

## Department of Planning and Zoning

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**TO:** Design Advisory Board  
**FROM:** Scott Gustin  
**DATE:** July 24, 2018  
**RE:** 18-1208CA/MA, 75 Briggs Street

=====  
Zone: ELM                                      Ward: 5S  
Owner/Applicant:      Onion River Cooperative, Inc. / Charest Alpinism, LLC

**Request:** Construct new health club/climbing center. Includes a new building and related site improvements.

### **OVERVIEW:**

The applicant is seeking approval to construct a new health club/climbing center and related site improvements at 75 Briggs Street. This parcel is presently vacant with one remaining building left over from the former railroad use of the property. This proposal is a comprehensive redevelopment of the site involving the new 13,450 sf building, retention of the existing 4,000 sf building, and new parking, landscaping, and stormwater management features. The climbing center is categorized as a health club in the Comprehensive Development Ordinance and is a conditional use in the E-LM zone. As the project entails a development footprint of > 40,000 sf, major impact review is also triggered.

This project was reviewed by the Technical Review Committee on February 8, 2018. Sketch plan review with the Conservation Board occurred April 2, 2018, with the Design Advisory Board on April 10, 2018, and with the Development Review Board on May 1, 2018.

The Conservation Board reviewed this application on July 2, 2018 and recommended approval as proposed.

### **ARTICLE 6: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STANDARDS**

#### ***Part 1, Land Division Design Standards***

Not applicable.

#### ***Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards***

##### ***Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards***

###### ***(a) Protection of important natural features***

The property does not contain any important natural features as identified in the Open Space Protection Plan or as outlined in Sec. 4.5.4, *Natural Resource Protection Overlay Districts*. In fact, the property is nearly devoid of any green space at all. It is a vacant former railroad property. The proposed construction will have no impact on Burlington's diversity of important natural features.

###### ***(b) Topographical alterations***

The existing property is essentially flat and will remain so. Proposed grading will direct stormwater runoff into newly proposed stormwater management measures. In an effort to retain as much soil onsite as possible (rather than landfill it), a berm will be created at the north end of the property.

*(c) Protection of important public views*

There are no significant public views from or through the subject property. The proposed construction will not adversely impact any identified public view corridor.

*(d) Protection of important cultural resources*

The property has no known archaeological significance. It contains no archaeological site points, nor is it located within an archaeologically sensitive area.

*(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy*

See Sec. 6.3.2 (f).

*(f) Brownfield sites*

The Vermont DEC Hazardous Site List specifically lists this property as a contaminated site. The applicants are working on a corrective action plan (CAP) with VT DEC to address onsite contaminants. This CAP was addressed with the Conservation Board. Essentially, the contaminated soils will be capped onsite. Soils that cannot be retained onsite will be disposed of in a landfill.

*(g) Provide for nature's events*

Presently, there are no stormwater management features onsite. The proposed project design includes four bioretention areas. These areas will collect stormwater runoff from the parking area and building rooftop and will attenuate flows prior to discharge to the city's combined sewer system. The contaminated soils onsite prevent utilizing infiltration, but post-development peak flows will be significantly reduced for the one year design storm.

The main building entry will be sheltered. There is sufficient room onsite for snow storage during the winter months.

*(h) Building location and orientation*

The proposed building will be set close to the street, reflecting similar front yard setbacks at neighboring properties. As required, the new building presents an entryway facing Briggs Street.

*(i) Vehicular access*

The property will be served by two driveways. The southern driveway will seemingly serve to access the existing outbuilding. The northern driveway will act as the primary vehicular access into the site for visitors. Sight triangles are clear for both driveways.

*(j) Pedestrian access*

Pedestrian access to the property will be afforded by way of new onsite walkways. The site plan also notes a future new sidewalk within the Briggs Street right-of-way to be constructed by the city. Confirmation from the Department of Public Works has been sought and is pending. The site plan also depicts a new crosswalk across Briggs Street. DPW review and approval will be required

for this feature. As required, pedestrian walkways are provided through the parking areas for access into the new building.

*(k) Accessibility for the handicapped*

Handicap parking spaces are depicted near the south-facing building entrance. Entries into the building appear to be at-grade. It is the applicant's responsibility to comply with all applicable ADA requirements.

*(l) Parking and circulation*

Parking is set to the side and rear of the new building. Given the lengthwise orientation of the property along Briggs Street, the side parking lot also has frontage along the street. Screening of the parking is minimal along that section of parking between the two driveways. The placement of a bioswale in this location limits appropriate species that could be used for improved screening; however, there are some types of shrubs (like red osier dogwood) that could be effective in this wet location. Alternatively, parking could be reconfigured to allow additional space for more typical tree or shrub varieties, or structural screening like a fence could be installed.

Parking spaces and circulation isles appear to be dimensionally compliant. Most parking spaces are 9' X 18', and circulation isles are 24' wide allowing for 10' wide travel lanes and compliant back-up space. The 18' parking space depth is acceptable given that all of the spaces are peripheral. Parking spaces along the rear of the property are a full 20' deep.

Curbing is evident along much of the parking lot's edge. There is no curbing along the western edge where stormwater runoff will sheetflow into the linear bioretention area. As recommended by this criterion, the parking area is divided into smaller components with peripheral landscaping to delineate the boundaries of the parking and circulation areas.

This criterion establishes a target of 30% shading of the parking area with new shade trees. At least 1 shade tree for every 5 parking spaces is required. The new parking lot contains 65 parking spaces and requires 13 shade trees. As proposed, 16 new trees will be planted within or around the parking lot (not counting those trees along the northern edges – they will provide minimal, if any, shade for the parking lot). Of the 16 new trees, 12 are acceptable shade trees. The birch trees are unlikely to achieve a mature canopy of 25' diameter. The birch trees are correctly not included in the shading study. This count is 1 shy of the required 13 acceptable shade trees. The shading plan demonstrates 38% shading. Whether this percentage includes the shade from trees that will not actually provide parking lot shade needs to be clarified. The shade study depicts shade from trees beyond the parking lot. These cannot be counted in the shading percentage for the parking lot.

Bike racks are depicted on the site plan. They are appropriately located near the building's southern entry.

*(m) Landscaping, fences, and retaining walls*

The project plans include a landscaping plan that encompasses a variety of plantings. As noted above, shade trees will be planted in and around the parking lot. Additional plantings will accent the building and site features. As previously noted, additional screening of the parking between the two driveways is needed. Additional landscaping may be used to address this need.

There are presently no street trees along this portion of Briggs Street. The applicant is advised to consult with the city arborist as to the need to provide any in association with this development.

*(n) Public plazas and open space*

No public plazas or open space are included in this proposal.

*(o) Outdoor lighting*

New outdoor lighting is included in the application and will include illumination of the parking area, walkways, and building entries. Fixture cut sheets and a photometric plan have been provided. Acceptable cutoff LED fixtures are proposed. Pole lamps illuminating the parking area are acceptable at 16' tall. Acceptable illumination levels are depicted for the parking lot and roof deck. While illumination levels are depicted for the building entries and walkways, the summary table does not indicate average, maximum, and minimum illumination levels for these features. This information is needed in order to determine compliance with the applicable lighting standards of Sec. 5.5.2. Building entries are limited to 5.0 footcandle average, and walkways are limited to 0.5 footcandle average with no point to exceed 2.0 footcandles.

*(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design*

The site plans depict a trash/recycling/compost area behind the building to be screened with 6' tall slatted wooden fencing. No electrical transformer box is evident on the site plans. It must be depicted and located behind the building or screened. All new utility lines must be buried.

**Part 3, Architectural Design Standards**

**Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards**

*(a) Relate development to its environment*

*1. Massing, Height, and Scale*

The proposed building contains 13,450 sf GFA with a 9,000 sf footprint. The massing of the structure is broken into distinct building components as required by this criterion. Varying roof forms and materials reinforce the perception of separate building components. Its height, as measured to the midpoint of the sloped roof, is within the 45' height limit in the ELM zone. Overall building scale fits within the context of the built environment. The newly constructed City Market next door is ~ 30,000 sf, while the remaining building on the subject site is 4,000 sf. Significantly larger commercial buildings exist to the north, while significantly smaller residential structures are to the east.

*2. Roofs and Rooflines*

As noted above, the proposed building incorporates multiple roof lines. The primary roof structure is a simple sloped shed roof. Other roof sections are flat or nearly so. These roof forms are common in the ELM zone. Part of the roof area will be activated with programmatic uses.

*3. Building Openings*

The primary building entrance is sheltered and oriented towards Briggs Street. It is also accessible from the parking area to the south. This primary entrance clearly reads as such. The fenestration is consistent with the angular, boxy appearance of the building. The function of the building's interior as a climbing center limits the placement and extent of fenestration. With that said, additional fenestration has been incorporated into the building's design since sketch plan review and is placed proportionately throughout.

*(b) Protection of important architectural resources*

This new construction will not affect existing historic buildings in the area. No building demolition is included in this application.

*(c) Protection of important public views*

See 6.2.2 (c) above.

*(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge*

The building is set close to the street and presents a clearly defined sheltered entrance easily accessible from the newly constructed sidewalk. The outdoor patio area and adjacent walkways further improve the perceived sense of invitation into the building. Ample street level glazing affords visual access into the building by patrons and passersby.

*(e) Quality of materials*

The building will be clad in metal siding. Texture and finish will vary to limit the monotony of a singular siding type. Aluminum frame windows will be installed throughout. Wooden accents will be incorporated into the entry canopy. The proposed materials are of acceptable quality and durability for this new construction.

*(f) Reduce energy utilization*

Inclusion of rooftop solar is being considered but not yet confirmed. Installation is encouraged. The new building must comply with the current energy efficiency requirements of the city and state.

*(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site*

Exterior signs are depicted on the elevation plans. Sign location and area appear to be acceptable. Exterior signage is handled by way of separate zoning permit in any event.

*(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design*

Mechanical equipment screening and ventilation have been incorporated into the building design. No exposed equipment is evident in the project design.

*(i) Make spaces safe and secure*

Entryways will be illuminated. Egress and fire safety standards will apply as administered through the offices of the fire marshal and of the building inspector.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Forward to the Development Review Board with the following conditions:

1. Responsibility for construction of the future sidewalk along the property's Briggs Street frontage shall be decided upon by the Department of Public Works.
2. Additional screening of the parking between the two driveways shall be provided.
3. The shading plan shall be clarified to include just acceptable shade trees that will provide shade to the parking areas.
4. The applicant shall consult with the city arborist as to the need for street trees along the property's Briggs Street frontage.

5. The photometric plan shall be revised to include the maximum, minimum, and average illumination levels for the walkways and building entries, subject to the applicable standards in Sec. 5.5.2.
6. Location of electrical transformer box(es) shall be depicted and located behind the building or sufficiently screened. All utility lines shall be buried.
7. Installation of rooftop solar is encouraged.