



CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS

DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

CITY HALL - 474 BROADWAY
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK 12866
TEL: 518-587-3550 X.2515 FAX: 518-580-8480
WWW.SARATOGA-SPRINGS.ORG

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ADVISORY OPINION

In the matter of the application

#2013.045

Advisory Opinion to City Council on Zoning Amendment - Turf Hotels
3368 South Broadway
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

Involving a request from the City Council for an advisory opinion on a petition to change zoning from Office Medical Business-1 (OMB-1) District to Tourist Related Business (TRB) District to permit construction of 4-story, 109 unit hotel, tax parcel # 178.00-2-16, within the City of Saratoga Springs.

Following discussion on this matter on May 15 and June 19, 2013, the Commission issues the following opinion:

Favorable Opinion – with the following considerations

Considerations:

- This property is across from the Saratoga Spa State Park. The Spa State Park is listed as a “contributing” property on the NY State and National Registers of Historic Places. In 1987, the Spa State Park was granted National Historic Landmark (NHL) status, recognized for its national-level historical significance. Of the 85,000 properties listed on the National Register, only about 2,500 are NHLs.
- This property is located within a City “Gateway Design District-1” (Zoning Ord. 240-3.2), the intent of which “is to establish a series of site and construction standards and guidelines to encourage appropriate development while preserving and maintaining a rural “Country” character in this gateway area to complement the natural conditions of the neighboring Saratoga Spa State Park.” An important objective of the Commission’s jurisdictional authority is to realize appropriate architectural design in this Gateway.
- The proposal for a hotel use in this City gateway is not without its appeal as the magnitude and potential impact of this use (a long-term stay hotel) may be overall less intensive than the currently allowed Office/Medical/Business uses or other possible uses under the general designation of Tourist Related Business - as long as the hotel design, materials, and site layout are sensitive and complementary to the adjacent National Historic Landmark property. It must be noted, however, that once the zoning designation is changed to TRB, there are no guarantees on the resultant project should financing, owners or circumstances change.

- The Commission notes that the originally proposed separate commercial building housing additional Tourist Related Business uses has been removed from the proposed plan. This is a welcome modification to the project proposal.
- While this area is currently zoned for office/commercial uses, the Commission does have concern that a change to Tourist Related Business zoning on this, and potentially future surrounding properties, may be contrary to preserving and enhancing the 'country' character objective in this area.

As currently defined, the Tourist Related Business district would permit such uses as outdoor storage/display, car washes, motor vehicle repair and fueling stations, eating and drinking establishments, parking facilities, etc.. Some, if not many of these uses, offer far more limited architectural and site design opportunities than the currently proposed hotel use. While context-sensitive architecture and design may mitigate a number of potential issues, these potentially permitted Tourist Related Business uses may not be appropriate for a primary City gateway leading to this National Historic Landmark.

- The City Council may wish to entertain revising the allowable uses in the Tourist Related Business districts or designating a more appropriate zoning category that would enhance the objective for a rural 'country' character while providing commercial uses complementary to the Saratoga Spa State Park and National Museum of Dance.

Record of vote: motion to issue favorable advisory opinion with identified considerations made by S Rowland, seconded by R Martin: passed 6-0
In favor: SRowland, TEhinger, RMartin, KCavotta, RDeMarco, GLussier
Absent: RWest

Mervyn Rowland

Chair

Date

6/24/13

cc: City Council
 File
 Applicant

RECEIVED
 JUN 24 2013
 ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT