



City of New Bedford

Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development

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STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE

December 5, 2017

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

December 13, 2017

Case #41-17: SITE PLAN REVIEW
269-271 Union Street
Map 52 Lot 273

Applicant: SouthCoast Federal Credit Union
Pop Box 40429
101 Page Street
New Bedford, MA 02744

Owner: SouthCoast Federal Credit Union
Pop Box 40429
101 Page Street
New Bedford, MA 02744

Overview

Case #41-17: 269-271 Union Street – SouthCoast Federal Credit Union. Request by applicant for Site Plan Approval for reactivation of an existing drive-thru window for a change of owner of a 10,644 SF existing financial institution and office building with drive-thru on a 31,286 SF site located at 269-271 Union Street (Map 52, Lot 273) in the Mixed Use Business (MUB) zoning district. Applicant: SouthCoast Federal Credit Union, POP Box 40429 101 Page Street, New Bedford MA 02744.

Existing Conditions

The applicant proposes to operate the SouthCoast Federal Credit Union at the subject location where previously First Citizens Federal Credit Union was located. There is an existing building with drive-thru already on the site as well as a parking lot. The new owner proposes to use the site in the same way as had previously been operated, relying on both walk in and drive-thru banking clients. The applicant is before the Planning Board because of a change in owner and because the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance c.9 stipulates that site plan

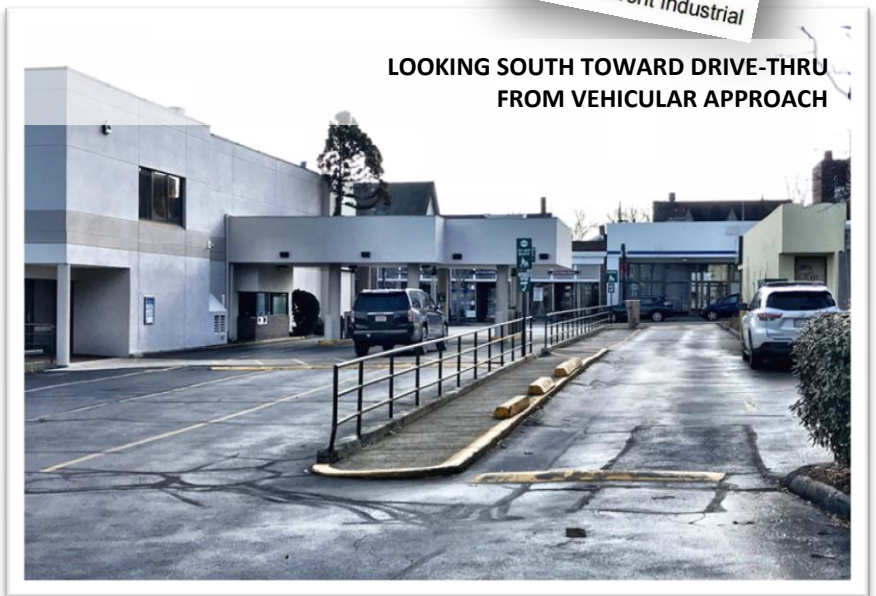


review is necessary for drive-thru facilities any time a drive-thru is closed for a period of ten (10) days or more as has been the case here.

This project site is an existing 31,286 SF lot located on the north side of Union Street between Eighth Street to the west and South Sixth Street to its east. The site is built out with an existing 10,6440 SF, 20' high two-story commercial building with four associated drive thru aisles and forty-three (43) existing off-street parking spaces (as reported by the applicant; planning staff found less than this number on-site). There is signage on the property including an existing frame for a previous ground sign used by the last tenant at the site's Eighth Street entrance.

There is a mix of retail, institutional and commercial uses in the vicinity of the property. The building is located almost directly across the street from where the Registry of Motor Vehicles was previously located; some older signage on the property cautions RMV patrons against parking on the subject site. The entrance to the property for both off-street parking and drive thru window access is off of Eighth Street. Those parking on site can then exit back onto Eighth Street or, if they wish to use the drive-thru, can then exit directly onto Union Street. The vehicular circulation pattern on site is such that all existing traffic utilizing any one of the drive-thru lanes enter from Eighth and exit onto Union Street.

A small pedestrian walkway with railing separating it from the drive thru area runs parallel to the actual drive-thru lanes. See photo to the right.



Proposed Conditions

The applicant has represented that the site will largely remain unchanged if approval is granted. The applicant is not proposing to do anything to the site and is intending on conducting banking business as had previously been done by the former building owner, First Citizens. No new construction of any kind, both in terms of building alterations or site development, is proposed.

The drive-thru is intended to provide convenience for the applicant's customers, offering four drive-up service areas with pneumatic tubes for transactions with the bank teller visible from an existing window on the building's north elevation. Customers drive southerly through the site and exit onto Union Street.

The existing insurance company is slated to remain in the building.

For Board Consideration

Site Plan Approval to reactivate the drive thru is required as it [drive-thru] has been vacated for greater than 10 days—the threshold stipulated within Section 5423 of the city's zoning ordinance as follows:

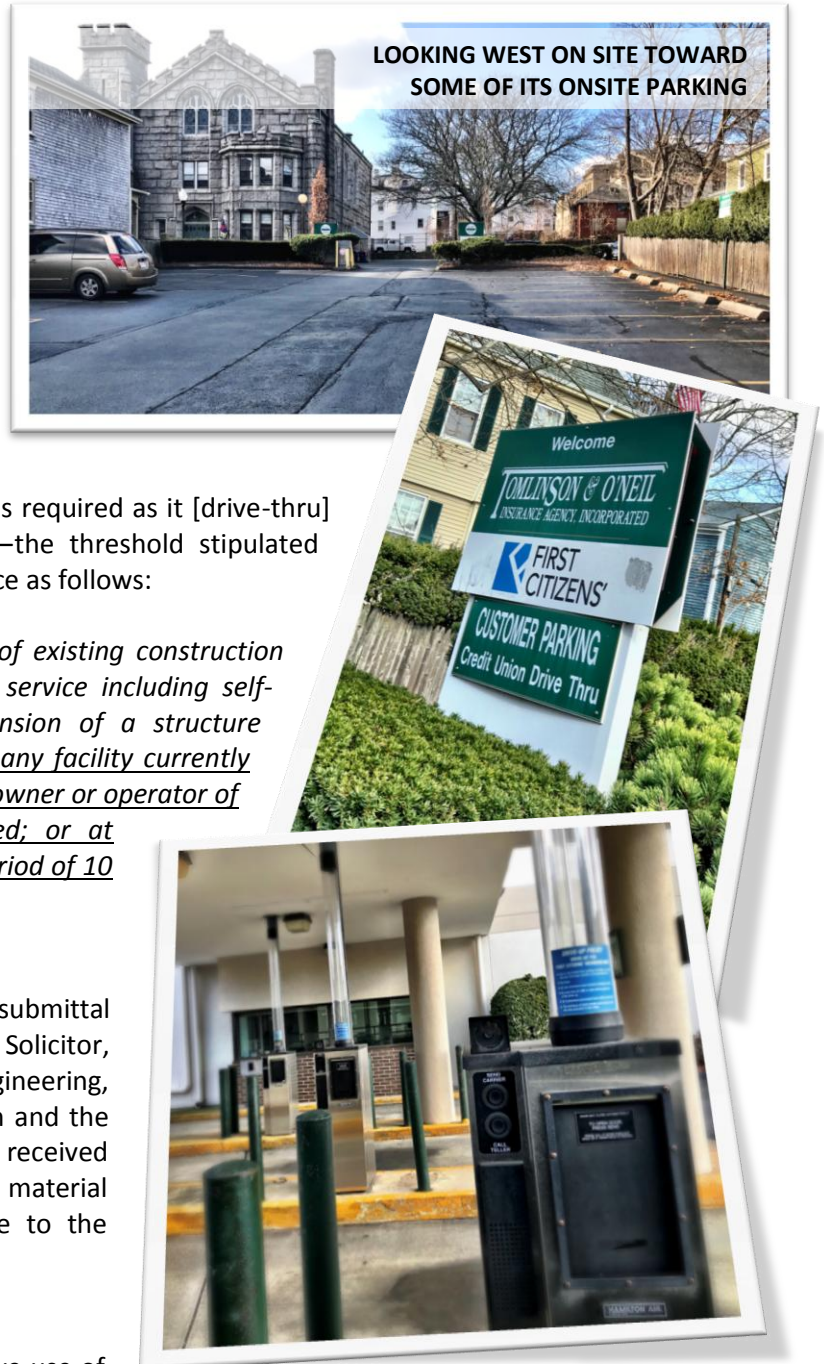
5423. Any new construction or expansion of existing construction where a drive-thru window for any service including self-service is proposed; and any expansion of a structure presently containing a drive-thru; or any facility currently containing a drive-thru, at which the owner or operator of the drive-thru is altered or changed; or at which the drive-thru is closed for a period of 10 days or more and to be reopened.

Review Comments

As required under city ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission and the Fire Department. Although no comments were received at the time this report was published, any material subsequently received will be made available to the Planning Board at its public meeting.

Master Plan Goal

Insofar as this proposal would support the active use of an existing commercial building and support business within the city, staff finds that this proposal is consistent with the master plan's goal [of establishing a sound foundation for future growth that builds upon its coastal location, preserves its historic legacy, and expands cultural and workforce opportunities] as it improves the neighborhood, and attracts emerging businesses and commercial enterprise.



Materials For Consideration

The submittal is shown as 277 Union Street on a Google Earth Image (*capture September 2015*) providing a Modified Aerial view of Site through Google Maps dated October 2017 Site Direction = East on Union Street with Northerly View of Building.” Although a formal plan set was not submitted by the applicant, application plan materials additionally included copies of the City of New Bedford Assessor’s Map 52 outlining the subject lot, an enlarged version of the Assessor’s Map depicting the subject lot, a copy of the Parcel Lookup card and an aerial view of the site using Google Earth dated October 2017.



In addition to the foregoing submitted materials, the Planning Board may also wish to consider:

Waivers

The applicant has submitted a waiver petitions for consideration by the Planning Board. A waiver is sought from Section 5450 Contents of Plan under Site Plan Review. The applicant notes that “the Planning Board has previously approved the existing site...” and that “there are no proposed changes to the site.”

Staff Recommendation



Site Plan Review. Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it move to approve the requested site plan approval for the proposed project:

- ❑ That all general conditions be applied to this decision.

- ❑ That the applicant provides a coversheet for the project meeting the requirements of the site plan review application standards for such sheets to the satisfaction of the City Planner.
- ❑ That the site plan review approval extends only to the change of tenant and reactivation of the drive-thru; any additional or future site plan review approval for signage or any other site development as may be required by the Zoning Enforcement Officer in the future will be required to return before the Planning Board as a new application.
- ❑ That the waivers requested for this application be granted.

Materials Provided by the Applicant (available at: <http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board/agenda-item-info-2017/>)

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| 1. Site Plan Review Application | 5. Photo, Plans and Other Supporting Information |
| 2. Waiver Request | 6. Certified Abutters List |
| 3. Rejection Packet | |
| 4. Bristol County (S.D) Registry of Deeds Book 12174, Page 111 | |