

From: Marc Poulin <Marc@poulinfinancial.com>
To: Jean Fraser <JF@portlandmaine.gov>
CC: Lee Allen <lee.allen@northeastcivilsolutions.com>
Date: 12/21/2015 7:02 PM
Subject: 171 Warren Ave - parking lot expansion
Attachments: Floor Plans - Square Footage - 022512.pdf

Hi Jean (and Lee),

Thanks for the good news and for letting me know this process is well underway.

The total building SF is 3,342 per the attached floor plan. This counts all the office space and common areas (hallways, stairs, conference room and bathrooms). If you add to that a rear entry & employee eating area and storage area, you would add another 500 SF and then there is the basement (not occupied in any way) of maybe another 500 SF. So, all space is maybe a total of 4,300 SF. None of this has changed since final occupancy was given for the entire building.

The occupants are all service providers that see clients in their offices regularly. They are:

- Ø Poulin Financial Services – tax and accounting services – 7 employees/occupants (first floor)
- Ø Donelson Accounting and Tax Services – sole owner (mezzanine level)
- Ø JMH Financial, Inc. – Insurance Sales – sole owner (mezzanine level)
- Ø New Interpretation and Translation Services – Immigrant services (2nd floor) – 1 employee
- Ø Pine Tree Community Services – Immigrant / case management services (2nd floor) – 4 employees

That's 14 people occupying the property – full capacity. Each has a car to get themselves to/from the office. With a total of 21 spaces, that leaves 7 spaces for visitors. Since all the occupants are service providers, they will often meet with clients in their offices. If you eliminate support staff that don't see clients (4 at the most), that leaves 10 professionals that will see visitors. During this past summer, we have had almost full parking and none of my staff was seeing tax clients like we will see during tax season. So assuming the 10 workers see clients, that is 10 visitors plus the 14 occupants/workers for a total of 24 spaces. That assumes meetings are attended by only one visitor. Many meetings are attended by 2 people that arrive in separate cars (ie: a couple arriving from their respective jobs in separate vehicles to have their tax return prepared). Asking for 26 total spaces does not seem excessive given the utilization of the property. Keep in mind that there is no parking outside of my property.... No parking is allowed on Warren Avenue and the gravel road – Hemingway Street - is not conducive to over-flow parking.

You ask about the bike rack....we have a bike rack at the entry to the property that will accommodate 2 bicycles – there is also some parking for motorcycles in that same area that will accommodate more than 2 motorcycles and can act as overflow for parking bicycles should the need arise. Clearly more than 4 bicycles can park in that area without interfering with vehicle traffic, parking and entry to the building. In the five years I have been in this property, I have only one client that has utilized the rack or ridden his bike to come here (twice – I remember because I thank him for using the bike rack since no one else does ☺). I believe I have only seen 3 motorcycles utilize that space in all 5 years – one of them was mine). There is no logical reason to have more than what is there for both motorcycles and bicycles.

Regarding buffering from the Warren Avenue (by KL Jack) perspective, I have no problem adding some bushes to hide the air conditioning units along the “back side” of the building. You and I discussed this and, you are correct, that was not included in the plan (Lee and I may not have discussed that specifically in relation to designing the parking area). I am reluctant to add and request that no bushes or trees be required along the paved areas since plowing every winter requires that we put our snow somewhere and

that would mean the snow would be piled along and over any plantings that are done along the parking area likely killing any growth or plantings. Last winter, along the 9 existing parking spaces at the back of the property, that entire grass area all the way to the woods was filled with snow at least 15'+ tall. It might be easier to walk the property with you to see what you would request/require. Of course, this would be additional plantings beyond what is proposed in the planned "Rain Garden". Also, be aware, the added parking requires no trees or plantings to be removed. The area to be used for parking is merely grass and crappy grass since that area is quite sandy.

Also, I remind you that of the 4 trees that were planted along Hemingway Street (among the rock border to the property and visitor parking area, one tree has died and been removed. The other trees seem to survive....that area, the whole length of Hemingway Street is full of ledge a very short distance making planting anything on that side of the lot prone to death since no roots can find good soil to survive. This is the reason, in the back corner of the parking area (at the end of the parallel spaces) no trees could be planted 5 years ago.

Ok, this is my non-professional answer to your comments. Lee can chime in as he thinks appropriate. Let me know your thoughts. If a meeting is necessary to speed this process along, I am happy to do that.

My best,

Marc

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From: Jean Fraser [mailto:JF@portlandmaine.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2015 12:15 PM
To: Marc Poulin
Cc: Lee Allen
Subject: More RE: checking in - 171 Warren Ave - parking lot expansion

Marc

,,...and the good news is that our Peer Engineer reviewer for stormwater is OK with the raingarden etc so if our DPW folks sign off (re impacts on the ROW) that piece of it is good- will get back to you but that was the aspect I was unsure about and I am sure the points I raised below can be easily addressed.

Thanks
Jean

Jean Fraser, Planner
City of Portland
874 8728
>>> Jean Fraser 12/21/2015 11:38 AM >>>
Marc

I am waiting for my colleagues to get back to me but there are three areas that the application has not addressed and it would speed up the review if these could be addressed asap:

1. Parking: The site plan states that there is 3330 sq ft of offices in the building, and therefore the zoning requirement (per the ordinances) for this project would be 9 parking spaces (eg 1/400 sq ft)- which is what we originally approved. The Site Plan ordinance has this requirement (see underlined sections as most applicable):

4. Parking:

a. Location and Required Number of Vehicle Parking Spaces:

(i) Off-street parking shall meet the applicable zoning requirements, except the Planning Board shall determine the parking requirement, based upon the applicant's parking study and a recommendation from the City Transportation Engineer, for new structures, building additions and changes of use with a total floor area of 50,000 sf or more and for projects, regardless of size, in the B-6, B-7 and USM Overlay zone.

(ii) Where a parking study is required, the City encourages Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to be employed.

(iii) Developments proposing to exceed minimum parking requirements by 10% or more must demonstrate through a parking analysis that the amount of parking is appropriate for the proposed use of the site.

(iv) Parking spaces and aisles shall meet applicable dimensional standards as detailed in Section 1 of the Technical Manual.

(v) Parking lots, except for temporary lots to be used for less than one year, shall be constructed of a permanent and durable hard surface that is not subject to ponding or erosion.

So there are two questions: what is the correct office floorspace for your building (our assessors entries suggest its a lot more than 3330 sq ft); and if its less than 9200sq ft then there needs to be a narrative explaining why this much parking is needed.

2. Landscape: In a recent telephone conversation with you I advised that landscape screening of the new parking area should be included (screened from Warren). I don't see any landscaping screening on the site plan. The relevant ordinance is (see underlined section as most applicable- I have quoted the entire section for context):

2. Landscaping and Landscape Preservation:

a. Landscape Preservation.

(i) Site development shall be designed to incorporate, and limit disturbance to or removal of existing trees, as specified below. Preserved trees may be counted towards site landscaping requirements.

(ii) All development subject to zoning setbacks shall preserve a minimum of 30% of existing trees ten (10) inches DBH or greater within the required setback area unless trees are non-native invasive species, as identified in Section 4 of the Technical Manual, or are deemed unsalvageable by the Portland City Arborist or their designee.

(iii) Protection during Construction: The site plan shall include adequate measures to protect vegetation to be preserved from construction impacts, in accordance with the tree preservation standards listed in Section 4 of the Technical Manual.

(iv) Waiver: Where the applicant can demonstrate that preservation of existing vegetation would compromise development of the site, the Reviewing Authority may permit the substitution of replacement

landscaping in other areas of the site, and/or a financial contribution to the City of Portland Tree Fund for an amount proportionate to the cost of trees removed, as described below:

(a) For each tree required to be preserved that is removed and is greater than 16" in caliper DBH, two (2) replacement trees of a species identified on the City of Portland Recommended Tree List shall be planted on the site as detailed in Section 4 of the Technical Manual).

(b) For each tree required to be preserved that is removed and is between ten (10) and sixteen (16) inch DBH, one (1) replacement tree of a species identified on the City of Portland Recommended Tree List shall be planted on the site as detailed in Section 4 of the Technical Manual).

(c) Where the planting of replacement trees on the site is not feasible, the applicant shall contribute an amount proportionate to the cost of required replacement trees to the City of Portland Tree Fund, as detailed in Section 4 of the Technical Manual.

(v) In addition to the provisions of this section, all development within the Shoreland Zone shall meet the requirements of Division 26, Shoreland Regulations.

b. Site Landscaping.

(i) Landscaped Buffers:

(a) Screening. Loading and servicing areas, dumpsters, storage areas and utility structures, except for renewable energy systems, shall be screened from view from public sidewalks, streets and adjacent properties by dense evergreen landscaping, fencing, masonry wall building walls, or a combination thereof.

(b) Understory Plantings. All development subject to required zoning setbacks shall include a minimum of six (6) shrubs per forty five (45) linear feet of all frontages as measured along the property line. A shrub shall be defined as one shrub, one ornamental grass, and/or 3 perennials. Required shrubs may be installed anywhere on the site, including a green roof, if proposed, and may be planted in any arrangement. Existing vegetation to be preserved on the site may be counted towards this requirement as detailed in Section 4 of the Technical Manual.

(c) Industrial and Commercial Zones. For non-residential development proposed in an industrial or commercial zone subject to required zoning setbacks and abutting a residential zone, an evergreen, densely landscaped buffer of not less than ten (10) ft wide and six (6) ft tall is required along the side abutting the residential zone. Where site constraints prevent such a buffer from being established, the width of the landscaped buffer may be reduced but shall include architectural quality fencing of not less than six (6) ft tall and a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees spaced no further than twenty (20) ft apart along the abutting the residential zone.

(d) Buffer from Surrounding Development. All residential development shall provide and/or preserve evergreen vegetated buffers where necessary to buffer the development from detrimental impacts of existing surrounding development.

(ii) Parking Lot Landscaping:

(a) Developments with five (5) or more parking spaces shall include at least two (2) trees (or one (1) tree and three (3) shrubs) per five (5) parking spaces planted in landscaped islands to screen shade and break up parking. Trees and shrubs in parking lots may be in informal groups, straight rows, or concentrated in clusters as detailed in Section 4 of the Technical Manual.

(b) Landscaped islands shall be distributed so that uninterrupted pavement does not exceed forty (40) parking spaces.

(c) Landscaped islands shall be curbed and a minimum of eight (8) feet in width, not including curbing.

The incorporation of bioretention into landscaped islands is strongly encouraged.

(d) Vehicle display lots shall be subject to the parking lot landscaping standards of this section.

(e) Waiver: Where site constraints prevent implementation of all or a portion of required parking lot landscaping, as determined by the Reviewing Authority, the requirements may be all or partially waived and the applicant shall contribute an amount proportionate to the cost of required parking lot trees to the City of Portland Tree Fund.

3. Bicycle parking: The requirement for bicycle parking is 2 spaces for every 10 parking spaces, or 4 for this project. These need to serve both the employees and the visiting public. Could you confirm how many bike parking spaces you have now- and if this is less than 4 than some would need to be added.

Please note that the review is "in progress" so these are not final comments- but reviewers will need this information in order to continue the review.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if any questions.

Thank you
Jean

Jean Fraser, Planner
City of Portland
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