

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
248 W. Canal St, North Utica, IL 61373
Planning Commission
Public Hearing
March 24, 2022
www.utica-il.gov

AGENDA

- I. **6:00 p.m.** Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll Call
- IV. **6:00 Public Hearing:**
 1. Consideration of the Petition of Christy Donahue, and Willow Tree Lane, LLC, as Owner of property located at 229 S. Clark St., Utica, IL, 61373. The Petitioner is seeking a Special Use and requires a text amendment to the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance, to construct and operate an amusement operation, specifically a Sluice Box / Gem Cleaning Station, in connection with the Rock Shop located on the property. The property is located in the C-2 Zoning District.
 - a. It is proposed that the Zoning Code of the Village of North Utica, Section 10-8B-3, be amended to allow a Sluice Box / Gem Cleaning Station as a Special Use in the C-2 Zoning District.
 - b. It is proposed that the Petitioner be granted a Special Use under Section 10-8B-3 of the Village of North Utica Zoning Code to grant the operation of a Sluice Box / Gem Cleaning Station, in connection with the Rock Shop, on property located at 229 S. Clark St., Utica, IL, 61373; Property is zoned C-2.
 - c. Such other relief that is necessary to allow Petitioner's intended use of the property.
 2. Discussion and Possible Recommendations of the Planning Commission regarding such Hearing.
- V. Village President: General Discussion regarding the next Chapter(s) of the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance to be reviewed by the Planning Commission
- VI. Consideration and Possible Action on Planning Commission Meeting Minutes: 02-24-2022
- VII. Old / New Business
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Adjournment

POSTED 03-22-2022

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MINUTES

At 6:06 pm the meeting was called to Order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Village Clerk Laurie Gbur recorded the meeting attendance. Present were Members Doug Gift, Mike Brown, Dennis Hamilton, Roy Chapman and Andy Skoog. Also present were Village Attorney Herb Klein and Village Engineer Kevin Heitz. Chairman Tom Guttilla and Members Dennis Hamilton and Bill Zens were absent from the meeting. Zoning Enforcement Officer Curt Spayer was also absent from the meeting.

A motion was made by member Skoog, seconded by Member Brown to nominate Member Gift to Chair the meeting.

All in Favor
Motion Carried

Attorney Klein provided a brief summary of the Petition of Christy Donahue, and Willow Tree Lane, LLC, as Owner of property located at 229 S. Clark St., Utica, IL, 61373. The Petitioner is seeking a Special Use and requires a text amendment to the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance, to construct and operate an amusement operation, specifically a Sluice Box / Gem Cleaning Station, in connection with the Rock Shop located on the property. The property is located in the C-2 Zoning District.

Village Exhibit #1 - Legal Notice published on March 8, 2022
Petitioners Exhibit #1 - Petition and additional documents

Ms. Christy Donahue was sworn in to provide Testimony.

Ms. Donahue stated that she is seeking a Special Use for her property located at 229 S. Clark St. which is also where her business, The Rock & Soul is located. The shop has many visitors that come in looking for rocks, gemstones and crystals. The shop also provides education to children about rocks.

Ms. Donahue stated that while traveling she has visited areas where there are sluicing and gem cleaning stations and she believes adding this to her property would fit in well with her existing business. There will be a small structure resembling a miniature water tower, along with a series of elevated boxes that will form a gem cleaning station. Customers will be able to purchase a small bag filled with dirt, rocks and stones that they can scoop into the sluice box to clean. Approximately 15-20 people will be able to participate at one time.

Ms. Donahue also stated that she had spoken to Mr. Dave Johnson, owner of Riverside Plaza (Formerly the Willows Hotel), about the possibility of shared parking. He is open to allowing customers of the Rock & Soul to park in his lot to help address the need for additional parking on Johnson St., near the shop.

Member Chapman stated that having additional parking available in the Riverside lot would help with the traffic on Johnson St.

Chairman Gift asked where the water tower feature would be located and whether it would be visible from the alley behind located the shop.

Ms. Donahue stated that the fencing located in the back of the property would be extended and there would be limited visibility of the water tower from the alley; The sluice box would not be visible at all from the alley.

Engineer Heitz then added that the water tower and sluice box will be visible from Rt. 178 and from Johnson St.

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Chairman Gift asked if there are requirements with fencing and setbacks that would affect Ms. Donahue being able to extend the fence.

Engineer Heitz stated that extending the fence should not be an issue.

Ms. Donahue then stated that the sluice box would collect all of the dirt material and the water is recirculated by a pump.

Chairman Gift asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the Petition; There was no one present. Chairman Gift then asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of the Petition; There was no one present.

It was motioned by Member Skoog, seconded by Member Chapman to close the Public Hearing at 6:22 pm.

All in Favor
Motion Carried

It was then motioned by Member Skoog, seconded by Member Hamilton to recommend amending the Zoning Code of the Village of North Utica, Section 10-8B-3, to allow a Sluice Box / Gem Cleaning Station as a Special Use in the C-2 Zoning District.

4 Yes
Motion Carried

It was then motioned by Member Brown, seconded by Member Skoog to recommend granting a Special Use under Section 10-8B-3 of the Village of North Utica Zoning Code to grant the operation of a Sluice Box / Gem Cleaning Station, in connection with the Rock Shop, on property located at 229 S. Clark St., Utica, IL, 61373; in the C-2 Zoning District.

4 Yes
Motion Carried

Mayor Stewart then provided a brief summary to the Planning Commission regarding performing a review of the Villages' Sign Ordinance. The April 28, 2022 meeting will be a joint meeting of the Village Board and Planning Commission Meeting, to have a general discussion about the Sign Ordinance. A document containing several areas within the Ordinance that need to be reviewed was provided to the group by the Village Clerk. Attorney Klein reminded the group that the Villages' Sign Ordinance was adopted in 2004. There are areas within the current Ordinance that need review such as off-site signage, billboard signage, and 'wind-sock' and 'flag' signage.

Mayor Stewart then added that anyone having questions when reviewing the Sign Ordinance can contact Zoning Enforcement Officer Spayer.

Old / New Business: NONE

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Public Comment: Mr. Vijay Rmervgesan, Plainfield, IL stated that he and his wife visit the Village and would like to purchase property to use as a short-term rental property. He then asked about the process for obtaining a License.

Attorney Klein stated that the Village of North Utica currently has a Moratorium on issuing any Licenses through September 9, 2022, while the Board reviews the Villages' Lodging, Hotel / Motel, Vacation Rental and Bed and Breakfast Ordinances.

Engineer Heitz then updated the Planning Commission about the parking at the new Village Administrative Building. There is a need for additional parking for the Village and the Visitor's Center. Engineer Heitz is assessing the drainage and the parking requirements in the area to create a plan to address the shortage in parking.

Chairman Gift asked if the Village had received any news regarding the Rebuild Downtown & Mainstreet Grant that was applied for earlier in the year.

Mayor Stewart stated that the Village is still waiting to hear, but the application that was submitted was very strong and we believe we have a great chance of being awarded the Grant.

Minutes: It was then motioned by Member Brown, seconded by Member Skoog to approve the Minutes from the 2-24-2022 Planning Commission meeting as presented.

All in Favor
Motion Carried

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm. Motion made by Member Skoog, seconded by Member Brown.

All in Favor
Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie A. Gbur
Village Clerk