

**VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA**  
**248 W. Canal St, North Utica, IL 61373**  
**Planning Commission - Public Hearing**  
**July 7, 2022**  
[www.utica-il.gov](http://www.utica-il.gov)

**AGENDA**

- I. **5:30 p.m.** Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll Call
- IV. **5:30 Public Hearing:**
  1. For the purpose of Considering and hearing Testimony regarding the Petition of Dale Senica, Owner, d/b/a Alley Cat's. The Petitioner is seeking a Special Use under the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance Section 10-8B-3, to Operate a Bar with Video Gaming Devices, on property located at 142 Mill St., Utica, IL 61373. The property is Zoned C-1
    - A. It is proposed that the Petitioner be granted a Special Use under the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance Section 10-8B-3 to Operate a Bar with Video Gaming Devices on property located at 142 Mill St., Utica, IL 61373. The Property is Zoned C-1.
    - 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.
- V. **6:00 Public Hearing:**
  1. For the purpose of Considering and hearing Testimony as to possible amendments regarding the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance at Section 10-15-1 et. seq., regarding Signs. The proposed changes under consideration include, but are not limited to:
    - a. Regulations regarding Definitions (10-15-2);
    - b. Regulations regarding Temporary Portable Signs (10-15-3F.2.e);
    - c. Regulations affecting Illuminated Signs (10-15-4A);
    - d. Regulations regarding Wall Business Signs (10-15-7C);
    - e. Regulations affecting Signs requiring a Special Use, including Advertising Signs, Billboards and Offsite Signage (10-15-8);
    - f. Regulations regarding Single Pole Banner Signs and Temporary Signs (10-15-9);
    - g. Any and all other amendments to Ordinances regulating Signs and Village Ordinances, necessary to effectuate any changes.
  2. Discussion and Possible Recommendations of the Planning Commission regarding such Hearing.
- VI. Consideration and Possible Action on Planning Commission Meeting Minutes: 05-26-2022
- VII. Old / New Business
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Adjournment

POSTED 07-05-2022

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MINUTES

At 5:40 pm the meeting was called to Order by Planning Commission Chairman Tom Guttilla who then led the Pledge of Allegiance. Village Clerk Laurie Gbur recorded the meeting attendance. Present at the meeting were Members Doug Gift, Mike Brown, Bill Zens, Dennis Hamilton and Andy Skoog. Also present at the meeting were Village Attorney Herb Klein, Village Engineer Kevin Heitz, Zoning Enforcement Officer Curt Spayer. Member Warren Munson was absent from the meeting.

Public Hearing: Attorney Klein provided a brief summary regarding the Petition of Dale Senica, Owner, d/b/a Alley Cat's. The Petitioner is seeking a Special Use under the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance Section 10-8B-3, to Operate a Bar with Video Gaming Devices, on property located at 142 Mill St., Utica, IL 61373. The property is Zoned C-1.

- Village Exhibit #1 - Legal Notice published in the News Tribune on June 20, 2022
- Petitioner's Exhibit #1 - Petition for Special Use
- Petitioner's Exhibit #2 - 4-page handout of additional documents including images of the back of the building and a layout of the interior of the building.

Mr. Dale Senica was sworn in to provide Testimony.

Mr. Senica stated that he has been making improvements to the building that he owns at 142 Mill St. He is adding approx. 15ft. to the back of the building and adding a large garage door with smoke glass panels. He also stated that he is making improvements to the interior of the building and will be installing a copper ceiling, glazed brick and he is going to dig out the basement to be able to utilize the space in the future. He would like to install a small bar and a video gaming room and an area with a couple of barber chairs. This will be located in the back of the building; the Tattoo & Piercing Shop will remain in the front. There will be a couple of pub tables and space for a small bar and restrooms. Mr. Senica also stated that he has been a resident of Utica for the past 57 years. He would like to provide a nice space where someone could come in and have a drink or play a game while they wait to have their hair cut by a local barber.

Member Skoog asked Mr. Senica if there would be an entry door in the back alley in addition to the garage door.

Mr. Senica answered "yes; the garage door will be 10' X 10' and there will be a side entry door in the back of the building as well." Mr. Senica also stated that he had already spoken with the Fire Chief and it was determined that the back entry door will be sufficient.

Chairman Guttilla asked if the basement would be a partial basement or a full basement when the project is complete.

Mr. Senica answered, "The whole basement will be dug out; it will be a full basement"

Mr. Senica also stated that the addition off of the back of the building will be on a concrete slab.

Member Skoog asked if the liquor would be able to be purchased by customers of the Tattoo Shop and if the building will have an open space with access to both businesses.

Mr. Senica stated that this would be determined by his liquor license and approval of the Board.

Chairman Guttilla stated that it would be a good idea to have the space divided with only an emergency access door; Member Brown agreed.

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Chairman Guttilla asked if there would be signage for the Barbershop.

Mr. Senica stated that he doesn't believe that the Barbershop would need signage because he already has a customer base built up however, he was thinking about getting a barber pole with 'Alley Cats' on the top globe.

Member Gift asked if the parking in the back of the building would be sufficient.

Mr. Senica stated that he believes the parking is sufficient.

Member Brown asked if Mr. Senica was open to dividing the space in the building and having only an access door between the two businesses.

Mr. Senica answered, "yes, that's no problem".

Attorney Klein stated that the liquor license would be issued to Alley Cat's in their unit location only, therefore the liquor would remain in that unit.

Mr. Senica agreed.

Chairman Guttilla asked if there was anyone present that would like to speak in favor of the Petition.

No one asked to provide Testimony.

Chairman Guttilla asked if there was anyone present that would like to speak in opposition of the Petition.

There was no one.

Chairman Guttilla then asked if there were any additional questions from anyone.

Mr. Tom Collins, LaSalle News Tribune, asked Mr. Senica how many video gaming machines he would have.

Mr. Senica answered, "four to six gaming machines".

Mr. Robert Martins, Western Cattle Company Factory Outlet, located at 130 Mill St., asked Mr. Senica about parking.

Mr. Senica stated that there is room behind the three businesses located in that back alley and he is willing to share parking with whomever needs it; He will work with the other businesses.

Village Engineer Heitz then reminded Mr. Senica and the group that the property is located in the flood plain therefore, that has to be kept in mind when doing any construction. He also stated that there are also ADA requirements that will need to be met. The Village addressed issues along Mill St. to make sure that ADA guidelines were met however, now property owners will have to do the same as they make changes to their properties.

Mr. Senica stated that he was already aware of that and he will take care of anything that is needed to meet the ADA guidelines and to make sure that the property meets the requirements of construction in a flood plain.

With no additional questions, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:04 pm. Motioned by Member Hamilton, seconded by Member Gift.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

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Attorney Klein provided a brief summary about the Findings of Fact to consider when recommending approval of a Special Use.

1. Is necessary or desirable to provide a service which is in the interest of public convenience.
2. Will cause no additional threat to public health, safety, or welfare or creation of a nuisance.
3. Will cause no additional public expense for flood protection, fire rescue or relief operations, policing, or repairs to roads, utilities, or other public facilities.
4. Will not unduly increase traffic congestion on public roads and highways.
5. Will not alter the essential character of the property or neighborhood in question.
6. Meets other requirements of this title, such as parking and landscaping.
7. Is consistent with the purpose and intent of the comprehensive plan.

It was motioned by Member Brown, seconded by Member Skoog to recommend approval of granting a Special Use for the operation of a Bar with Video Gaming Devices on property located at 142 Mill St., Utica, IL 61373, subject to the business d/b/a Alley Cat's being divided by an emergency access door. There should be no access to Alley Cat's from the front of the building through the Tattoo & Piercing Shop.

5 Yes

Motion Carried

Discussion: Member Zens asked if the business will be subject to the same requirements to work with all of the other Mill St. businesses regarding sharing a schedule for Music and / or having a band.

Attorney Klein stated that Mr. Senica would need to apply for a Sound Amplification Permit from the Village and it would then be determined if there is any conflict with other music for that date.

Chairman Guttilla spoke about the downtown design guidelines; although the improvements to the building are not being done to a building fronting Mill St., the improvements are still being done in the same general downtown area.

Attorney Klein stated that the appearance of buildings located in the downtown is to remain consistent and similar, for example, Metal buildings are prohibited.

Mr. Senica stated that he would be installing a Cedar facade and a smoke glass garage door.

Lighting was discussed among the group.

Chairman Guttilla reminded Mr. Senica that there is lodging across the alley from his building and there would be some concerns about flashing lights or neon lights.

Mr. Senica stated that he will not be having any flashing lights and wants the building to feel more like a small neighborhood bar.

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A motion was made by Member Hamilton, seconded by Member Skoog to recommend approval of the Special Use subject to the divided use of the building by emergency access and subject to being consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines.

5 Yes

Motion Carried

Public Hearing: At 6:14 pm the continued Public Hearing regarding possible amendments to the Village Sign Ordinance began. Attorney Klein provided a brief summary; the Public Hearing was continued from May 26, 2022 to July 7, 2022 at 6 pm with no further publication.

Illuminated Signs – Attorney Klein read the current guidelines regarding illuminated signs, including changeable copy.

Chairman Guttilla stated that most LED signs have changeable copy that changes the message every few seconds.

Member Skoog asked where they are currently located in the Village.

Zoning Enforcement Officer Spayer stated that LED signs are currently located at the Utica Police Department, the Utica Fire Department, Grand Bear Lodge & Resort and at Loves Travel Stop.

Member Gift stated that this type of signage should always be considered a Special Use.

Chairman Guttilla stated that if the Village allows them, potentially there could be several throughout the community.

Member Gift stated they are used to catch the attention of people passing by however, if they are allowed without a Special Use a business could put an LED sign anywhere on their property and it could become an issue due to the effects of bright lights; The other Members agreed.

Mr. Robert Martins, Western Cattle Company Factory Outlet, stated that there was an issue with a large LED Sign installed in Spring Valley. The business was renting the sign to businesses that wanted to advertise.

Attorney Klein stated that the sign being referenced was said to be distracting due to the brightness and flashing lights.

It was then motioned by Member Gift, seconded by Member Hamilton to recommend that illuminated changeable copy signs (Other than static message signs) would require a Special Use in all Zoning Districts.

5 Yes

Motion Carried

Jamie Wallace asked if a Special Use would be required for all illuminated signs.

Attorney Klein stated that it would only apply to changeable copy signs.

Wall Business Signs –

Chairman Guttilla asked if this category applies to painting a business sign or logo on a building or installing individual letters on a building.

Attorney Klein provided a brief summary of the current ordinance regulating wall business signs.

1 wall business sign is allowed per business establishment and it can not exceed a total of 120 sq. ft.; if a property is located on a corner lot, 2 signs would be allowed.

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Member Gift asked if only the business on the property can be advertised.

Attorney Klein answered, “yes”.

Chairman Guttilla asked if there is anything in the current Ordinance regulating individual letters being used.

Attorney Klein answered, “currently this is not in the Ordinance”.

Member Gift suggested that a ‘box’ being drawn around the outside of the collective group of Letters would total the square footage of the business signage. Individual symbols and letters would be collectively subject to comply with the square footage requirement.

Ms. Kelly Waters, Skoog’s Pub & Grill, stated that the Village is regulating every sign so that a business would have to come in and apply for a Special Use.

Member Gift stated that the business could check the Ordinance first to see if they can meet the requirements already in place.

Member Zens asked if ‘angel wings’ on the side of a building is considered signage or art.

Mrs. Jen Cetwinski asked if a mural is considered art or signage.

Chairman Guttilla stated that a large cupcake on a building could be considered art or it could be considered advertising.

Member Zens then asked about the square footage. He stated that 120 sq. ft. is not a lot if the building is larger. Maybe the Village should consider 1 sq. ft. for each foot of building frontage.

Then discussion was held among the group about the same and how that would be affected by buildings located on a corner, or buildings that are located on a corner but also have another entrance in back. Some of the businesses downtown also have a back entrance on Clark St.

Member Skoog asked if Canal Port could also have a sign in the back alley.

Trustee Mary Pawlak reminded the group that at one time, the main road was behind the businesses on the west side of Mill St. The back alley, which is actually Clark St. was where the main entrance of Joy & Ed’s was located.

Chairman Guttilla stated that businesses located on a corner could potentially have up to three wall signs.

Mrs. Jen Cetwinski stated that she would like to have a sign for each business located in her building. She would be limited if she is only allowed a small sign on the front of the building.

Member Zens stated that she could actually have a wall sign on Mill St. and a wall sign on Church St.

Member Gift then suggested that she could advertise two businesses on one wall sign, or three individual wall signs that would collectively fit into the total allowed square footage.

Mrs. Cetwinski stated that if she has three separate businesses, she should be able to advertise each of them.

Member Zens stated that she could have three individual signs; one sign for each business, as long as they collectively fit into the allowed square footage.

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It was motioned by Member Zens, seconded by Member Skoog to allow wall business signage, per side of the building facing a public street or public alley, subject to the meeting current total square footage per side.

5 Yes

Motion Carried

It was then motioned by Member Zens, seconded by Member Brown to continue the Public Hearing to July 28, 2022 at 6 pm, with no further publishing.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Minutes: It was motioned by Member Skoog, seconded by Member Brown to approve the Minutes from the May 26, 2022 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 7:16 pm. Motion made by Member Brown, seconded by Member Zens.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie A. Gbur  
Village Clerk