

Ellicott Development calls retail path 'best possible situation' to spur plaza growth

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of the ground floor facing N 8th Street. Several site and landscape modifications were included in this plan approval directly related to the residential conversion of a commercial/retail building and to provide a more residential feel. This previously proposed residential conversion ultimately proved to be cost-prohibitive following continued construction cost increases and weak rental market performance. The ground floor conversion has since been on hold in anticipation of securing a commercial tenant for the space consistent with original plans.

"In recent months and consistent with the original approved development plans for 780 Center Street, which date back to 2016, we have successfully executed a retail tenant lease to occupy the entire ground floor of the building including enclosure of the initially constructed internal drive-thru lane for use as additional interior space.

"As proposed, the drive-thru infill area on the front elevation will be detailed to match the adjacent storefront sections on the ground floor, including matching aluminum-framed glazing and EIFS. As proposed, the infill area on the rear elevation will include EIFS infill and a roll-up panel door to accommodate tenant deliveries. The site area around 780 Center Street is proposed to remain as it currently exists and as was initially approved in December 2016 with some exceptions including continuation of the existing sidewalk including three additional parking spaces across the infilled drive-thru opening on the building's south elevation and embellishment of the existing landscape beds as the SW and SE corners of the building."



Ellicott Development intends to convert the street-level floor of building No. 3 within its Lewiston plaza to a retail space. The expected tenant is Ace Hardware.

Ellicott Development also intends to construct a gazebo on the plaza grounds.

This past Monday, Fox presented the current proposal for building No. 3 and addressed the Planning Board. He was joined by attorney Sean Hopkins, a partner with the law firm Hopkins Sorgi & McCarthy.

Fox said the upper floor of building No. 3 – 12 two-bedroom

residential units – is currently 100% occupied – but it was "a struggle." Based on fluctuating market conditions, "(Floor one) doesn't work, unfortunately, as that."

Conversely, he noted, "We generated a lot of interest" for retail within the plaza. "We've had over 30 sizable tenants, prospects, that we've worked on over the last four years."

Fox reminded the board a 2016 plaza plan anticipated a Rite Aid – with a drive-thru – leasing the majority of building No. 3's first floor.

He said the cost to convert the ground floor into residential units

is "astronomical."

"It wasn't our main preference to go for residential here; in a condition like this, it's more expensive to build, the rental rates are lower, so it's a greater challenge and stress on the debt and the property," Fox said.

"It was always the intent for that to be commercial," Hopkins added.

Fox said, "We're working with two or three good prospects for vacant spaces in the front building. Obviously, getting that back-acre tenant is important, driving that traffic through to help with those tenants and fill those spaces up, as well. So, this is a critical

piece to finally bring everything to closure here – the active site that we hoped to have six or seven years ago."

He added, "This is the best possible situation."

Haight pointed out several items within the development plan that he said need clarification and/or improvement, including:

•**Parking:** A variance permitted the plaza to have 187 parking spaces – 108 9-by-18, and 79 9-by-20-spaces. Haight said there are 123 of the former and 70 of the latter.

•**Sidewalks:** Haight said there needs to be a connection from building No. 3 to the Onondaga Street sidewalk.

•**Truck deliveries:** Haight called for a traffic/route map, with expected times and quantities.

•**Landscaping:** Haight said some plantings shown on the drawings are not in place, and the plantings that do exist need better oversight. He also requested landscaping along the plaza's Onondaga Street side.

•**Stormwater:** Haight asked for a maintenance plan.

Haight suggested the proposal go back to the Historic Preservation Commission for elevation and exterior review.

A request was made to have Ellicott Development send its plan to the village for community review at least one week before the public hearing.

With regard to what happens after the public hearing, Haight noted the proposal will go to the Village Board for a final vote.

"If it is, in fact, a hardware store, the zoning code itself has in there that the hardware store is an allowed use," he said. "That's what the code says. We (Planning Board) look at the code."

IN THE NEWS

Village of Lewiston water bill reminder

Last week Wednesday, the Village of Lewiston shared the following information regarding water bills:

Water bill notice

The village has received reports that some residents have not yet received their July water bills due to a mailing delay.

We have contacted the U.S. Postal Service, but they are unable to provide an estimated delivery date at this time.

If you have not received your

water bill, please contact the Village Clerk's Office by phone at 716-754-8271 or by emailing treasurer@villageoflewiston.com, and we will gladly print a replacement copy for you.

To ensure residents are not penalized because of this mailing delay, all late payment penalties will be waived through July 31.

We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate your patience while this issue is resolved.

LEGAL NOTICE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at 6:30 PM

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the following public hearings will be held before the Zoning Board of Appeals:

-On the advisability of providing recommendations to the Village Board of Trustees on the special use permit application submitted by Nicole Ferrari to permit a dog grooming business in her residential detached garage located at 360 N. 2nd Street, Lewiston, NY 14092 SBL #101.06-3-51.2. This property is zoned R-1A,

Residential, Single Family, Medium Density.

-On the advisability of granting appeal to Sec. 8 – Zoning Schedule; to Madalene Zucco who is requesting a 10-foot rear setback variance from the required 20-foot setback to allow a 7-foot rear setback (this is an undersized lot and the rear of the house is only 17ft off of the rear property line), a 13'1" front setback variance from the required 20-foot setback to allow a 5'4&1/16" setback and an area variance of 19% from the required 30% to allow a total

area coverage of 49%; for a proposed addition to the primary structure in the rear and an extension on the front porch at 345 S 3rd Street, Lewiston, NY 14092, SBL #101.14-1-30.1. This property is zoned R-1A, Residential, Single Family Medium Density. The meeting will take place on Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Village Board Room, located at 145 N. 4th Street, Lewiston, NY 14092. All persons interested in this matter may attend the meeting and be heard.

Thank you,
Donna Cassick
Deputy Clerk
Tribune/Sentinel
July 17, 2026

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