

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission  
First Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 62 Washington Street  
June 6, 2016**

**Members Present:**

Christine VanVorst, James Ahlemeyer, George Farrell, Bridget Swick

**Members Absent:**

Thomas Cardamone, Robert Campano, Lynn Feltus

**Staff Present:**

Mike Brown, Assistant Director of Planning

**Others Present**

Ms, Tonya Deptola (New Russia Center); Mr. Sean King (King Piano Moving, LLC); Jack Spath

**Call to Order:**

The Chair, Christine VanVorst, called the meeting of the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission to order at 6:30PM. Roll call was taken and a quorum was determined.

**Adoption of Past Meeting Minutes**

Motion to adopt by James Ahlemeyer; motion seconded by George Farrell

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

Review of Site Plan / Special Use Permit application for:

1. **1550 Broadway – The New Russia Cultural Center** (Ms. Tonya Deptola) to utilize the existing zoned mixed-use (MU-1) property and create a cohesive locality with unique cultural characteristics for the Russian-speaking population in the Capital District, to provide cultural activities, educational programs, etc. relative to Russian culture; Ms. Deptola gave an overview of the proposed use at the former church located at Tracey Street and Broadway; Chairwoman Van Vorst asked if the New Russia Cultural Center was a new organization and Ms. Deptola explained that currently they were located in Schenectady but wished to relocate to Rensselaer due its central location in the Capital District and that the Rensselaer site offered much more space; Chairwoman Van Vorst asked about parking needs for the center's users and expressed concerns about traffic increases and street parking when the center is in operation; with abbreviated hours scheduled for the center's operation, parking impacts will be minimal and for larger gatherings, visitors will be encouraged to utilize public parking areas at the Forbes Avenue boat launch area. Commission member Ahlemeyer inquired about potential noise impacts on the neighborhood during gatherings and functions held at the site and Ms. Deptola explained that impacts, if any would be minimal due to the planned hours of operation anticipated for childrens groups weekdays from 10 AM to 1 PM and adult groups in the evening. Further, as advised by Jack Spath (Attorney), noise ordinances would need to be complied with. Commission members asked about any plans for signage and Ms. Deptola indicated signs will be installed and she will inquire about sign regulations with the city planning office. A public

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hearing on the proposed property use was not required due to the intended use falling within Mixed-Use 1 (MU-1) zoning per existing city zoning regulations.

2. **850-852 Broadway – Home Office of King Piano Moving, LLC** (Mr. Sean King) to utilize the existing zoned mixed-use (MU-1) property for sales and service of antique pianos, sales of repurposed piano parts and components, and offer space for piano lesson space; Mr. King described his proposed use of the building and explained that noise/traffic impacts to the neighborhood would be minimal, if any, due to the nature of the business; in addition, Mr. King intends to utilize the downstairs area of the building for his business and keep the upstairs living quarters as a rental unit; the Commission asked if signage would be installed for the business and Mr. King indicated it would be and will work with the city planning office with regard to regulations. A public hearing on the proposed property use was not required due to the intended use falling within Mixed-Use 1 (MU-1) zoning per existing city zoning regulations.

**Decision:**

Pursuant to SEQR it was determined that both actions are considered Type II and therefore no significant environmental impacts. The Planning Commission approved both Site Plan/Special Use Permit applications for the New Russia Cultural Center and for King Piano Moving, LLC.

**Adjournment:**

George Farrell made a motion to close the meeting and the motion was seconded by James Ahlemeyer. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

**Next Meeting:**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, **July 11, 2016 at 6:30 PM.**

**Record of Decisions:**

An official record of decisions noting the details of motions and votes from this meeting along with any conditions & stipulations of approval has been filed with the City Clerk and a copy maintained in Planning Department records.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael S. Brown, Assistant Director  
Office of Planning and Development