

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
248 W. Canal St, North Utica, IL 61373
Planning Commission Meeting
May 23, 2024
www.utica-il.gov

AGENDA

- I. **5:00 p.m.** - Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll Call
- IV. **5:00 - Public Hearing:**
 1. For the purpose of considering and hearing Public Comment and Testimony regarding the Petition of Waltham Elementary School District No. 185 (hereinafter referred to as “District”), as Contract Purchaser, and Hawthorne Healthcare of Greenville, LLC, Owner / Seller, in which the Petitioner is seeking a zoning amendment and certain Variances to the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance provisions to allow the future construction of an addition to the District’s existing Public Elementary School, and the use of modular facilities during the interim. The tract of land affected is located at the Southwest ten (10) acres of N. IL Rt. 178 and E. US Rt. 6, Utica, IL 61373, just North of 2902 IL Route 178, Utica, IL. Parcel Part of PIN 19-04-309-000; Zoned A-1 (Agriculture)
 - A. It is proposed that the Petitioners be granted the following:
 - a) The District seeks a map amendment so that the subject property will be zoned C-2 (General Commercial District), where public institutional uses like an elementary school are permitted. Alternatively, if a map amendment is denied, the District seeks a Special Use Permit to construct and operate a public school at the site.
 - b) The District intends to utilize modular school buildings until the additions of the existing school facility are constructed and is seeking any and all approvals necessary for such use.
 - c) In connection with the map amendment, the District seeks certain variances pursuant to Section 10-3-3 of the Village of North Utica Zoning Code. The following variances are being sought:
 - I. In the C-2 zoning district, the maximum building height is 35’, but the planned school is 35’-6”. Accordingly, the District seeks a variance as to building height to construct a building that is 35’-6”.
 - II. Any required planting would be done after the construction has been completed. The District seeks a variance to omit the required planting at this time.
 - III. Due to the nature of the structure, the District is seeking a variance to allow for 9’-0” parking stalls instead of the 10’-0” parking stalls that are required.
 - IV. The District is seeking a variance from the maximum front yard setback. The current maximum is 50’, however the District is seeking a maximum setback of 272.8’.
 - d) Such other amendments, variances, and / or relief as may be necessary to allow the intended construction.
 2. Discussion and Possible Recommendations of the Planning Commission regarding such Hearing.

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
248 W. Canal St, North Utica, IL 61373
Planning Commission Meeting
May 23, 2024
www.utica-il.gov

- V. Consideration and Possible Action on Planning Commission Meeting Minutes: 01-09-2024
- VI. Old / New Business
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Adjournment

POSTED 05-17-2024

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
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MINUTES

At 5:04 pm the meeting of the Planning Commission was called to Order by Chairman Tom Guttilla who then led the Pledge of Allegiance. Village Clerk Laurie Gbur recorded the meeting attendance. Present at the meeting were Planning Commission Members Mike Brown, Andy Skoog, Mark MacKay, Doug Gift. Also present were Village Attorney Herb Klein, Village Engineer Kevin Heitz and Public Works Director Curt Spayer. Members Bill Zens and Warren Munson were absent from the meeting.

Public Hearing: Village Attorney Herb Klein provided a summary of the Petition of Waltham Elementary School District No. 185 (hereinafter referred to as “District”), as Contract Purchaser, and Hawthorne Healthcare of Greenville, LLC, Owner / Seller, in which the Petitioner is seeking a zoning amendment and certain Variances to the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance provisions to allow the future construction of an addition to the District’s existing Public Elementary School, and the use of modular facilities during the interim. The tract of land affected is located at the Southwest ten (10) acres of N. IL Rt. 178 and E. US Rt. 6, Utica, IL 61373, just North of 2902 IL Route 178, Utica, IL. Parcel Part of PIN 19-04-309-000; Zoned A-1 (Agriculture)

Village Exhibit #1	Legal Notice published on May 7, 2024
Petitioner’s Exhibit #1	Rezoning Application
Petitioner's Exhibit #2	Zoning Variance Application
Petitioner's Exhibit #3	Signed Contract for the Purchase of the Property
Petitioner's Exhibit #4	4-page rendering of the proposed addition to the School

Attorney Klein then presented the Rules of Procedure for the meeting.

Ms. Kristi Eager, Waltham School District No. 185 Superintendent, was sworn in to provide Testimony. Attorney Ken Florey, Attorney representing Waltham School District No.185, was also sworn in to provide Testimony.

Attorney Florey stated that Waltham School District No. 185 is planning to add on to the existing building to be able to accommodate the growing number of students in the Village. In the interim period, there will be additional modular units brought in on the property adjacent to the existing school. The property, ten (10) acres, has been purchased.

Chairman Guttilla asked where the modular units would be located.

Ms. Eager stated that the units would be located in an area adjacent to the existing school, where they would not interfere with future construction of the addition.

Chairman Guttilla asked the size of the units.

Ms. Eager stated that the modular units are 70’ X 70’ and will contain classrooms, restrooms and a room for the teacher.

Member Skoog asked about the grading of the land and if the units would be located on any foundation.

Ms. Eager stated that the units would be on a pad with concrete posts.

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
248 W. Canal St, North Utica, IL 61373
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Member Brown asked the life expectancy of the modular units.

Attorney Florey stated that the units can last up to twenty (20) years on a sturdy foundation.

Ms. Eager stated that the units will be sturdy and they will be compliant with the safety code.

Member Gift asked Ms. Eager about the projection of the number of students that will be attending the elementary school.

Ms. Eager stated that they have studied the number of current students and the growth in the community that indicates additional students will be enrolled over the next several years.

Ms. Eager stated, "The school was built to accommodate 240 students and at the time that was a solid number. Currently we are over capacity at 256 students, and the preschool already has 35 students registered for next year."

Member Brown asked when the temporary modular units would be ready for students.

Ms. Eager answered, "They should be ready for the beginning of the next school year.

Attorney Florey added, "The tentative construction schedule is approximately six weeks."

Member Brown then asked about the cost of the proposed addition.

Ms. Eager stated that the approximate cost will be approximately \$600,000 over three years.

Chairman Guttilla asked if there were any questions or comments from Village Engineer, Kevin Heitz.

Engineer Heitz or Zoning Enforcement Officer, Curt Spayer; there were none.

Chairman Guttilla asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak in favor or in opposition of the Petition; there was no one.

A brief discussion was held about the proposed parking and the limitations of the proposed plans to include additional parking spaces that are 9' instead of 10' wide.

Members of the Planning Commission shared concerns that the smaller parking spaces will not accommodate vehicles easily.

Trustee Debbie Krizel was sworn in to provide Testimony.

Trustee Krizel asked Ms. Eager why the current school was not constructed to be able to accommodate additional students from the continued growth in the community.

Ms. Eager stated that there was an enrollment study completed from various data sources including the Census and the study projected a 10 year plan with an enrollment of 225 students so the school was built with a capacity to accommodate 240 students.

Trustee Krizel then asked why the District decided to add a preschool when they were already seeing the potential enrollment going higher.

Ms. Eager stated that the preschool is only utilizing one classroom; the growth in the number of students is in the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. Waltham tries to keep the classroom sizes and student to teacher ratio at 24 students before splitting into another class and the middle grades are already over that number of 24 students in each class. If Waltham doesn't offer the preschool, the students would need to be bused out to another community which costs.

Member Brown asked if the new preschool was mandated by the State.

Ms. Eager stated that the State is looking at mandating however, currently it is not.

Ms. Eager stated that the projection of the capacity of the school, including the construction of the addition, will be in the mid 300's, accounting for two classrooms for each grade from Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Trustee Jim Schrader was sworn in to provide Testimony.

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
248 W. Canal St, North Utica, IL 61373
Planning Commission Meeting
May 23, 2024
www.utica-il.gov

Trustee Schrader reminded Ms. Eager that there were many warnings from the Village about the increasing population in the Village of Utica. He then asked Ms. Eager if the same thing will happen again in five years and the school will need to construct another addition to the building.

Ms. Eager stated that when the school was constructed, the data that was used to determine the projection of student enrollment was what was considered in the plans. The funds that the District had available at that time, met the construction needs to achieve what was being projected. The school was constructed to accommodate 240 students; the enrollment is currently 256 students; the projection was 225 students.

The Public Hearing was closed at 5:43 pm; Motioned by Member Brown, seconded by Member Gift.

All in Favor
Motion Carried

It was then motioned by Member Gift, seconded by Member Skoog to recommend approval of the amendment to the map for the property located at the Southwest ten (10) acres of N. IL Rt. 178 and E. US Rt. 6, Utica, IL 61373, just North of 2902 IL Route 178, Utica, IL. to be zoned C-2 (General Commercial District), where public institutional uses like an elementary school are permitted; subject to allowing farming and agricultural use until the construction of the addition to the school.

4 Yes
Motion Carried

It was then motioned by Member Skoog, seconded by Member MacKay to recommend approval of the amendment of the C-2 Zoning District to define modular classrooms in the C-2 Zoning District on the same lot as public institutional uses like an elementary school are permitted.

4 Yes
Motion Carried

It was then motioned by Member Skoog, seconded by Member MacKay to recommend approval of granting a Special Use for property located at the Southwest ten (10) acres of N. IL Rt. 178 and E. US Rt. 6, Utica, IL 61373, just North of 2902 IL Route 178, Utica, IL.

3 Yes (Skoog, MacKay, Gift)
1 No (Brown)
Motion Carried

Member Skoog asked if they could come back to the Village seeking approval of the addition after the referendum and after the approval of the Regional Office of Education.

Attorney Florey stated that the Regional Office of Education has already granted approval however, the District would like to be sure that the addition can be constructed before the final purchase and closing on the property.

Engineer Heitz stated that there are costs associated with having another Public Hearing and there are rising costs associated with construction.

Member Brown asked if the School intends to have a building permit for the construction of the addition.

Attorney Florey stated that the District will be following and adhering to all State Laws and the regulations of the Regional Office of Education.

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
248 W. Canal St, North Utica, IL 61373
Planning Commission Meeting
May 23, 2024
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It was then Motioned by Member Brown, seconded by Member Gift to recommend approval of granting Variances as follows:

- A variance as to building height to construct a building that is 35'-6".
- Any required planting would be done after the construction has been completed, therefore the District seeks a variance to omit the required planting at this
- A variance to allow for 9'-0" parking stalls instead of the 10'-0" parking stalls that are
- A variance from the maximum front yard setback. The current maximum is 50', however the District is seeking a maximum setback of 272.8'.

3 Yes (Skoog, MacKay, Gift)

1 No (Brown)

Motion Carried

Minutes: It was motioned by Member MacKay, seconded by Member Gift to approve the Minutes from the January 9, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting, as presented.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Old Business / New Business: NONE

Public Comment: NONE

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm; Motioned by Member Skoog, seconded by Member MacKay.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie A. Gbur
Village Clerk