

CASE DESCRIPTION

34745 Woodward (21-55)

Hearing date: December 14, 2021

Appeal No. 21-55: The owner of the property known as 34745 Woodward requests the following appeal or the following variance to renovate the property and update the operations of a car wash use known as Jax Kar Wash:

A. Chapter 126, Article 4, Section 4.54(C)(3) of the Zoning Ordinance requires a 32 inch capped masonry screen wall to be placed along the front or side of any parking facility that abuts a street, alley, passage, or mixed passage. On October 13th, 2021, the Planning Board approved the applicant's site plan application with the condition that the applicant submit revised plans with sufficient screening that meets Article 4, Section 4.54 of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant is requesting an appeal of the Planning Board's decision with the condition that the applicant satisfy all screening requirements of Article 4, Section 4.54.

OR

B. Chapter 126, Article 4, Section 4.54(C)(3) of the Zoning Ordinance requires a 32 inch capped masonry screen wall be placed along the front or side of any parking facility that abuts a street, alley, passage, or mixed passage. The applicant is proposing a site plan with a parking facility consisting of 47.75 feet of unscreened frontage along Woodward Avenue. Therefore, a dimensional variance of 47.75 feet is being requested.

Staff Notes:

In regards to the purpose of screening standards, Article 4, Section 4.54(A) of the Zoning Ordinance states:

The purpose of this section is to require a barrier, capable of containing noise, vehicular lights, visual disarray, debris and other factors detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the community between an open parking station, outdoor storage, dumpsters and adjacent properties. Flexibility in the materials, size, height and placement of walls permitted in order to allow architectural harmony and usable open space and to accomplish a unified design.

In regards to the definition of parking and parking area, Article 9: Definitions of the Zoning Ordinance states the following:

Parking: An area used for the parking of motor vehicles

Parking Area, Total: The actual parking area and the area of the access drives.

The applicant appeared before the Planning Board July 2019, August 2019, September 2019, October 2019, July 2020, September 2021, and October 2021. Relevant minutes are attached. Concern regarding a proposed contraflow use of the access drive for exiting the car wash facing Woodward Ave, turning left on the access drive, and then pulling into the service area in the northern portion of the site was one of the main issues. The applicant addressed this concern by proposing a new exit door from the car wash on the northern elevation of the building. The proposed door would allow cars to turn left out of the carwash and pull into the service area without using the Woodward service drive. The service area allows customers to park their car alongside vacuum stations for interior cleaning.

The Planning Division considers the service stations on the north side of the car wash structure as an open parking station and is therefore required to be screened by a 32 inch masonry capped screenwall, or other materials as approved by the Planning Board.

The applicant has provided a proposed site plan with proper screening along Brown Street, however they have not indicated the required screening along Woodward Avenue. The applicant has indicated a concern that a screenwall along Woodward will impede proper turn radius of cars exiting the the newly proposed car wash exit.

On October 13th, 2021, the Planning Board discussed their concerns regarding the lack of a screenwall along Woodward Avenue. The relevant memo to the Planning Board on this date is attached. Issues regarding visual aesthetics and pedestrian safety without a screenwall were the main concerns discussed. The Planning Board does not want automobiles from Jax Kar Wash to be able to drive across the sidewalk along Woodward Ave between Brown Street and the car wash structure for safety reasons. The Planning Board approved the proposed changes by a vote of 4-3 with the condition that a screenwall be installed along Woodward Ave. If the applicant wishes to use landscaping such as arborvitae or evergreens instead of a masonry screenwall, the proposed plans would also have to be approved by the Planning Board.

This property is zoned B1 & D4 Overlay.

Brooks Cowan
Senior City Planner