



## City of New Bedford

### Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development

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DIRECTOR

## STAFF REPORT

### REPORT DATE

October 11, 2017

### PLANNING BOARD MEETING

October 18, 2017

**Case #36-17: SITE PLAN REVIEW**  
480 Rockdale Avenue  
Map 34 Lot 1

**Applicant:** Taunton Federal Credit Union  
14 Church Green  
Taunton, MA 02780

**Applicant's Agent:** Poyant Signs  
125 Samuel Barnet Blvd.  
New Bedford, MA 02745

**Owner:** Taunton Federal Credit Union  
14 Church Green  
Taunton, MA 02780



### Overview

Request by applicant for **Site Plan Approval** for a change of owner of a 2,840+/- existing financial institution with drive-thru on a 13,337+/- SF site located at 480 Rockdale Avenue (Map 34, Lot 1) in the Mixed Use Business (MUB) and Residence A (RA) zoning districts. Applicant: Taunton Federal Credit Union, 14 Church Green, Taunton, MA 02780.

The applicant proposes to operate the Taunton Federal Credit Union at the subject location where previously Webster Bank 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.

### Existing Conditions

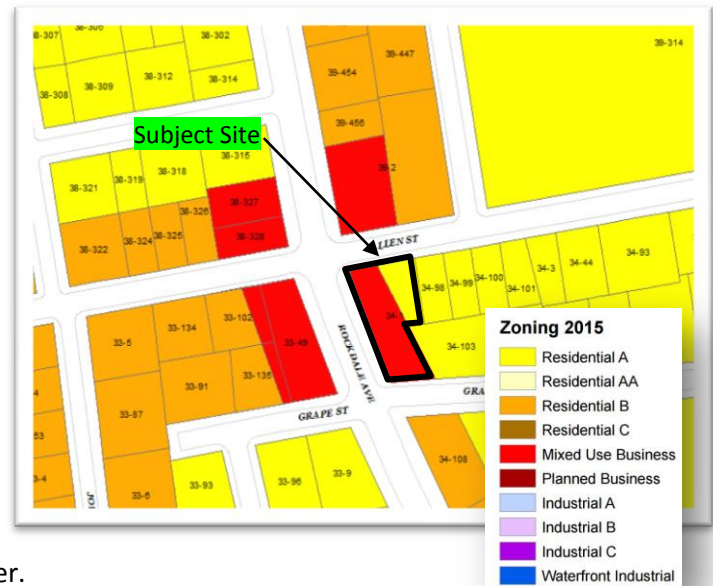
This project site formerly known as Webster Bank is comprised of a single parcel that is split by two zoning districts—MUB and RA. It is a pre-existing undersized lot at 7,800 SF located at the southeastern corner of the intersection of Rockdale Avenue and Allen Street in the city's west end. The site is built out with an existing 2,840 SF single story commercial building with two associated drive thru aisles and nine (9) existing off-street

parking spaces. There is signage on the property including an existing frame for a previous ground sign used by the last tenant.

The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of retail/commercial and residential uses. Santander Bank is directly across the street from the proposed site on the northeast corner of the same intersection; a 7-11 convenience mart and gas station is opposite the parcel to the west across from Rockdale Avenue and a small professional office is diagonally across from it. Beyond a vegetated buffer on its eastern property line is residential housing.

### **Proposed Conditions**

Although the plan set provided by the applicant's agent depicts the entire scheme for signage at the subject location, the proposed condition of the site (relative to the site plan review request currently before the Planning Board) will remain unchanged if approval is granted. The applicant is not proposing to do anything to the site other than the possibility of replacing some plant material in a planter.



No new construction of any kind, both in terms of building alterations or site development, is proposed. The only thing being proposed is the reactivation of a previously-approved drive-thru.

The drive-thru is intended to provide convenience for the applicant's customers, offering both a drive-up ATM and two lanes with for drive-up with pneumatic tubes for transactions with the bank teller visible from an existing window on the building's east elevation. Customers drive northerly through the site and exit onto Allen Street.

### **For Board Consideration**

According to the Commissioner of Inspectional Services/Zoning Enforcement Officer, Webster Bank received site plan approval for this property in 2005 but a new tenant is now proposing to come in. As such, the Zoning Enforcement Officer finds the proposal to operate will require approval for a change of owner.

Additionally, the city's zoning ordinance Section 5400 also stipulates under which types of activities and uses site plan review by the Planning Board



would be warranted. In this instance, Webster ceased operations earlier this year and as such, the drive-thru has also 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.*

With respect to the applicant’s intent to install a ground sign on this site—since the applicant’s contractor will be utilizing the existing (inner) support pole/framework in the erection of its own ground sign identity in the same location as what had been previously approved, the Zoning Enforcement Officer has determined that no additional site plan approval for a ground sign is needed in this instance.

As such, site plan review for a change of owner and reactivation of the drive-thru is necessitated while no such site plan approval is necessary for the proposed ground sign.

#### **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, Fire Department and School Department. DPI comments have been provided and note that because there is no work within the City layout, they have no comments and therefore recommend approval.

Conservation noted: *“The proposed project is not in or within 100’ of Local or State Wetland Resource Areas. Therefore, no permit is required from the Conservation Commission”*. Outside of this, no further comments from city offices were received in this matter.

#### **Master Plan Goal**

Insofar as this proposal would support the active use of an existing commercial building and support new 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 the Taunton Federal Credit Union, 480 Rockdale Avenue, New Bedford, MA (Assessors Map 34 Lot 1) on behalf of Howland Place Realty Trust and dated August 25, 2017. Plans were prepared by Poyant Signs in New Bedford, MA. The plan set consists of the following sheets with a date of September 19, 2017:

- ❏ **Refurbish Pylon Sign** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the refurbishment. (Sheet 1C.1)





- ❏ **Internally Illuminated Building Sign, Northwest Elevation** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the refurbishment. *(Sheet 2A.1)*
- ❏ **Non Illuminated Building Sign South Elevation Option A** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet 3A.1)*
- ❏ **New Face-Lit Channel Letterset for East Elevation** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet 4A.1)*
- ❏ **Directional Signs** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet 5A.1)*
- ❏ **Site Plan with Proposed Freestanding Signs** depicting aerial site plan and design drawings associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet SP.1)*
- ❏ **Site Plan with Proposed Freestanding Signs** depicting aerial site plan and photography associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet SP.2)*
- ❏ **Mortgage Inspection Plan** including flood determination stamped 6.7.17.
- ❏ **Vinyl Graphics for Main Entrance Door and Window** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet 7A.1)*
- ❏ **Digitally Printed Graphics for Drive-Up Window** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet 8A.1)*
- ❏ **Drive-Up Canopy Clearance Sign** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet 9A.1)*
- ❏ **Drive-Up Canopy Drive Up ATM Sign** depicting specs, design and photography associated with the proposed signage. *(Sheet 10A.1)*



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 request is for a “limited site plan review of an existing property...previously approved by the Planning Board.

#### **Development Impact Statement (DIS)**

The applicant has not provided a DIS for the proposed development.

#### **Traffic Impact & Access Study**

The applicant has not provided a traffic analysis for the proposed development.

#### **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 project as proposed:

- ☐ 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 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 with the exception of the coversheet so noted, the applicant’s request for a waiver from Section 5450 as presented is granted.

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**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. Certified Abutters List                           |
| 2. Plan Set                     | 6. Bristol County (S.D) Registry of Deeds Book 3985, |
| 3. DPI Memorandum Dated 10.4.17 | Page 270   |
| 4. Waiver Request               |  |

