

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 Pond 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, does it include re-roofing that discharges more pollutant?

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

Libby 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: _____