

EAST AURORA PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
November 14, 2023

PRESENT:

Randy West-Chair  
Dale Morris-Vice Chair  
Stacy Oar  
Allen Ott Jr  
Dan Castle  
Dave Simeone

Absent: Geoff Hintz

ALSO PRESENT:

Joe Trapp, Counsel  
Liz Cassidy, Code Enforcement Officer  
Grace Viger, Liaison  
Crystal Barrett, Deputy Clerk  
Nicholas Pittas, Commerce Way  
Peter Sorgi, Douglas Feyes  
James Boglioli

Member West, noting that a quorum was present, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Member Ott noted that the minutes of the October meeting needed to be corrected to indicate that he had not been present. Member Morris motioned to approve the October 3rd meeting minutes as so modified, seconded by Member Castle and approved unanimously, with Member Ott abstaining.

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**Site Plan Approval**  
**Self-Storage Facility, Commerce Way**  
**Peter Sorgi and Douglas Feyes, representing Nicholas Pittas**

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Member West, Chair, opened the discussion for Mr. Pittas's application to construct a self-storage unit on Commerce Way. Member West noted that the recently received materials included architectural renderings of the storage units, and a drawing specifically identifying trees to be preserved; these materials were supplemental to those received in the September 2023 meeting, so the combined packages would be evaluated together.

The PC noted again its regret that though the parcel is zoned correctly for self-storage units, this project is not the “highest and best use” of the land, since it will create only one or two jobs. The PC noted that job creation was one of the main objectives of construction (including utilities) of the Commerce Green Industrial Park. Member West noted, however, that the action before the PC was a Site Plan approval, so the PC would proceed with the review under the assumption that the project would be approved.

The PC requested a different color to the siding of the units than the harsh white shown in the renderings. The applicant agreed to check with the supplier for different color options. The PC asked if crushed stone could be used instead of blacktop in order to reduce runoff. The applicant stated that crushed stone does not remain permeable for long, and that asphalt pavement is easier to maintain, especially for snow removal. The applicant stated that snow storage will be at the back of the building. The applicant confirmed that the lights will be set on a timer; the PC noted that existing adjacent parking lots are lit at night. The applicant confirmed that access to the site will be via the driveway, which will be controlled by a gate activated by swipe card, and that there will be no perimeter fence. The applicant again committed to extending behind this project the existing 6-ft white vinyl fence currently behind the adjacent LSI property. The applicant agreed to include five broad-canopied trees planted at the southside of the property. The applicant again stated that there will be no outdoor storage. The applicant stated that there will be only one sign, to be mounted on the side of the office, and no free standing sign. The PC asked about the soil storage pile shown for the construction phase in the area of trees shown to be preserved during construction. The applicant stated that the soil pile will not be placed in a way that damages the vegetation to be preserved.

#### Findings and Conditions:

1. Though the proposed project is a listed use for the zoning of the Village’s Commerce Green industrial park, the PC expresses regret that this use of the developed land will result in only minimal employment.
2. The applicant committed to adding 5 large canopy trees (native maple) on the southside of the property.
3. The applicant committed to no outdoor storage.
4. The applicant committed to alternative color selection for the building siding to present to the Village Board.
5. The project will have a single sign, compliant with Village code, placed on Building A.

The PC reviewed all the materials from the September and November meeting and noted that the fence extension was discussed at the September meeting.

A motion to approve the Site Plan as conditioned above for Commerce Way was made by Member Oar. The motion was seconded by Member Ott and approved by 4 votes to 2, members Castle and Simeone voting Nay.

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**Site Plan Modification and Special Use Permit for Drive-Thru  
Chase Bank, Grey Street Plaza, 123 Grey Street  
James Boglioli, Benderson**

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Member West, Chair, opened the discussion of the proposed stand-alone Chase bank with drive-thru ATM in the Grey Street Plaza. noting that there is significant overlap between the criteria for the two applications before the PC. As a result, West directed the PC to evaluate the applications for modification to the plaza site plan and for a Special Use Permit for the ATM drive-thru concurrently.

The applicant presented the modifications made to both applications in response to the Planning Commission's comments at the August and September, 2023 meetings.

Benderson summarized the results of a new "Traffic Assessment Report," prepared by Passero Engineering. Benderson stated that the study demonstrates that the bank will have no impact on the existing safe traffic patterns in the plaza. Benderson noted that, after it had submitted the report to the Village but prior to the meeting, a PC member had contacted Passero with questions based on the assessment, and that Passero had revised the report accordingly. Benderson submitted a revision of the report at the meeting and stated that its conclusions were unchanged. As a result, Benderson had made no changes to the location of the drive-thru ATM or its drive lanes for the previous submission.

The PC asked for the rationale of the second, bypass lane behind the bank parallel with the ATM drive lane and was told that this was a Chase standard that, because of the low numbers of vehicles that would use it, would have no impact on the plaza traffic flow or intersections.

Benderson agreed to ensure that all exit lanes from the ATM were appropriately signed to minimize confusion in a potentially busy area.

Benderson noted that it had significantly modified the proposed parking area of the bank. It reduced the number of parking spaces proposed from 33 to 19, had relocated the entrances to the parking area to better align with the drive aisles of the larger parking lot, and had eliminated parking spaces that would have required backing out into the main "ring road" of the plaza. Benderson noted that it had significantly increased the green space of the proposed Chase parking area.

Benderson noted that it had added planters at the ends of the parking lanes in the Tops lot, and that these would serve both as landscaping and refuge for pedestrians crossing from Grey Street

to Valu Home Center and the plaza proper. Benderson stated that they had relocated the farmers' market one aisle further north-east (closer to Tops) than they had previously planned, and that the Market had not objected. The PC noted that the drawings provided no details of the proposed plantings in those islands, and that the existing trees at the ends of the existing islands of the plaza had been recently removed. CEO Casidy noted that Village code requires small trees with low shrubs and ground cover in such locations. Benderson agreed to plant (and replant) the proposed and existing islands in accordance with Village code.

The PC noted that the dumpster enclosure shown near the Boies Alley entrance to the plaza had not been removed as Benderson had stated it would. Benderson agreed that it would relocate the dumpster to behind the plaza proper, stating that the bank did not generate sufficient trash to require one nearby.

The PC questioned putting a stop sign on the incoming traffic at the Boies Alley entrance. Benderson stated that this was the traffic designer's input to calm traffic before entering the plaza. The PC noted that Benderson had pulled the existing islands at the Boies Alley entrance back 20 feet in response to comments from the August meeting, but that the stop sign eliminated the improvement. Benderson stated that they would investigate whether the proposed stop sign could be relocated closer to Grey Street to improve turning movements at the entrance.

Benderson noted that it had completely redesigned the architecture of the proposed bank building to better harmonize with the plaza: the new design will have a peaked roof with brick siding to match the look of the existing plaza. The PC expressed its appreciation for this improvement to the proposed plan.

Benderson indicated that it would pursue a variance with the ZBA for internally-lit signs.

#### Findings:

1. Substantial modifications to the plan meet Village Board guidelines.
2. The proposed plan includes the safety for pedestrian traffic.
3. The plan includes improvements to the entrance opposite Boies Alley, allowing safer turns.
4. The increase in greenspace instead of all asphalt.
5. The applicant is to confirm the vegetation within the plaza with the Village Board.

#### Conditions:

1. The dumpster needs to be relocated.
2. New and existing tree islands in the plaza will be planted in conformance with Village code.

A motion to approve the SUP and the Site Plan as conditioned above for 123 Grey for Chase Bank and Drive-Thru was made by Member Castle. The motion was seconded by Member Simeone and unanimously approved.

**Old Business:**

Member West, Chair commented on an email that he received for the Village Attorney. Member West, Chair stated that restrictions can be made to ADU for only family members, but it needs to be written carefully. Member Castle suggested that it could also be income restrictive. Member West, Chair will forward the email to the PC.

A motion was made by Member Castle to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 PM, seconded by Member Ott and unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Barrett  
Deputy Clerk