



Planning Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM
City Council Chamber Second floor, 149 Main Street,
Watertown, MA, 02472

Agenda

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, the meeting and public hearing will be conducted with remote opportunities for participation. In-person and remote participation and access methods include:

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. This meeting will be held on **September 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM**. Location: City Council Chamber Second floor, 149 Main Street, Watertown, MA, 02472
 - B. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): <http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch-now?site=3>
 - C. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/92709029148>
 - D. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 927 0902 9148
 - E. Public may comment through email: pb@watertown-ma.gov
 - F. Please Visit the Planning Board Website here: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/226/Planning-Board>
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1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- A. Minutes 5/8/2024
- B. Minutes 8/14/2024 Meeting

2. CONTINUED CASE

- A. **6 & 12 Church Hill St-** *Request to be continued to the October 9 regularly scheduled Meeting*
 - i. 6 Church Hill St-William T. Conti requests a Special Permit for the construction of a new three-family dwelling (existing 2266 sq feet lot expanded to 2797 sq ft). The project would include demolition of an existing single family structure. Central Business (CB) Zoning District. [See link](#)
 - ii. 12 Church Hill St- The owner, Brianna LLC, through its manager, William T Conti, requests a Special Permit for the construction of a new three-family dwelling (existing 3373 sq lot decreased to 2840 sq ft). The project would include the demolition of an existing two-family structure. Central Business (CB) Zoning District. [See link](#)

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: May 8, 2024 PLACE: City Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Hearing

PRESENT: Janet Buck, Chair; Abigail Hammett; Rachael Sack; Payson Whitney; Jason Cohen
Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner; Larry Field,
Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Abigail Hammett motioned to approve Minutes of 3/14/2024 meeting.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

Payson Whitney abstained

CASES PENDING

10-30 Manley Way

Michael Baldwin, SEYON, industrial real estate, many uses over the years, part of Raytheon. We have worked on this project over 2 years, we had several community meetings. Property is located along Pleasant Street corridor, south of Walkers Pond. City is now working on Walker's Pond, it has been vacant since 1921. The goal is to get tenants to improve the property.

Kevin Deabler, RODE Architects, we are proposing full transformation.

Brian McCarthy, Vice President, RJO'Connell&Associates, we have worked with the Planning staff & DPW over the past 6 months. There have been many design challenges, the width of the entry will be reduced, pedestrian connection will be added, sidewalk widen, connection to the Walker Pond, all benefitting the public. Additional signage will be added, drainage and utilities updated, existing sewer service for the existing building replaced. Adjustment in the future, we will be flexible, 10' wide easement in the back of the property.

Scott Thorton, Traffic Engineer, standard traffic study was prepared. Previously the site was used as a warehouse for Target and Raytheon. We have received input from the staff, left turn out of the site is prohibited. The proposed use will generate the same amount of traffic as the existing use.

Michael D'Angelo, Landscape Architect, our goal is to reduce impervious finishes, new plantings will be improved, we are proposing to get rid of some parking spaces and add green space for employees to gather. 4 foot high fence will be added to prevent BJ's trash on our property. On easter side pathway to Walher Pond is proposed. Plants added will withstand the harsh climate, low level lighting will be placed.

Kevin Deabler, new materials with texture are proposed, it will become a building for humans, accessible walkways, textures added to the building as well. We will encourage different types of transportation, all will be compliant with Watertown ordinances, solar panels will be added. Community provided input, we will reduce impervious surface.

Janet Buck, the Board has received detailed plans, but the audience needs explanation.

Brian McCarthy, trash will be kept inside of the building until pick up. Snow storage along the western part of the parking lot. Existing tree will be replaced, walking path to Walker Pond is 3' on our property, 5' on Repton property.

Gideon Schreiber, staff is in support of the petition, recommends conditional approval. It now requires approval from the Conservation Commission. The site will be less heavy industrial. City has an easement that will make it easier to use for pedestrian access, focus on the community. Flexibility with truck moving, shared vehicular driveway point. Creating a place for people, pedestrian access point, building and property will be significantly improved, future light industry. Conditions provide flexibility. New control plans provided, staff recommends previous conditions, in support of transportation aspect, improving entire system. We are suggesting that the Board approve the petition.

Jessica Grimsby, we are trying to get better understanding of the property next to the Walker Pond., is there a space between the two properties?

Gideon Schreiber, we walked to the site with Trees for Watertown, some of the trees will be removed, other landscape will be enhanced. Invasive trees will be removed, cluster of unhealthy replaced with new ones.

Janet Buck, we have seen the slides, if the public wants to see our packets, it is on the website.

Elodia Thomas, this is a simple elegant building, proposed landscape will enhance the site. CPC provided money toward the Walker Pnd study, how will this proposal affect the study?

Brian McCarthy, discharge to Walker Pond will remain but significantly reduced. We will be in compliance, new treatment system will be provided.

Gideon Schreiber, water quality will improve in Walker Pond.

Janet Buck, it will allow improved runoff to the river.

Jason Cohen, doe it include re-roofing that discharges more pollutant?

Brian McCarthy, we will repair larger portion of the roof.

Liby Shaw, this project looks very good, we walked along the community path, trees that provide shade along the pathway should be added. People are concerned with the construction, that is bad news for wild life, company should not use poisonous materials. Hopeful that the new tenant will be interested in climate change.

Gideon Schreiber, the petitioner will have to coordinate with health department.

Linda Scott, I will echo what other people are saying. Historically HVAC create lot of noise. Will there be standard conditions, will the new tenant be another bio lab?

Janet Buck, we do not know who the tenants will be.

Gideon Schreiber, we have conditions that would address these questions.

Joan Gumbleton, we appreciate the responses to our questions. You always want to make sure that the roof is in good condition. Once the pond is in good condition it can be a good condition for kids and dumping, we need security for the area.

Gideon Schreiber, the petitioner is responsible for the building, the City for the Walker Pond. We will have additional conversations with the applicant.

Elodia Thomas, is the parking limited on Walker Pond, can people use the parking at Manley Way?

Janet Buck, the parking at Manley is for the tenants, they need to speak to them.

Payson Whitney, condition #10 in the staff report should be deleted. #16 a roof top removed, all exterior lighting should be fully shielded.

Abigail Hammett, screening needs to be provided, truck turnaround depends on the design of the pond. Additional planting is suggested. Traffic patterns have changed a lot.

Gideon Schreiber, screening will be needed, flexibility is important.

Jason Cohen, this petition is well designed, great improvement to the site, it is a nice addition to Pleasant Street. City owns the Walker Pond, there are 2 other property owners, it is difficult to visualize. Will the path work? Do we want the petitioner to design the pathway?

Gideon Schreiber, some areas need to be graded. Yes we want them to design the path, there is not a choice where it will go. The City still has the final approval for materials, etc. The petitioner agreed to design and build a very nice pathway.

Johanna Scheider, we did a market study, we are trying to get max flexibility. Other companies do not have the right equipment.

Payson Whitney raised questions about Conditions 10A (building foundation as built), 16A (lighting) and 18 (easements); all three are discussed further below.

Abigail Hammett, I would like to ensure that there be screening of the turnaround area. The applicable condition could be phrased to both ensure screening and allow flexibility as the Walker Pond plans are developed. I want to encourage the Petitioner to locate mechanical systems farther away from Repton and to provide more varied landscaping at the main entrance.

Jason Cohen praised the building design and wanted further details about the Pleasant St/Walker Pond connection. He also asked about the need for WB-67 trucks.

Before the roll-call vote, Board members agreed that minor changes to the conditions would be made by staff, deleting Condition 10A, changing "will" to "shall" in Condition 18, and inserting "and mutually acceptable screening" in the second to last sentence in Condition 18B. The conditions in this Decision include these changes. In addition, staff agreed to look at Condition 16A to determine if its intent to minimize the impact of rooftop emergency lighting could be made clearer and this decision contains more precise wording.

Payson Whitney motioned to approve the petition for Special Permit with Site Plan Review under Sections 5.01.5 (a,b,&e) Light Industry,office,lab&R&D/non nuisance manufacturing – conversion greater than 4,000 s.f. and Section 5.16 Pleasant Street Corridor District, in accordance with Section 9.03-9.05 based upon the finding that it meets criteria under §9.03 and §9.05 set forth in the staff report.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

OTHER

Planning Board Rules of Practice & Procedure

A discussion and possible consideration to adopt a new and complete copy of the rules and regulations per the City Code. Title III Subchapter 1 Section 31.02 Rules & regulations, to be filed with the City Clerk.

Larry Field, two board members responded and changes have been incorporated into the draft document.

Discussion regarding the Rules followed. Board wants to make sure that people are being heard. Staff is available to answer any questions. We will designate one member to take questions and answer at the end.

Gideon Schreiber, changes to the document can be accepted. We will incorporate comments and then provide updated document. The final document will be stamped by the City Clerk.

Larry Field, Rules are supposed to be Watertown specific with the most discretion. The rest will be referred to other authorities

Abigail Hammett, should something be included regarding the alternate members?

Payson Whitney, we should provide cut off time for applicant. Applicant is not allowed to bring updated drawings at the time of the hearing.

Janet Buck adjourned the meeting at 10:05 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:05 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

0814 WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: August 14, 2024 PLACE: City Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Hearing

PRESENT: Janet Buck, Chair; Payson Whitney; Rachael Sack; Abigail Hammett; Jason Cohen
(Remote)
Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Board; Gideon Schreiber; Larry Field

Gideon Schreiber, tonight we have 4 members in person and 1, Jason Cohen, is remote.

CASES PENDING

6 & 12-14 Church Hill Street

Ken Leitner, Atty, the property consists of two abutting lots, approximately 6,000 s.f.. The site is not visible from Main Street. The petitioner is proposing to build two 3-unit building with 1 parking space under for each unit. The property is located in CB zone, apartments can be build as long as first floor has commercial use. This proposal is appropriate for the area, surrounding uses are more dense, this will improve the neighborhood. The proposed parking is underneath and there will be access to the roof.

Fergal Brennock, Engineer, both buildings are very similar and are the best uses for the site. There are no sidewalks because of the space constrain. The existing utility pole can be relocated to more appropriate location. The proposal has not been approved by DPW, the petition was submitted in June, there are strict guidelines.

Ken Leitner, we have provided 3 parking spaces as requested by the staff, cars can easily pull in and out of the parking area. There is sufficient parking on the street. The garage area is open. Each unit has 3 bedrooms. Second level has access 2 units, third floor consists of 3 bedroom unit. 6 Church Hill structure is little small er. The buildings are located 15-16 feet behind the Main Street buildings, this is a very tight neighborhood.

Janet Buck, it is very difficult to follow the submitted plans to see where the structures are. It would be easier to see elevations to see how the proposed structures relate to the existing buildings.

Larry Field, staff did not make recommendations in the staff report. The proposal has been discussed for the last 2 years. This is a very tight neighborhood without sidewalks. The proposed petition meets the zoning requirements, one parking space has been removed. The petitioner is asking the Planning Board to make comments/recommendations. This project will have impact on 128 Mai Street, set of retaining walls, it has not been fully addressed yet. Underground utilities are proposed but confirmation is needed from National Grid.. Final approval and comments regarding storm water from DPW have not been yet received. The petitioner has not submitted robust landscape plan. Planning Board is recommending board to Zoning Board of Appeals, they provide comments to the petitioner to be addressed at the next meeting. The final is to deny and let them continue to the ZBA.

Chairman Janet Buck opened the hearing to public comments.

Joe Post, 13 Church Hill St, I am concerned with the aesthetics. The neighborhood style is townhouses, these would have vertical faceless façade. Both structures are very high, we use our balconies, the new buildings will tower over us. They will be very close to our houses. We have little gardens, the height will prohibit the growth.

Chuck, 21 Church Lane, is it possible for Planning Board to request more visual plans to show the new buildings in relation to the existing buildings? Lots of trees and vegetation will be lost.

Michele Froc, 19 Church Hill St, I have lived here for 14 years. I want to preserve this neighborhood. The narrow street is busy with pedestrians. I am concerned with the height of the buildings.

Mary Nygren, 15 Church Lane, one of the walls will be right at the road. This is not an attractive plan, it does not fit the neighborhood which is all residential. The open garages are dangerous for pedestrians. This is not acceptable use.

Marla Feldman, 11 Church Hill St, I have lived here for 11 years, leaving Church Hill Street is very difficult, there are blind spots. It will be hard for 2 cars to fit, the structures are too big for one lot.

Mary Nygren, 15 Church Lane, this is a nice neighborhood, not just a street. The building application is for 5 spaces ? The owners of 6 & 12 Church Hill Street have not kept the property up. There are many errors in the application. Plans show 6 existing trees, there are 14. Total of 4 parking spaces. There is first floor commercial requirement in CB zone. I am viewing the application and plans as a layman. I am concerned that it was not properly submitted. More review is needed, all conditions of Sec 9.05 have to be approved. 4 townhouses at 7-13 Church Hill are in compliance. This is too large and not appropriate for this site. It will adversely affect the neighborhood. They did not keep up the properties for 20 years. This petition will create buildings that are not appropriate.

Libby Shaw, Eat Watertown, there are cluster of trees on the property, many are significant, 8 inches in diameter. Trees are for public good and should be preserved. Watertown needs a tree ordinance.

Len Holt, owner of 128-138 Main Street, we have met with the developer in June. This is a flat building, I am concerned with water and the retaining wall. Car lights need to be turned down, they are proposing 6 units, rules need to be followed.

Jessica Grimsby, 41R Prospect St, I feel for the people who live in the area. I advocate for sustainable Watertown. I was in the area this morning, there are many trees on the site that would be destroyed. The property is right in the heart of Watertown Square. Planning Board should consider how this would affect everyone. Trees are important, they are natures cooling system, it is important to keep this little pocket of trees.

Larry Field, affordable housing requirement is part of the conditions. Townhouses are currently not allowed in the CB zone. Parking spaces have change from 12 to 6. Storm water report was not included in the package.

Payson Whitney, this application is very difficult to understand. Plans are not showing context to the neighborhood, how do the buildings relate to the existing buildings. Application has not been included? The garage is open to potential intruders, it will be hard to coordinate with other homeowners. The existing building was done in 1860, is there any historic value?

Larry Field, demolition application will have to be filed, the petitioner wants to wait until they receive approval from ZBA.

Payson Whitney, they are nice buildings, why they cannot be restored/renovated? The new design does not fit the neighborhood.

Abigail Hammett, we believe that the townhouses across the street are better, but they are not allowed as per the Zoning Ordinance. The new design should be different, trees should be preserved. People own this land and have the right to develop the property. It is in the center of the City, I am not opposed to add more units but we need to be sensitive to the neighborhood. There are no sidewalks. There are some sloppy parts of the package, more visual plans are needed, the garage should be closed.

Rachael Sack, open garage is not feasible, it needs to be protected from animals, etc. Could the parking be reconfigured? We are adding more cars, can no left turn onto Main Street be added ?

Gideon Schreiber, if there is concern from the neighborhood, Traffic Commission is the appropriate authority to make the change.

Jason Cohen, all concerns have been covered with my fellow Board members and public. I am struggling to understand the plans. Buildings are 20 feet apart, almost identical. We need to see how they affect the neighborhood. Some changes can be made based on tonight's comments. The plot plan is ineligible, very confusing. Lot of information has to be changed, it is a very dense neighborhood.

Abigail Hammett, if the petition is continued tonight, the petitioner has to hire landscape architect.

Jason Cohen, it is important that an architect attends next meeting to answer our questions.

Attorney Ken Leitner asked the Planning Board to continue the above petitions to the September 11, 2024 meeting.

Payson Whitney motioned to continue the petition for 6 Church Hill Street to the September 11, 2024 meeting.

Abigail Hammett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 Roll-Call/In Favor

Payson Whitney motioned to continue the petition for 12 Church Hill Street to the September 11, 2024 meeting.

Abigail Hammett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 Roll-Call/In Favor

Janet Buck adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:00 PM

MINUTES APPROVED: _____