

**VILLAGE OF SCOTIA PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL WORK SESSION
THURSDAY November 15, 2007 7:00PM
FIRE HOUSE MEETING ROOM**

Call to Order:

Chairman Powell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Planning Board Members Robert Powell, Dave Moehle, Gregg Gibbons, James Basil, Tom Gifford and Planning Board Alternate Jacqueline Koch,
Board of Trustee Liaison Armon Benny acted as facilitator for the meeting.

Also in attendance were attorney Lou Lecce representing the applicant Rite Aid, attorney Arkley Mastro, Jr. representing the property owner, and property owner Peter Polsinelli.

Rite Aid Site Plan Review

Mr. Powell opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of the work session—to review the many aspects of the Rite Aid site plan, suggestions made by Schenectady County Department of Economic Development and Planning, and the policy of DOT regarding the entrance/exit on Mohawk Avenue. The objective of the meeting was to develop a unified list of issues/requirements that could be provided to Rite Aid to enable revisions to the proposed site plan that might lead to Planning Board approval. To initiate the discussion Mr. Powell provided an outline of the current situation and issues to be discussed relative to the site plan, building location and design. Trustee Benny was extremely helpful in limiting the discussions, challenging suggestions, and maintaining a focus on Village benefits. Following is a listing of requirements, suggestions, and information provided to attorney Lou Lecce on November 16, 2007 for submission to Rite Aid.

Village of Scotia Planning Board

**Decisions made at the November 15, 2007 Workshop Session
in regards to Rite Site Plan dated 9/18/2007.**

Entrance/Exit on Mohawk Ave.

- Reference: New York State Department of Transportation Policy and Standards for the Design of Entrances to State Highways (November 24, 2003) section 5A-4 “General Design Requirement and Guidelines” states: “When a property fronting on a State highway also fronts on and has access to any other public street, road, or highway that intersects the State highway, the Department may restrict access to the State highway if it determines that such access would be detrimental to the safety and/or operation of State highway.”
- An informal opinion by DOT implies that safety is a key issue with the location of this entrance for vehicles entering the site (making right turns into the site east-bound from the Mohawk Ave. and Route 50 intersection); the above policy would apply to the entrance/exit on Mohawk Avenue.

- Also, since the current site plan indicates two additional entrances/exits on local streets that connect with or intersect with a State highway, DOT would probably deny this entrance.
- Attorney Lou Lecce to follow up Rite Aids submittal to DOT on the Mohawk Ave. entrance/exit to determine whether or not DOT will approve. Such approval is key to the continuation of the project.
- If entrance/exit is allowed by DOT suggested changes from Schenectady County Department of Economic Development and Planning (SCDEDP) must be considered:
 - Handicap parking space #1 and parking space #12 must go. Both are too close to the entrance from Mohawk Ave.
 - The problem is with vehicles backing out of the parking places into entering traffic at high speeds.
 - At least 20' (or one car length) is needed for any space in this location to be sure that an entering vehicle can get safely off the main street.
 - The handicap parking space #1 needs to be moved south.
 - The net result is two less parking spaces.
 - The curbing should be extended to omit these parking spaces. A net loss of three parking spaces.
- The curbing for the entrance should be designed to permit right in and right out turns only.
- If DOT denies the Mohawk Avenue entrance/exit, there is a possibility that DOT would permit traffic to right exit only onto Mohawk Avenue.
- The entrance/exit area is a very sensitive area and every attempt must be made to make this entrance pedestrian friendly. This area will also require special landscaping to defuse the appearance of a 30' space in the streetscape.

Building Location

- The location of the building and the size of the building are OK.
- Rite Aid should consider a rear entrance to the building to accommodate customers using the rear parking lot.
- The Village should consider establishing an on-street loading zone on S. Ballston Ave. so Rite Aid delivery trucks could park on the street to make deliveries. This would eliminate to need to use the parking lot to maneuver trucks to the loading dock and permit the installation of curbed end islands with landscaping.

Building Design

- To be compatible with the neighborhood the proposed Rite Aid building must be designed and constructed to blend with surrounding buildings. The mere height, scale, signage, and building materials suggested by Rite Aid are not consistent in size, scale and character of adjacent buildings.
- Possible solutions to these issues are:
 - Build a store with a façade similar to the Camden Maine store with a unified façade that follows the predominant styles of adjacent buildings (Higgins Law Office, Walgreen's, Boston).
 - Construct a façade that mimics existing store fronts of two or three buildings in the Village of Scotia.
 - Each storefront facade might have display windows (or shadow-box windows) displaying Rite Aid merchandise as do other store. Such treatment would help the store fit in with other stores and remove the "large brick wall" issue.

- The store unit at the east end of the building could feature a main entrance. Another entrance should be considered at the rear of the building to accommodate customers that park in the rear of the store. (Such access to a store would be a natural for other retailers without a “one plan” format.)
- While the exterior of the building would be a unique design to fit the Village, the interior of the store might be able to closely follow the Rite Aid standard interior plan.

Signage:

- Signs suggested for the building and the property are just too overbearing for the small Village of Scotia. No variances can be granted for signage.
- The large bronze metal area for the suggested signage matches nothing in the Village, nor does the extra large trademarks and store name lettering.
- The signs should compliment the scale, design, and materials of the building as well as other signage in the Village.
 - On the Camden, Maine store the Rite Aid name is not readily apparent but yet 95% of the residents of Camden probably recognize the building as the Rite Aid store.
 - On the Rite Aid stores on Central Avenue in Albany and State Street in Schenectady store signs and lettering are much smaller than those suggested for the Scotia store and are still very readable.

Drive Thru:

- Changes to the drive-thru (if it is allowed) would also improve traffic flow on the property.
 - By moving the drive-thru 15’ to 20’ east, the shift would permit a smoother turning radius for cars approaching the drive-thru window.
 - The addition of a curbed and landscaped end island adjacent to the drive-thru would provide protection to cars in the area and also help in break up the large expanse of building wall
 - Additional changes listed under parking below will help to define traffic flow on the site, reduce or eliminate potential traffic backups for the drive-thru on S. Ballston Avenue, provide additional landscaping.

Parking:

- Parking spaces #40 to #48 should be moved closer to Glen Avenue leaving a driveway of 22’ for traffic entering the drive-thru.
- The end islands for these parking spaces should be curbed and landscaped and have catch basins for storm water runoff that could be directed to the storm water storage area below the parking lot.
- With the parking area nearest Mohawk Avenue, several changes should be made:
 - The site plan indicates that the distance between the spaces on the left and the spaces on the right is 30’. Only 24’ distance is required.
 - The gain of 6’ could be used to build a significant landscape buffer between the south side of the Rite Aid store parking lot and the neighboring business (Cruise Port).
 - This landscape strip could be used as an “absorption area” to catch storm water and also provide space for snow storage.

- The area could be graded to transfer water to the storm water retention area as well.
- A reduction in the number of parking spaces is also recommended.
 - Parking spaces #25 to #32 could be eliminated and replaced with “banked” landscaping designed such that the “banking” could be removed at a future date if additional parking was deemed necessary

Storm Water Retention:

- The Planning Board desires to have the adjacent lot on Glen Avenue remain empty. No storm water retention basin (or lake) for storm water run-off on this parcel.
- The storm water retention basin should be located under the parking lot at the rear of the proposed store.
- Consideration should be given to installing absorption beds in the 10’ set-back area along S. Ballston Avenue to absorb roof drainage run-off.
- The planting chosen for this area should be those that can absorb large volumes of water.
- The landscaping berms along Glen Avenue could also be designed to be absorption areas to catch run-off from the parking lot and for snow storage areas.

Landscaping:

- Trees and lamp posts along Mohawk Avenue. Trees and shrubs surrounding the Mohawk Avenue entrance/exit to “soften” the area and make it pedestrian friendly.
- A buffer along the south property line to protect the Cruise Post Store.
- Berms tall enough to defuse car headlights from shinning onto homes along Glen Avenue.
- The right mix of trees and shrubs along S. Ballston Avenue.
- Plantings on the end islands, etc.
- Sidewalks all around the property with pavers on Mohawk Avenue.

Waste Collection:

- Consider two waste containers vs. three presently indicated on the site plan.

Motion: By Mr. Powell to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 pm. Seconded by Mr. Moehle. All in favor.

Respectively submitted,

Robert J. Powell

Robert J. Powell
 Chairman
 Village of Scotia Planning Board