
Application: Special Exception SE2021-8
Applicant: Dominick D’Agustino
Owner: 593 Washington Street Realty, LLC
Address: 593 Washington Street (34-0034)
Zone: B-2
Description: New Carwash

Proposal

Dominick D’Agustino submitted an application for special exception and site plan review for the construction of a new carwash facility and associated improvements in a flood hazard area located at 593 Washington Street in the B-2 zone pursuant to Sections 33, 44, 46, 55, and 60 of the Middletown Zoning Code.

Existing Conditions

The property is a rear lot consists of 1.26 ac in the B-2 zone with frontage on Washington Street. It is bounded to the north by a property containing a restaurant, the west by an automobile sales and repair facility, the south by a retail building and to the west by a sliver of land that is part of a single family residence with the railroad right of way beyond.

The property was previously improved with a carwash that was constructed in the 1950s. The building has been demolished in anticipation of constructing the new facility. The site was 96% covered with building and asphalt. Much of that material still remains on site.

The property is within the 100ft wetland upland review area and the AE flood zone.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to construct a new 4,958 ft automated carwash facility, driveways, 24 parking spaces include 21 vacuum stations, drainage system, utilities, lighting, landscaping, and other associated improvements.

Yard, Coverage & Bulk Requirements (B-2)

	Proposed	Required (Max or Min)
Font Yard	64.5 ft	50 ft
Rear Yard	38.1 ft	10 ft
Side Yard (North)	25.6 ft	11.7 ft
Side Yard (South)	56.7 ft	26.7 ft
Coverage	9%	30%
Height	1 Story	3.5 Stories

Buildings and Uses

The proposed building is a 1 story, 4,958 SF automated carwash facility.

Stand-alone carwashes are not permitted uses in the B-2 zone. Prior to March 1998, they were special exception uses, even as far back as the 1950s when the previous carwash was constructed. I have not been able to confirm or deny that a special exception was granted for the original development of the site. Nonetheless, the proposal is a continuation of the nonconforming use. The proposed building is 51% smaller than the previous building and the total impervious surfaces was reduced by 69% from existing conditions.

Flood Hazard Area

The property is in the AE Flood Hazard Zone at elevation ± 23 ft. The proposed building has a first floor of 23 ft. The lowest floor must be elevated 1 ft above the base flood elevation (46.05.03.D.2a). The proposal has a net cut of 44 CY, so no additional compensatory storage is necessary. Non-residential development in a flood hazard area required special exception approval (46.03.04).

Parking, loading and Circulation.

The site plan provides 24 parking spaces include 21 vacuum stations on site. There is no parking demand provided for carwashes in the Zoning Code so is up to the commission to determine the minimum parking required (40.04.27). Considering the transient nature of the use, the only long term parking spaces required should be for anticipated staff at the property. There are 3 spaces including an ADA space proposed that are not equipped with a vacuum station, not to say that a staff member could park in one of those stalls.

No electric vehicle charging stations are proposed (40.02.01).

Drainage

The stormwater management plan consists of collecting stormwater runoff from the building and driveways and directing it towards one of two proposed retention basins located on site. Overflow will be directed towards and high-level overflow structure which will discharge towards the wetlands.

Utilities

The building will be connected to City sewer and water located under Washington Street.

Erosion & Sediment Controls

The proposed erosion & sedimentation controls consisting of a single row of silt fencing around the disturbed area. A temporary sedimentation basin is proposed to be installed during construction.

Landscaping

Ornamental landscaping and tree plantings are proposed along the edge of curbing and in landscape islands.

Lighting

Sight lighting will consist of 15 new light poles installed around the parking and lights mounted on the building.

Inland Wetlands

A portion of the property is within the 100 ft upland review area. On July 7, 2021, the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency discussed the proposal and determined a wetlands permit would not be required and designated review of the proposal to staff.

Special Exception Findings (44.04)

The Commission may grant a special exception when making a finding on the following criteria below:

Compliance with the City Plan

The proposal is consistent with the 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development because it will assist and promote development along the major corridor. Furthermore, the overall site development with a new building, and landscaping will enhance the aesthetics of the property. Furthermore, the proposed design will remove an existing building from the flood area and the elevated structure will be out of the flood hazard area.

Adverse Effects

The property is adjacent to other commercial uses. It is unlikely that the change of use will have any adverse impacts to the area.

Visibility and Accessibility

N/A.

Traffic Movement

The traffic enters and exists from the existing curb cut on Washington Street. Traffic will circle left either through the washing facility or bypass the building and access the vacuum stations and/or exit the property.

Orderly Development

The property is in B-2 (General Business Zone) this section of Washington Street has a mix of commercial uses from retail to offices, to restaurants and other automobile related businesses.

Property Values and Character

There is likely no impact on property values and character of the neighborhood. The previous building was a solid block building constructed in the 1950. The new building will be smaller and provide additional green space and landscaping.

Parking and Loading

The parking provided appears to comply with that required in Section 40. See analysis above.

Compliance with Standards

There are no additional standards for carwash facilities

Issues to be Resolved

1. The Commission should determine if the parking provided is adequate for the use.
2. The Commission should consider if the EV charging station requirement should be waived.

Staff Recommendations

Prior to the issuance of building permits:

1. Site development plans and architectural plans shall be submitted to Land Use Staff to verify compliance with this special exception/site plan approval and the Middletown Zoning Code. Any significant changes to the site plan would require Planning and Zoning Commission review. The following shall be addressed:
 - a. The first floor shall be raised an additional 1 ft in elevation, which may require some regrading. Additional material may have to be removed from the detention basins to balance the site.
 - b. Mechanical equipment shall be raised to elevation 24 or higher.
 - c. One EV charging station should be added to the site plan unless waived by the Commission.
 - d. An anti-tracking pad should be installed at the construction entrance.
 - e. The applicant should address Public Works Department comments dated 6/22/2021.
2. The applicant shall acquire all required state permits for work in the DOT right of way and waste water discharge from the State of Connecticut