

Burlington Design Advisory Board

645 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
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Ron Wanamaker
Emily Morse
Jay White
Jack Qualey
Gabriel Stadecker
Kathleen Ryan, Alt
Michael Alvanos, Alt



DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD Tuesday, March 28, 2023 3:00 PM

Remote and In Person (at 645 Pine Street) Meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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Agenda

Session I – 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM

ZSP-23-1; 179 Queen City Park Road (E-LM, Ward 5S) Zoo Holdings, LLC / Martin Courcelle

Sketch plan review of proposed 65,000 square foot addition to the existing Rhino Foods facility including associated access, parking, utility, and stormwater modifications. (Project Manager, Scott Gustin)

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Department of Permitting and Inspections

Zoning Division
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William Ward, Director
Scott Gustin, AICP, CFM, Principal Planner
Mary O'Neil, AICP, Principal Planner
Garret King, Associate Planner
Joseph Cava, Permitting Technician
Theodore Miles, Code Compliance Officer
vacant, DPI Administrator



MEMORANDUM

To: Design Advisory Board
From: Scott Gustin
Re: 179 Queen City Park Road
Date: March 28, 2023

File: ZSP-23-1

Location: 179 Queen City Park Road

Zone: E-LM **Ward:** 5S

Parking District: Shared Use

Date application accepted: March 9, 2023

Applicant/ Owner: Martin Courcelle / Zoo Holdings, LLC

Request: Sketch plan review of approximately 65,000 sf addition to the existing Rhino Foods facility including associated access, parking, utility, and stormwater modifications.

Overview:

The applicant has requested sketch plan review of the site plan associated with a planned expansion of the Rhino Foods facility. Building plans are not included in this sketch plan, except for footprint and approximate area. The applicants met with the city's Technical Review Committee in December, 2022. Insofar as zoning standards are concerned, two items were flagged during TRC review: 1) increasing curb cuts from one to two, and 2) constructing additional parking in front of the proposed building addition. The applicant has wisely requested sketch plan review to understand the Boards' perspectives on the proposed construction prior to investing in a complete application and design.

Article 6: Development Review Standards

Part 1, Land Division Design Standards

Although not expressly noted in the plans, it appears that two parcels will be merged into one as part of this project. The open lawn slated for development is presently a separate parcel.

Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards

(a) Protection of important natural features

The property is not affected by any important natural features as identified in the Natural Resource Overlay map. The tree line along the westerly boundary line remains intact.

(b) Topographical alterations

No significant topographical alterations are proposed. The site is flat and will remain so. A new stormwater pond will require some topographical alteration.

(c) Protection of important public views

There are no important public views on or through the subject property.

(d) Protection of important cultural resources

The site has no historical significance, nor are there any known archaeological resources.

(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy

No information as to alternative energy is included in the sketch plans.

(f) Brownfield sites

The subject property is not an identified brownfield.

(g) Provide for nature's events

Significant impervious surface will be created as part of this construction. Although details are limited, the sketch plans depict a new stormwater pond to capture additional runoff.

Peripheral green space remains for wintertime snow storage from plowing. Existing sheltered building entries will remain. Information as to new entries is lacking.

(h) Building location and orientation

The existing building faces Queen City Park Road. The proposed addition will be constructed to the south of the existing building and appears to leave the existing front entry intact. No new front entries are evident within the addition.

(i) Vehicular access

The existing driveway will be retained and will provide ingress and egress to and from the property for passenger vehicles. It will also serve as the entry for truck deliveries; however, trucks will circulate around the building and exit from a new southerly curb cut. The Department of Public Works has reviewed this second curb cut and found it acceptable. Sight lines at the existing driveway's intersection with the road remain essentially unchanged. Sight lines at the new driveway intersection with the road appear to be clear. Preliminary traffic information has been provided. Between 11 and 31 additional peak hour trip ends are anticipated, depending on the ITE versus Rhino Foods' supplied data. Both are below the 75 peak hour trip end threshold for requiring a comprehensive traffic analysis.

(j) Pedestrian access

There is no public sidewalk along this side of Queen City Park Road. Therefore, there is no requirement to provide a front walkway connecting to it. Pedestrian walkways provide access from the existing parking lot to building entries. No walkway associated with the new parking lot is evident on the sketch plans and will be required.

(k) Accessibility for the handicapped

ADA parking spaces are depicted within the existing parking lot. No additional ADA spaces are noted in the proposed parking. ADA standards are administered through the building code.

(l) Parking and circulation

Under present conditions, parking is situated in front of the building and to the south side. Circulation wraps around the entire building to facilitate truck access. The proposed building addition is located to the south. Parking to the south will be removed and relocated/expanded in front of the proposed building addition. Truck circulation will wrap around the entire building and exit via a new curb cut to the south.

As depicted in the sketch plans, the proposed parking falls short of compliance with this criterion.

- Location of parking in front of the building is discouraged but not expressly prohibited. There are no apparent site constraints to locating the parking behind or to the side of the expanded building. The applicants have submitted a narrative explaining operational roadblocks to locating the parking to the side or rear. The standard, locating parking to the side or rear of the lot “to the extent possible” is ultimately a discretionary call the Board needs to make.
- Parking areas of 20 or more spaces need to be broken into smaller areas separated by landscaping. The proposed parking area contains over 20 spaces and depicts no “islands” or other landscaping features to break it into smaller areas. The site plan will need to depict these features upon application.
- At least 30% shading of the new parking area is required. At least one shade tree for every 5 parking spaces is needed. No shading information is included in the sketch plans and will be required upon application.

No bike parking details are provided in the sketch plans. The expanded facility will require 1 long term bike parking space per 20,000 gfa and 1 short term bike parking space per 25,000 gfa (at least 2 per public entrance).

(m) Landscaping, fences, and retaining walls

Existing landscaping is depicted in the sketch plans. No new landscaping is shown. If new parking is ultimately constructed as noted in the sketch plans, it must be screened from the street with new landscaping and/or fencing.

(n) Public plazas and open space

No public plaza or open space is included or required in this proposal.

(o) Outdoor lighting

No outdoor lighting information is included in the sketch plans. Presumably, the new parking will be illuminated. Details as to fixture types, locations, and illumination levels will be required upon application for the project.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design

No new infrastructure, such as mechanical equipment and solid waste and recycling facilities, is depicted in the sketch plans. If any is proposed, it must be depicted and screened on site plans submitted with the permit application.

Part 3, Architectural Design Standards

Not applicable – no building information provided.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Not applicable for sketch plan review.

Burlington Development Review Board
Department of Permitting & Inspections
645 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401

RE: Rhino Foods – Additional Curb Cut and Parking Lot Discussion

Development Review Board (DRB) Members:

On 12/08/22 Rhino Foods and Food Tech met with the Technical Review Committee (TRC) to discuss the potential building addition at Rhino Foods' location at 179 Queen City Park Road. During this meeting there were two concerns brought up by the TRC relating to the proposed site plan and its compliance with the City of Burlington's Development Review Standards. We would like to address these two items with staff and the DRB in a Sketch Plan Review so we can come to an agreement on the approach to these items as they could have a make-or-break impact on our project.

Item 1: Curb Cuts

The first item relates to the Development Review Standard 6.2.2i – Parking and Circulation, which states, "Curb cuts shall be arranged and limited in number to reduce congestion and improve traffic safety."

We are proposing to go from one curb cut to two to enhance the safety for both employees and members of the public using the adjacent GMT bus stop. Rhino Foods currently has one curb cut that serves as a driveway for both passenger vehicles and larger trucks. After the building is expanded, a greater number of trucks will be present to serve the new warehousing space. Due to the increased number of trucks, we are proposing a second curb cut be allowed to reduce the amount of truck traffic through the employee parking lot. On our proposed site plan, trucks and passenger vehicles would both enter the existing curb cut at the front of the building. Passenger vehicles would also exit through this curb cut, but trucks would continue on the driveway around the perimeter of the building, and then exit out the new curb cut at the south end of the property. Providing a second curb cut dedicated to trucks exiting the site will (1) reduce the traffic through the parking lots and thereby provide a safer environment for employees and (2) reduce the truck traffic passing the bus stop located at the existing curb cut, reducing potential congestion and risks to citizens using that bus stop.

Item 2: Parking

The second item relates to the Development Review Standard 6.2.2l – Parking and Circulation, which states, "To the extent possible, parking should be placed at the side or rear of the lot and screened from view from surrounding properties and adjacent public rights of ways."

We are requesting that the DRB exercise the discretion permitted in the ordinance by approving the parking as proposed in our site plan.



At the time the existing Rhino Foods facility was built, the City standards allowed for parking lots to be located on the street side of the building. As this is an expansion of an existing facility, the proposed design complies with 6.2.2h, which states, "The introduction of new buildings and additions shall maintain the existing development pattern and rhythm of structures along the existing streetscape."

More importantly, in designing this addition to the facility, we have determined it is not operationally possible to place the parking to the side or rear of the addition. Imposing a condition to site the parking at the rear or side of the building would have a highly detrimental impact on both the proposed building expansion as well as the employee flow through the existing facility. Such a condition would render the proposed expansion infeasible and would result in this project not moving forward. Please consider the following points in evaluating the proposed site plan:

1. **Employee Safety** - The current and proposed parking lot provides direct access to the front entry of the building. Employees enter the front doors and have access to the administrative offices, break area, and locker rooms. It is not possible for some of Rhino Foods' employees to enter the opposite side of the building as they would have to pass through the production spaces which have strict sanitary requirements. And it is also not possible to reconfigure the employee entrance to any other location, as that would require a complete redesign of almost the entire building. Therefore, locating new parking to the side or rear of the lot would require employees to walk through areas of high truck traffic to reach the front entrance.
2. **Production Space and Product Flow** – Rhino Foods' current production space is at the rear of the current building, and the proposed expansion includes an extension of that production space at the rear of the building. If parking were located in the rear of the building, the production spaces could not be made contiguous, which would interrupt product flow in and out of the integrated production space. Also, the truck dock was placed on the south side of the building expansion to optimize product flow through the facility while still screening trucks from the road. And there is not enough space on the south side of the lot for both the truck dock and additional employee parking.
3. **Fire Department Access** - Eliminating the parking lot on the front of the building also creates challenges for fire department access to the new expansion. There will be a stormwater detention pond that needs to be placed along the street in order to connect to the existing stormwater system. Without a paved area on the other side of this pond, fire fighters would need to park on the street and navigate around the pond before they could access the building.

We appreciate your consideration of these two items. In summary, the second curb cut is intended to create a safer site by separating truck traffic from both Rhino Foods employees and citizens using the bus stop in front of Rhino Foods. Also, we hope we have adequately conveyed how locating the parking lot on the side or rear of the new expansion would make this project infeasible. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you and come to a resolution that suits the needs of both the City of Burlington and Rhino Foods. Thank you for your consideration.



Sincerely,

Nicholas Strube, AIA

Lead Architect, Food Tech, Inc.

Ted Castle

Owner and Founder, Rhino Foods

3/17/23

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DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD Tuesday March 28, 2023 3:00 PM

Minutes

Present: Jay White, Ron Wanamaker, Gabe Stadecker, Jack Qualey, Kathleen Ryan (alternate)

Absent: Emily Morse, Michael Alvanos (alternate)

Staff present: Scott Gustin, Garret King

Guests: Martin Courcelle, Ted Castle, Rooney Castle, Blaine Paxton, Matt Greer, Garret Cirkey, Sam Anderson, Samantha Dunn, Will Clavelle

Agenda

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As a sketch plan review, no Board action was taken.