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RENSSELAER CITY CLERK

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RENSSELAER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION HELD ON FEBRUARY 3, 2004 IN THE SECOND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM AT 7:30 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING:

The regular meeting of the Rensselaer City Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Philip Erlich at 7:30 pm.

Roll Call was taken, and it was determined there was a quorum.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Philip Erlich, Chairman; Michael Baggetta; Edward Burns; Louis Lourinia; and Richard Mooney.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jim Creveling; Christopher Eastman, Assistant Planner; Frank Filippini; Brad Konopaske; Andy May; and Marybeth Pettit, Planning Director.

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 6, 2004 MEETING:

Commissioner Mooney motioned for, and Commissioner Burns seconded, approval of the minutes of the January 6, 2004 meeting of the Rensselaer City Planning Commission as submitted.

All in favor except for Commissioner Lourinia, who abstained. Motion carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman Erlich announced that the Commission's next agenda item was to elect a Chair and Vice Chair.

Commissioner Burns motioned to nominate Philip Erlich as Chair and Richard Mooney as Vice Chair.

Commissioner Baggetta seconded.

Chairman Erlich asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Chairman Erlich called for a vote on the slate of officers.

All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Auto Now, Application for Site Plan Review of a Business Tenancy Change at 320 Columbia Street

Andy May addressed the Commission and explained his plans to lease the former Getty filling and service station to operate a used car sales lot with 19 cars on the premises with operating hours between about 10 am and 6 pm Monday through Saturday.

Chairman Erlich remarked that 19 seems a large number of cars for the size of the lot and asked if Mr. May would consider having traffic from Route 9/20 enter the lot but exit (and enter as well) via Rensselaer Avenue.

Mr. May replied that he would.

Chairman Erlich went on to ask Mr. May if he intended to keep the canopy over the area where the gas pumps were until recently and what kind of maintenance and service he intends to provide in the garage.

Mr. May told members of the Commission that the owner of the property was not yet willing to remove the canopy and that for the time being only the cars being prepared for sale would be serviced on the premises.

There was discussion about where employees would park, and Chairman Erlich suggested the Commission set a maximum on the number of cars allowed on the lot, be they cars for sale or employees' cars.

Commissioner Baggetta asked Mr. May about his plans for the building on the lot.

Mr. May explained that he plans to lease the lot and building for three years and then eventually to purchase the property. His plans for the building involve rehabilitating the interior office space and painting the exterior of the building.

In response to questions about signage, Mr. May went on to say that he planned signage on the canopy. When the canopy is eventually removed, a 15-foot sign for the car lot will be erected to replace the lettering that will be installed, until then, on the canopy. Mr. May mentioned, too, that the canopy lettering will be far less than the 100-foot maximum square footage allowed in the Columbia Overlay District and that a backlit sales sign will be installed on the building.

There was discussion about when the lot is paved that a raised lip or curb, permanent or temporary, be added along the Route 9/20 frontage where cars will not be entering. Mr. May agreed to the recommendation.

In response to questions about lighting, Mr. May told the Commission that there are four lights under the canopy and four on the sides. He said lighting would be added to the corners of the lot. The Commission agreed, after some discussion, that the safest pattern for traffic flowing in and out of the lot would be for cars to enter from Route 9/20 and enter and exit via Rensselaer Avenue.

The Commissioners discussed landscaping the property with the applicant, and the applicant agreed to leave the landscaping that is currently at the northeast corner of the lot and to add planters near the sales office.

Commissioner Mooney motioned for the following resolution:

“The Rensselaer City Planning Commission hereby grants site plan approval for a business tenancy change to Auto Now, a used car dealership at 320 Columbia Street with the following conditions: access from Columbia Street be entrance only; access from Rensselaer Avenue be both entrance and exit; entrances and exits be marked; there be not more than 15 cars on the lot at one time; the existing landscaping remain; a raised lip or curbing be added along the Columbia Street frontage where cars will not be entering; and the building be painted and excess signage removed.”

Commissioner Lourinia seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other business before the Commission, Chairman Erlich said he welcomed a motion for adjournment. Commissioner Burns motioned for adjournment.

All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marybeth Pettit
Director

MP:ce