VENEZIANO & ASSOCIATES 84 Business Park Drive Suite 200 Armonk, New York 10504 (914) 273-1300

September 15, 2023

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Joseph Monticelli, Chair North Castle Zoning Board of Appeals 15 Bedford Road Armonk, NY 10504

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TOWN OF NORTH CASTLE Re: 23 Bedford Banksville Road Variance Application

Honorable Chair and Members of the Board:

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This letter is submitted to your Board (ZBA) on behalf of the owner, Greenwich Realty Group LLC (Owner/Applicant) with respect to property located at 23 Bedford Banksville Road (the Property). The Owner seeks to redevelop the Property to include a 68,000 s.f. self-storage facility of three stories, with a height of 30 feet. That re-development will require a story variance adding a third story while maintaining the permitted 30' height. It is for that purpose that this application is submitted. The Owner has retained this firm, as well as DTS Provident Design Engineering, LLP, and Edgewater Architects as the project team.

As this Board is aware, the Town Law sets forth a balancing test with some specific factors to consider in reviewing an area variance. These factors will be discussed in turn below and addressed with particularity. At the outset, some general salient points as to the balancing test will put the requested variance in context. In balancing the benefits to the Owner against the impacts to the area, the benefits are apparent:

- (i) Reclamation of a deteriorated site and the replacement of an ancillary outdated building;
- (ii) Reclamation and protection of DEC wetlands and wetland buffer;
- (iii) Commencement of a permitted use under an authorized site plan;
- (iv) The addition of a useful warehouse for Town residents; and,
- (v) Increased tax revenue.

With respect to impacts, they will be hardly noticeable, and in many respects, positive, as follows:

- (i) The siting of the proposed building is ideal for the use. The building will be approximately 325 feet from Bedford Banksville Road. There are mature trees located within the first 40 or 50 feet of the road which will further hinder the view of this building;
- (ii) The Property located immediately to the north is a commercial site. It is used as a prior non-conforming construction yard, a junkyard and also creates fill for sale in the rear;
- (iii) We have been cleaning up our site and reclaiming it for over a year, having evicted five tenants, removed 30 to 40 feet of a fill pile to the rear, and are currently removing the balance of the soils. The removal of the operation, a previously permitted non-conforming use, results in the removal of noise and dust from the area;
- (iv) There is minimal traffic associated with a self-storage building. DTS Provident shall testify that there is minimal traffic associated with this proposed use; and,
- (v) The self-storage use creates minimal water demand and, on a site with very limited septic capacity, generates negligible sewage flows.

II. THE PROPERTY & PROPOSED USE

The Owner seeks to redevelop the Property to include a 68,000 s.f. self-storage facility of three stories, with a height of 30 feet (Project). The zone permits two stories. This use is in addition to the existing 15,500 s.f. building currently on site.

The former use and deterioration of the site accumulated over the years, since the 1950's, by the previous owner. The Applicant has struggled to work through improving the original building and eliminating undesirable uses at its own great expense. The Applicant now proposes a use that requires minimal use of water or septic, generates no school children, results in a mitigation plan for the wetlands, and generates additional Town and County taxes.

The site is 10.816 acres in size. Part of the Property is in the CB-B zoning district, and part of it is in the GB zoning district. There is an existing +/-15,500 s.f. building on the Property (Existing Building), which has undergone upgrades to the exterior. There had been substantial fill on the Property for decades, accumulated and regenerated by the previous owner, as well as storage of equipment, most of which has been removed since. The Applicant took ownership of the site in 2022. It has long been serviced by a septic field located inside of the DEC wetland. Discussions with Westchester County Department of Health have indicated to DTS Provident Design Engineering that the use of the septic facility will be limited to 20 employees.

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III. PRESENT POSTURE & ZONING

The Planning Board is presently processing a site plan application for the Project. A copy of the current Site Plan is submitted in support of this Application. The Conservation Board has also approved a prior wetlands mitigation plan now that the rear has been cleaned up by the Applicant. We will appear before the Conservation Board and secure its input on this proposal.

The proposed use is a permitted use in the GB Zoning District and the Project conforms to the zoning in all respects except as to stories, as is elaborated upon immediately below. Under the Property's zoning, height is limited to 30 feet and two stories.

IV. DISCUSSION OF VARIANCE

A. Variance Requested: As set forth above, the Project proposes a height of 30 feet and three stories. Thus, an area variance of one story is required to accommodate the proposed height.

Four important overarching factors should be noted in connection with the ZBA's consideration of the variance:

- (i) With respect to the Project's location, the self-storage building is not visible to a residential site, hardly visible from Bedford Banksville Road. The proposed building maintains the 30 foot permitted height.
- (ii) The floor area ratio for the Property of 0.23 would allow more square footage than we are proposing in this application;
- (iii) The proposed use is a permitted use under the zoning and an improvement to both the Property and the surrounding properties; and,
- (iv) There is almost zero additional impacts associated with the additional floor area permitted with this use (traffic, water supply, septic treatment).

The Project thus conforms to zoning in all respects except as to the story variance requested.

From the impact perspective, the variance has very little impact on the area, does not impact neighbors and it is submitted is not substantial. We can easily accommodate a third floor within the 30-foot height.

B. Legal Standard: Town Law Section 267(1)(b) sets forth the standard to be applied in considering an area variance, as follows:

[T]he zoning board of appeals shall take into consideration the benefit to the applicant if the variance is granted, as weighed against the detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or community by such grant. In making such determination the board shall also consider:

(1) whether an undesirable change will be produced in the character of the neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties will be created by the granting of the area variance;

(2) whether the benefit sought by the applicant can be achieved by some method, feasible for the applicant to pursue, other than an area variance;

(3) whether the requested area variance is substantial;

(4) whether the proposed variance will have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood or district; and

(5) whether the alleged difficulty was self-created, which consideration shall be relevant to the decision of the board of appeals, but shall not necessarily preclude the granting of the area variance.

(c) The board of appeals, in the granting of area variances, shall grant the minimum variance that it shall deem necessary and adequate and at the same time preserve and protect the character of the neighborhood and the health, safety and welfare of the community.

We submit that the applicant's proposal amply supports the granting of the area variance under this standard. There are obvious benefits to the owner of the property who has sought to redevelop the Property, but those benefits accrue to the Town of North Castle as well. The Owner has reclaimed the front existing building, evicted 5 tenants on consent in the rear of site, eliminated noxious uses, demolished a condemned building, and is in the process of eliminating the numerous "storage" trailers on the site. A substantially improved and engineered site plan will, among other things, improve future site drainage and result in a new, state-of-the-art building serving Town residents' storage needs, all while hardly impacting the area.

C. Supporting Factors: Below the standards for granting an area variance are set forth, followed by a narrative explanation of the manner in which the application meets those standards.

[T]he zoning board of appeals shall take into consideration the benefit to the applicant if the variance is granted, as weighed against the detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or community by such grant.

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The benefit to the Applicant if the variance is granted will be to allow the continued successful re-development of the Property. The proposal would have less than the allowable F.A.R. and would result in a new, high quality, Code compliant building. The use would benefit Town residents. The site has been severely impacted since the 1950's, such that redevelopment is a challenge, and the proposed use, which is a conforming use, is needed in the Town and will have very low environmental impacts. There is no nearby residential development which will be impacted by the re-development. The proposed use is in keeping with the commercial nature of the location. The condition and aesthetic value of the site will be greatly improved. And increased tax revenue will be generated for the Town with no greater drain on Town services or resources.

The resultant building will be no higher than a permitted building: 30 feet. Therefore, zero additional visual impact.

(1) whether an undesirable change will be produced in the character of the neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties will be created by the granting of the area variance:

It is submitted that the proposed Project will not have an undesirable effect on the character of the neighborhood. It will upgrade the area. The character of the neighborhood is commercial/industrial and, according to zoning, should be developed commercially. The proposal is to re-develop a long-blighted property in conformance with the character of the "neighborhood" and the district.

To date, the Owner has removed substantial fill and equipment storage from the site. In fact, when completed, the Project will have a desirable impact on the neighborhood character and the Town's local tax revenues; it will represent a substantial improvement. The Owner will be reclaiming a site which has long been in disarray, and replacing an outdated building with a brand new, modern storage facility which will be an amenity to Town residents.

The building exterior has been upgraded recently and is being maintained by the owner, and a building of approximately 2,000 s.f. has been demolished where the new one will be erected. The area in the rear of the site has been reclaimed and nuisances have been eliminated. Approximately 12 of the 18-wheeler trucks that were used by the former tenants, mostly for storage, have also been legally removed. The property immediately to the north is utilized as a construction yard for a fill operation, stores "junk," and operates essentially as an industrial use generating and transporting fill. At a substantial scale, the site is approximately 3.7 acres.

There will be no adverse visual impacts, as both the quality of the re-developed building and the overall site planning will be an improvement. The proposed warehouse use can only improve this area.

September 15, 2023 Page 6 The granting of the requested variance will improve the character of the neighborhood, make it consistent with the primary use on this site and create a state-of-the-art self-storage facility for the Banksville area in the Town of North Castle.

(2) whether the benefit sought by the applicant can be achieved by some method, feasible for the applicant to pursue, other than an area variance:

The Property was acquired in a substantially worse, and non-Code compliant, condition in 2022. The use proposed is a very low-impact use for such a site in comparison to both its past uses and its potential alternate development under the present zoning. The septic limitation guides the uses on this site.

(3) whether the requested area variance is substantial.

The height limitation of two stories and thirty feet would allow approximately 44,000 ft.² of development. The additional floor proposed is internal to the building and generates virtually no perceptible increase in impacts to the community. The proposed three stories are insubstantial when weighed against the benefits to both the Applicant and the Town. The Property and the proposed new building are situated in such a way that the additional height will hardly be perceptible. The eastern wall of the building will be set back 325 feet from Bedford Banksville Road.

(4) whether the proposed variance will have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood or district:

Since the operations of the self-storage facility will be activated by the tenants, it requires negligible employee traffic and parking, and will generate only nominal vehicle trips during the day, which will be either passenger vehicles or moving vans/trucks, and slightly more on weekends during non-peak times. Traffic will be minimal, noise will be reduced, the wetlands will be permanently protected by a mitigation plan, the uses on-site will be conforming to zoning, the new building will conform to State and Town Building Codes, and taxes will be generated without concomitant impacts on municipal services or the schools. An aerial photograph will be presented that makes clear that the site is virtually undeveloped in the rear and is dominated by a DEC wetland buffer.

(5) whether the alleged difficulty was self-created, which consideration shall be relevant to the decision of the board of appeals, but shall not necessarily preclude the granting of the area variance:

The Property was acquired in a substantially worse, and non-Code compliant, state in 2022, subject to the current zoning as discussed above. The Owner has cleaned up the site, removed a 40-foot-high mound of fill and eliminated an active fill operation, and remedied many of

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the Code violations. The proposed Project would result in an entirely Code compliant building and site.

The former use and deterioration of the site accumulated over the years, since the 1950's, by the previous owner. The applicant has struggled to work through reclaiming the site, upgrading the existing building, and eliminating undesirable uses at its own expense. The Applicant now proposes a use that requires very limited water or septic treatment, generates no school children, results in a mitigation plan for the wetlands, and generates additional Town and County taxes.

V. SUMMARY

In summary, the overall benefits to both the Applicant and the Town far outweigh any conceivable negative impact, and most of the tangible impacts are positive. These considerations may be summarized as follows:

POSITIVE ELEMENTS OF USE	POSITIVE IMPACTS OF PROPOSED PLAN
Increased tax revenue.	Modern building under Code-compliant plans.
Reclamation of a deteriorated site and the replacement of an outdated building.	The Applicant removed a +/-35 foot-high pile of fill and are remaining soils.
The removal of a non-conforming use results in the removal of a noise and dust nuisance from the area.	Commencement of a permitted use under an authorized site plan.
Virtually zero traffic associated with the self-storage use.	DTS Provident suggests 5 to 7 trips.
This use improves the "neighborhood."	The Property located immediately to the north is used as a construction yard, a junkyard and fill operation.
The addition of a useful amenity for Town residents.	The self-storage use creates negligible water and septic demand.
	Brings area more in conformity with current zoning and Town Comprehensive Plan.

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VI. REQUESTED RELIEF

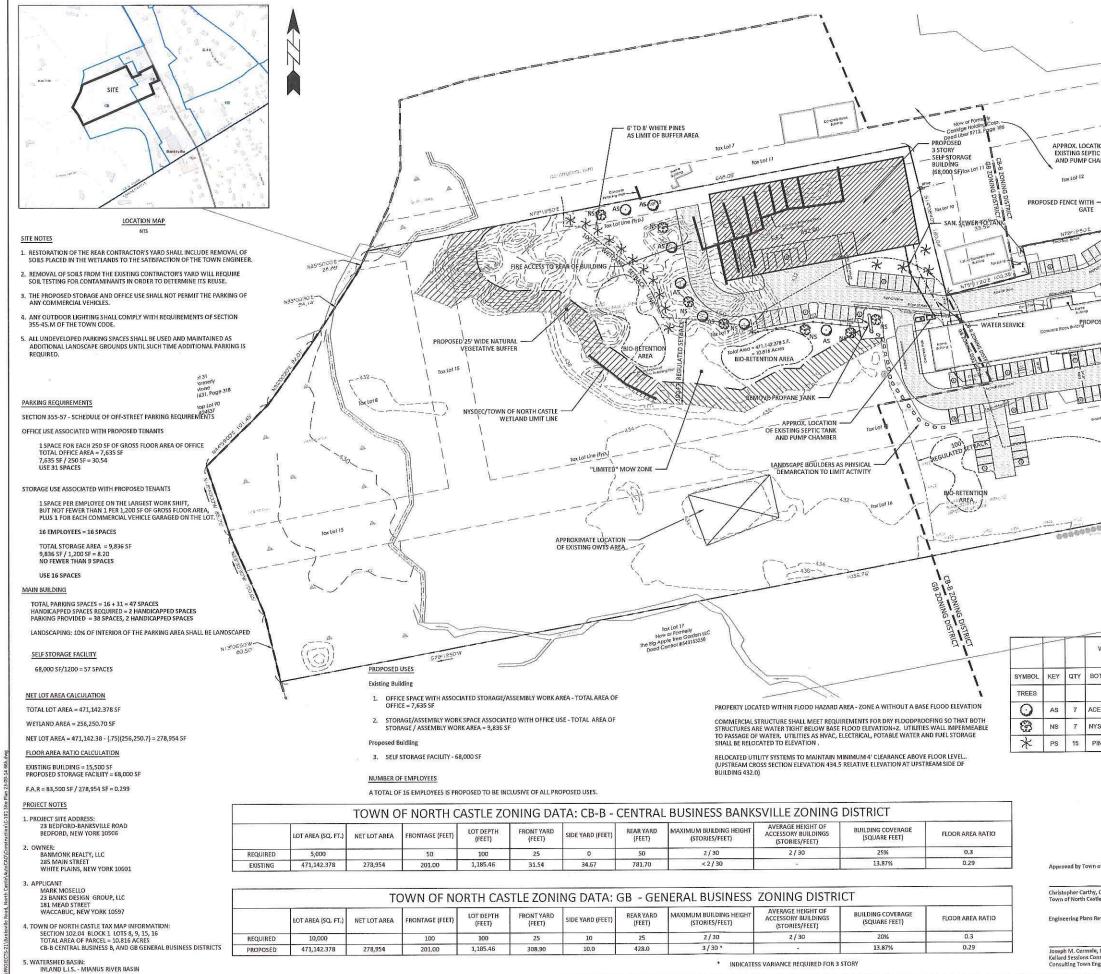
Attached hereto is a completed Variance Application form, and the required application fees have been delivered under separate cover by my office. The Applicant respectfully requests that this matter be placed on your next agenda, October 5, 2023, and that the requested area variance be granted.

Very truly yours,

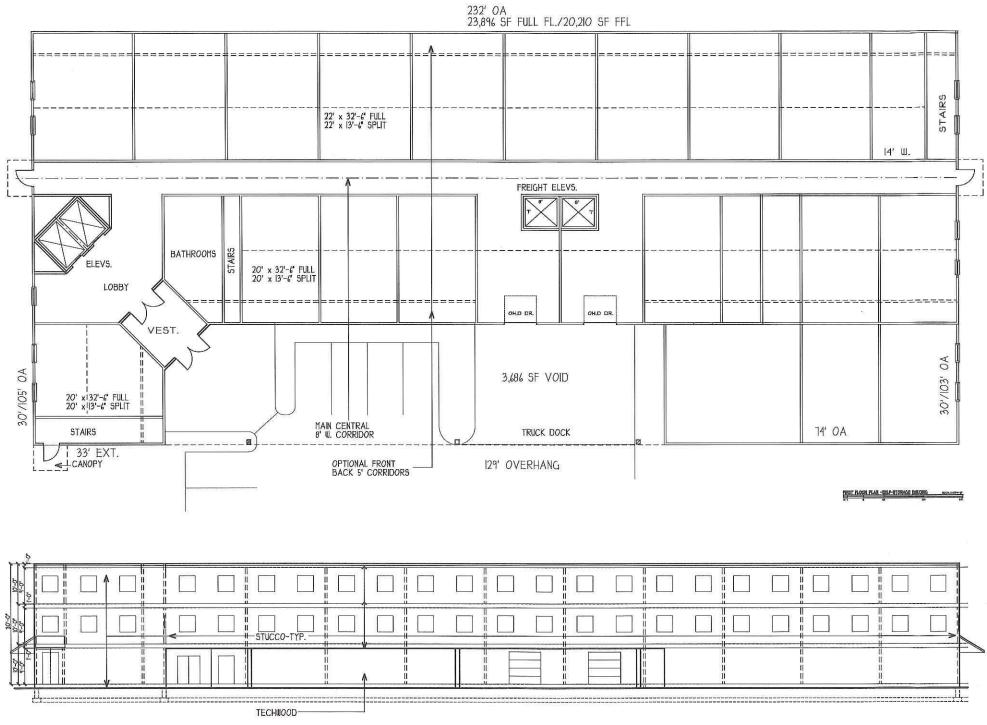
Anthony F. Veneziano, Jr.

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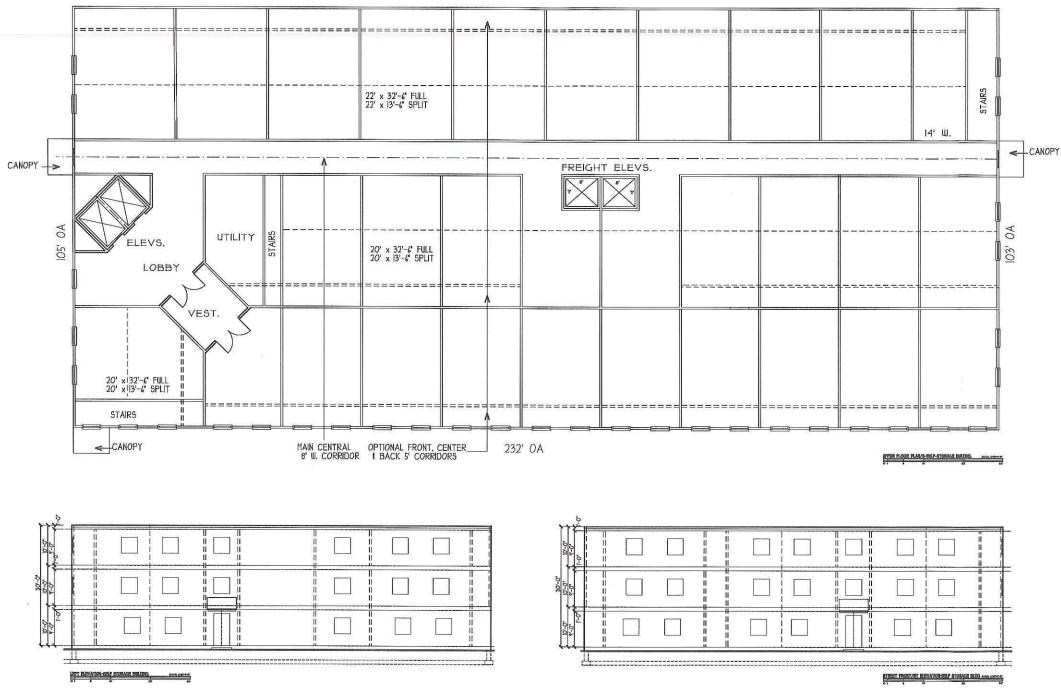
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