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**City of Rensselaer
Planning and Development Agency
City Hall - Rensselaer, New York 12144**

**REGULAR MEETING
RENSSELAER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Monday, 3 July 1989
Common Council Chambers, City Hall

AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Thorpe Electric Supply, Inc./21 Washington Street/Special Use Permit to build in Floodplain

REGULAR MEETING - 7:15 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 6 June 1989

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

1. ZBA Update: Neiman
2. Other

OLD BUSINESS:--none

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Thorpe Electric Supply, Inc./21 Washington Street/Special Use Permit to build in Flood Plain
2. Rensselaer Middle High School/555 Broadway/Freestanding Sign Review

ADJOURNMENT



AGENDA NOTES

NEW BUSINESS

1. Thorpe Electric Supply, Inc./21 Washington Street

Thorpe Electric Supply, Inc., is proposing to build an addition, approximately 42' X 120' in size on the south side of the store and warehouse at 27 Washington Street on property known as 21 Washington Street. The addition will be used as a warehouse. The addition will maintain the line of the existing building and will come within 5 feet of the side lot line.

Because warehousing is not permitted in a Local Business District (LB), the proposal can only be permitted through the granting by the ZBA of a use variance to allow expansion of a non-conforming use. Also, area variances will be required to permit encroachment on the front, rear and side yard setback, as well as deviation from the requirements for maximum structure coverage and open space.

As part of the proposal, the applicant intends to pave and stripe the existing employee parking lot between Broadway and Academy Street. It is anticipated that 25 spaces can be created. The spokesman for the applicant, Art Gammel, also informs me that negotiations are also underway to acquire the remaining buildings between the proposed addition and the Hess gas station, which, if successful, would permit off-street loading and unloading.

RPDA Recommendation: The proposed addition is similar to one built a few years ago. Building it would permit the business to expand while remaining in the City. The addition maintains the existing lines of the building, while leaving space adequate for purposes of fire safety between it and the buildings on the adjacent lot. Paving the nearby employee parking lot should maximize use. Hopefully, negotiations for the adjacent parcel will be successful and, at least, some of the space used to accommodate off-street loading and unloading.

Therefore, the RPDA recommends that the Planning Commission make a favorable recommendation to the ZBA to grant the necessary variances. If it has no problem with the site plan, the Commission might consider approving it conditional upon ZBA action.

2. Rensselaer Middle High School/555 Broadway

The Rensselaer Middle High School proposes to replace an existing freestanding sign with another freestanding sign, which will be the same height and about two feet wider, and will also be internally

illuminated. Because the sign was a gift from the graduating class, a temporary building permit was issued so that it could be in place for graduation.

The sign is 4' X 8' (32 square feet). The top of the sign stands 8' from the ground, the same height as the previous sign. The words "Rensselaer Middle High School" are written in white on a blue background at the top; below are three lines for changeable copy (black letters on white). At present the sign is not being lighted.

RPDA Recommendation: Because the grandfathered status of the previous freestanding sign carries over, a variance is not needed. Therefore, the sign is permitted. The Planning Commission will review the size, height and other aspects of the sign's appearance. The new sign has been sited at the location of the old sign, back from the street where the illumination should not impact passing traffic. The RPDA recommends approval.

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MEETING MINUTES
RENSSELAER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
3 July 1989

ATTENDANCE: William Carroll, Ray Frankoski, William Spath and John Dunn were present. Michael Bridgeford, William Pulver, James Van Vorst, Jr. were absent.

OTHERS PRESENT: Douglas Burgey, Judith Scott, Arthur Gammell, Thomas Gammell, Mary Szydlowski and others.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Thorpe Electric Supply, Inc./21 Washington Street/Special Use Permit to build in Floodplain

Vice-Chairman Frankoski called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. He asked David Howell, engineer for Thorpe Electric Supply, Inc., to explain the proposed project. Vice-Chairman Frankoski asked if anyone wanted to speak in favor. No one spoke. Then he asked if anyone wanted to speak against the proposal. Again, no one spoke. Vice-Chairman Frankoski then closed the public hearing at 7:09 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. It was determined that a quorum was present to conduct business.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Upon motion of John Dunn and seconded by William Spath, the minutes from 6 June 1989 were approved by unanimous vote.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

1. The ZBA granted a variance to Herbert Neiman to create a four family dwelling at 212 Washington Avenue.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Thorpe Electric Supply, Inc./21 Washington Street/Variance Recommendation, Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit to build in a flood plain

Upon motion of William Spath, and seconded by William Carroll, the Planning Commission acted as follows:

"The Rensselaer City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the request by Thorpe Electric Supply, Inc., for a use variance to expand the existing warehousing use at 27 Washington Street by building an addition, approximately 42' X 120' in size, on presently vacant land at 21 Washington Street be granted. The Commission also recommends that the various area variances required from the front, rear and side yard setback requirement and from the maximum structure coverage and open space requirement be granted. In making its decision, the Commission notes the proposed addition is similar in terms of use and design to an addition built approximately three years ago and simply expands the use and size of the existing building in a way that is not out of character with the surrounding commercial neighborhood.

Moreover, the Planning Commission hereby approves the site plan, dated 22 June 1989 and prepared by Northway Engineering, Inc., for the proposed addition and grants a special use permit to construct in the 100-year flood plain, noting that the plans indicate that the building will be flood-proofed in accordance with federal standards. This approval is conditional upon the Zoning Board of Appeals granting the necessary use and area variances. The Commission also notes that the employee parking lot located at 126-8 Broadway will be paved and striped as part of the project, thereby facilitating maximum usage of the space.

In conjunction with approval of the site plan and review of the environmental assessment, the Commission has determined that there will not be any adverse environmental impact on the surrounding neighborhood or the wider community and requests that a SEQOR Negative Declaration be issued."

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Rensselaer Middle High School/555 Broadway/Freestanding Sign

Upon motion of John Dunn, and seconded by William Spath, the Planning Commission acted as follows:

"The Rensselaer City Planning Commission hereby approves the sign plan, dated 6/2/89 and prepared by Hawley Sign Company, for the proposal by the Rensselaer School District to erect an internally-illuminated freestanding sign, 32 sq. ft. in size at the entrance to the Rensselaer Middle High School at 555 Broadway, as a replacement for the existing freestanding sign, which is approximately 24 sq. ft. in size, and is not illuminated. Even though a freestanding sign would normally not be permitted in a Multi-family Residential District (R3), the replacement sign is allowable because the existing freestanding sign is grandfathered.

In making its decision, the Commission notes that the proposed sign is only marginally larger than the existing sign and is the same height (8 feet) above grade and will be erected at the exact location of the existing sign. It is not out of scale with the school or the site; moreover, the illumination should not be distracting to passing traffic on Broadway."

The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

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Tape Reference: B 10 - 429

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith E. Scott

Judith E. Scott
Acting Secretary