

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
801 South Clark Street, North Utica, IL 61373
Planning Commission
Public Hearing
March 25, 2021
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 Lucas Goucher and Railside Real Estate LLC, as a Contract Purchaser and Petitioner, seeking a Special Use under Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance Section 10-8A-3. The Petitioners are seeking a Special Use to operate an outdoor seasonal bar on property generally located at the southwest corner of Canal St. and Mill St. in the Village of North Utica, IL. The tract of land affected is currently vacant and used for parking purposes.
 - a. It is proposed that Petitioner be granted a Special Use to operate a seasonal outdoor bar on the premises. The property is zoned C-1 (Central Business District).
 - b. 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.
 3. Review of Construction Plans and Improvements to be made on the site, including the installation of a converted shipping container, and Possible Recommendations by the Design Review Committee.
 4. Discussion and Possible Recommendations regarding converted shipping containers being allowed for business use in the Commercial District(s) in the Village of North Utica
- V. Consideration and Possible Action on Planning Commission Meeting Minutes: 01-28-2021
- VI. Old / New Business
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Adjournment

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MINUTES

At 6:02 pm the meeting of the Planning Commission was called to Order by Chairman Tom Guttilla who then led the Pledge of Allegiance. Meeting attendance was recorded. Present at the meeting were Members Doug Gift, Dennis Hamilton, Warren Munson, Roy Chapman, Bill Zens and Mike Brown. Also present at the meeting were Village Attorney Herb Klein, Village Engineer Kevin Heitz and Director of Village Affairs Jamie Turczyn.

It was motioned by Member Zens, seconded by Member Hamilton to appoint Jamie Turczyn as Clerk Pro-Tem for the meeting in the absence of Village Clerk Laurie Gbur.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Public Hearing: Attorney Klein provided a summary and read the legal notice of the Petition of Lucas Goucher and Railside Real Estate LLC, as a Contract Purchaser and Petitioner, seeking a Special Use under Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance Section 10-8A-3. The Petitioners are seeking a Special Use to operate an outdoor seasonal bar on property generally located at the southwest corner of Canal St. and Mill St. in the Village of North Utica, IL. It was also noted that the property affected is currently vacant and used for parking purposes.

Village Exhibits: #1 - Legal Notice of the Public Hearing
#2 - Special Use Permit Application submitted by Mr. Goucher
#3 - Aerial View of the Property being considered for a Special Use

Mr. Lucas Goucher was sworn in to provide Testimony.

Petitioners' Exhibits: #1 - Design plans and colored images of the proposed development

Mr. Goucher stated that he would like to develop a vacant lot currently owned by Isabelle Duffy. The proposed development would be a seasonal outdoor beer garden where people could purchase beer, mead and cider. The development would be 'on brand' with an existing brewery; Obscurity. Table seating would allow for comfortable seating for 215 people and there would also be a fire pit. The development would utilize a decommissioned silo, connect to water and sewer for bathrooms, and feature a sound stage. The area would be self-service and there would be possible food provided from local businesses or possibly a food truck could be brought in. Mr. Goucher also stated that he would like the development to create a 'draw' for visitors to come in to the Village.

Member Gift asked about the timeline of the proposed development.

Mr. Goucher stated that the contractor is looking at 6 – 8 weeks for completion of the project; there is a target date of Memorial Day.

Member Chapman asked if there will be a retaining wall.

Mr. Goucher stated that there will be a partial wall.

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Chairman Guttilla asked about the roof material.

Mr. Goucher stated that the material will be a translucent green corrugated material that would allow for some light to shine through.

Chairman Guttilla then asked if the materials would be permanently placed.

Mr. Goucher answered yes; there will be taps for beer and mead, hand sinks, and prairie grass.

Member Brown asked Chief Damron if he could foresee any issues with traffic on Village Streets.

Chief Damron answered no.

Mr. Goucher then added that there will also be fencing placed around three sides of the development.

Member Zens then stated that the development looks to be similar to other breweries. "It would be a nice area for people to sit while they are waiting to get into other restaurants and businesses in town."

Member Brown asked if there would be a separate liquor license for the property; separate from Mr. Gouchers' current business, Lodi Tap House.

Attorney Klein answered yes.

Trustee R. Pawlak asked if they would be serving food.

Mr. Goucher answered no; however, there would be a possibility of a food truck being brought in on busy weekends.

Trustee M. Pawlak stated that she has received comments from other people that would like to do something similar; "Are we opening a can of worms?"

Ms. Kelly Waters, Skoogs Pub & Grill was sworn in to provide Testimony. She then stated that although the development looks great, she questions whether this property would be the right spot for it and there is a concern regarding outdoor dining, as well as that currently there are no bars allowed outside on Mill St. She also stated that she is concerned about the number of liquor licenses recently issued in the Village. Recently two additional liquor licenses were issued and this would be the third. She then reminded everyone that the local businesses are just coming back from dealing with the effects of Covid.

Mr. Goucher stated that he wants to attract people to the area and to keep the downtown visible and enhance the outdoor dining.

Trustee Krizel was sworn in to provide Testimony. She stated that the development looks gorgeous but she has concerns that there isn't diversification away from alcohol. "This is a critical time for Utica."

Village Engineer Heitz asked if the development is closed up at the end of the season.

Mr. Goucher stated that the tables are pulled up and stored at the end of the season.

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With no additional Testimony or questions, the Public Hearing was closed at 7:08 pm. Motioned by Member Zens, seconded by Member Munson.

All in Favor
Motion Carried

Member Munson made a Motion to recommend to deny the Petition. The Motion was seconded by Member Brown.

A brief Discussion was held. Member Munson stated that he has a concern with the size and the use of shipping containers and grain bins; "It is not appropriate for the downtown."

Member Brown agreed and stated that the development and use of the materials does not fit with the historic nature of the community and the Villages' Comprehensive Plan.

Member Zen stated that he believes there is a need for the diversity. The property would not be suitable for a building due to its' small size so the only option is parking or outdoor use.

Chairman Guttilla stated that the Village may need to be a bit flexible. It doesn't send a good message if proposed developments are denied based on not looking exactly like the downtown.

Member Gift stated that he believed the development is a solid attempt to use the footprint of the property and there aren't many other uses for this location if the Petition is denied.

Member Hamilton stated that maybe the entire area could be enclosed with fencing as a better way to secure it.

Roll call vote to recommend to deny the Petition:

4 No (Gift, Hamilton, Chapman and Zens)
2 Yes (Munson, Brown)
Motion to deny the Petition Failed

A motion to recommend approval of the Petition was made by Member Gift; seconded by Member Chapman. The motion is subject to having the property more fully enclosed with additional fencing.

Roll Call vote to recommend approval of the Petition:

4 Yes (Gift, Hamilton, Chapman and Zens)
2 No (Munson, Brown)
Motion Carried to recommend approval of the Petition

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It was motioned by Member Gift, seconded by Member Chapman to approve the design review of the development as presented, with no major deviation from the plan.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Member Zens departed the meeting at 8:06 pm.

A brief discussion was held regarding the possibility of allowing shipping containers to be used for business.

Minutes: It was motioned by Member Chapman, seconded by Member Gift to approve the Minutes from the January 28, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm. Motioned by Member Brown, seconded by Member Chapman.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie A. Gbur
Village Clerk