of that is going to be done off site. The prep work will be done at 600 Straits Turnpike.

Mr. Duplissie asked if it is two different corporations one is Auto Corner and the other is Valenti. The service is going to be performed at Mr. Valenti's building which is a private building. If for some reason the corporation and the private entity become separate entities and don't get along anymore and Saab no longer having a space to go for service will they want to put a service bay within this building?

Mr. Rondeau commented I think there is two ways we can protect ourselves against that. First in order for them to make any changes to the building they are going to have to come back to us. Secondly we can add specific language to this special permit that we approve this under the basis that no servicing of vehicles will be done at this location. So we have a way of covering ourselves twice.

Mr. Minnich replied it is possible. Another issue there is the five acres.

Mr. Mancini said could we condition the number of vehicles there, if you have less than five acres you are limited to certain number of cars parked on the property. There is no loading and unloading of vehicles as a property that is less than five acres. No repair or prep work is done on the property of less than five acres. Only display vehicles be allowed in the inside the showroom.

Mr. Minnich replied yes we can, through the special permit portion of it and like the YMCA let the applicant give us those conditions rather than us going through them.

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Ms. Malloy said I will have that information ready for you at the next meeting and what information Saab has.

MOTION: Duplissie moved to continue to next meeting

SECOND: Russ

All in favor

Michael Masayda _____

Secretary