

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Development Review Board Minutes
Wednesday, May 3, 2017

Development Review Board Members: Stephanie A. Lorentz, Al Paul, Jim Pell, Steve Wilk and Mike McClallen.

Members present: Chair Lorentz, Board members Paul, and Wilk. Also present, Zoning Administrator Tara Kelly.

At 6:10 PM the applicants arrived and Chair Lorentz called to order the hearing for consideration of a Variance application related to 142-144 Grove Street. The applicants (Lee Perry and Christina Princiotta) are tenants of the subject property. They are seeking permission to open a pet grooming business in a commercial building located within a Single Family Residential building that was formerly a pizza shop. Chair Lorentz explained the process for this public hearing. The applicants were sworn in as were to members of the public, Todd Sawyer and Sue Brodowski. A third member of the public, Timothy Cook, had signed in but left before this point in the hearing.

Mr. Perry and Ms. Princiotta described their proposed business. They noted there is a shortage of experienced, locally-owned pet grooming salons in Rutland. Pet owners often wait 6-9 weeks for service. The proposed location for this new business is across the street from a pet supply store (The Pet Cage) and would be a complementary business convenient for pet owners.

The applicants have experience working for a salon in Boston. They expect to serve 8-12 animals per day, primarily dogs. They would operate from 7AM – 5PM or a bit later if needed. The 1,000 SF commercial space is adjacent to a multi-family apartment building on the same lot, separated by a wall with no access between the two.

Applicants responded to a series of questions posed by DRB members. Bathing tubs/sink and a hydraulic table are the main pieces of equipment. The 3-year business plan anticipates only Mr. Perry and Ms. Princiotta as the employees. There will be stalls for dogs and cages for cats to be kept when they are not being actively groomed. Grooming appointments involve a quick drop-off by the owner and last about 2 hours per animal, depending on how complicated the service is. Shorter services will also be provided such as nail clipping. Owners are expected to pick up the animals at the end of the appointment.

With regards to parking, the area of the lot to the south of the building (SW corner of lot) has been covered with sure-pak and a fence is going to be put up to block access to the rear of the building. This area could park up to 4 cars at a time. There is also a drop-off zone near the front door that was traditionally used by the pizza shop. Employees would park away from the property if needed to accommodate customers.

DRB Chair Lorentz noted the drop-off zone may not be well-suited for future use given the location within the public ROW. Permission would need to be sought from the Department of Public Works to confirm.

No animals will be loose at any point. Dogs would be harnessed at all times with a "noose" that is clipped into the area where they are being worked on.

The applicants are planning to have lighting over the entrance and a sensor light facing the parking lot. Applicants were advised that they will need a sign permit from the City for any planned signs.

No overnight stays will be offered for the animals.

Ms. Brodowski introduced herself as a prospective buyer of the Pet Cage. She currently works for a vet that offers grooming. She asked if the new business will include retail. The applicants stated they would not be offering anything for sale. They want to complement Pet Cage, not compete. Mr. Sawyer, current owner of the Pet Cage, spoke in favor of the proposal. He confirmed that there is a need for more groomers in the area as demonstrated by the long wait lists pet owners experience.

Mr. Sawyer noted that in the past, when the pizza shop was open, there were a few spaces along Crescent Street marked for 15 minute parking to allow for pick up. Since the need for this new business is similar, he suggested this be pursued by the new business as well. Mr. Perry confirmed that it is preferable for business operations that owners do a quick drop off / pick up of the animal versus lingering on-site. They are in favor of restricted parking times.

Chair Lorentz informed all a decision will be issued. Appeal period for 30 days from date of decision. Hearing adjourned at 6:35 PM. The DRB members entered deliberative session and issued a decision in favor of the application.

ZA Kelly presented the DRB with a sketch plan for a proposed two-lot subdivision of 191 Pearl Street. The DRB affirmed this is a minor subdivision and the requirement of a Preliminary Plat Review is therefore waived. Applicant will be notified of need for survey and deeds detailing any easements and the need to gain approval from City Engineer regarding drainage.

ZA Kelly asked the DRB for their input about a proposed development on Campbell Road that had been reviewed in the past. The DRB indicated a public hearing to review the current site plan would be required.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tara Kelly
Development Review Board Clerk