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TO: Plan Commission
DATE: June 10th, 2024
SUBJECT: 1800 S Church St. – Conditional Use Permit - CUP & Site Plan Review

A request by Zuern Brothers Family Limited Partnership for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for granting legal conforming status to an existing lumberyard and approval of a site plan including building renovations, a storage shed, and fuel depot. Parcel PIN: 291-0815-0844-002.

SITE DETAILS:

Acres: 9.66
Current Zoning: General Business (GB)
Existing Land Use: Retail
Future Land Use Designation: Planned Mixed Use

BACKGROUND & APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The applicant is seeking approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to grant legal conforming status to an existing lumberyard that was previously conforming but made nonconforming by an update to the zoning code. The current General Business (GB) zoning district does not allow for 'Outdoor Storage or Wholesaling' land uses under which lumberyards would be categorized. The lumberyard was established at its current location in 1990 under a previous version of the zoning code that did allow for this use at this location. In these situations, the zoning code allows for such uses to be granted legal conforming status via a CUP. In conjunction with the CUP, the applicant is seeking site plan approval for building renovations that include a new vestibule over the front entrance, new windows, an outside seating area, a new storage building, and a fuel depot among other improvements.

STAFF EVALUATION:

Site Plan Review Committee:
See Minutes of June 10th, 2024

Land Use and Zoning:

The 'Outdoor Storage or Wholesaling' land use description within the Zoning Chapter of the Watertown City Code includes land uses that are primarily oriented to the receiving, holding, and shipping of packaged materials where any activity beyond loading and parking is located outdoors. A lumberyard is an example of such a use. [per § 550-53B]

Within the GB General Business zoning district 'Outdoor Storage or Wholesaling' is neither a principal land use permitted by right nor a principal land use permitted as a conditional use making the existing lumberyard a legal nonconforming use. [per § 550-33]

The Zoning Chapter of the Watertown City Code contains provisions that allow for the granting of legal conforming status via Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to previously legal uses made nonconforming by the adoption of the current Zoning Chapter. [per § 550-61]

A Site Plan Review Committee recommendation and Plan Commission approval of the site plan is required pursuant to Sections 550-144 & 550-145 of the zoning code.

Site Layout and Design:

The proposed addition and other improvements meet building and pavement setbacks, as well as the maximum building height limits for the GB General Business zoning district. The Airport Approach Protection Zone sets a maximum elevation of 889 feet above mean sea level for all buildings and vegetation at this site. The planned improvements do not exceed the maximum elevation.

Landscaping:

The property exceeds the minimum LSR (Landscape Surface Ratio) of 15% with approximately 3.9 acres of the property being existing green space.

Parking:

Parking requirements for 'Outdoor Storage and Wholesaling' land uses require one space for every 10,000 square feet of gross storage area, plus one space per each employee on the largest work shift. [per § 550-52B(2)] The existing parking exceeds these requirements.

Lighting:

The site will utilize the existing exterior lighting. No additional exterior lighting plan is planned.

PLAN COMMISSION OPTIONS:

The following are possible options for the Plan Commission:

1. Deny the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan.
2. Approve the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan without conditions.
3. Approve the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan with conditions as identified by the Plan Commission:
 - a. The applicant shall apply for any needed sign permits.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Application materials