

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: December 14, 2016 PLACE: Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman, Gary Shaw; Jeff Brown, Janet Buck, Fergal Brennock
Steve Magoon, Director/Assistant Town Manager; Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the
Planning Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of the 10/20/16 & 11/16/16 meetings.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

CASES PENDING

- **100 Warren Street;** Celico Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless – Telecommunications Variance & Special Permit

Victor Manougian, Atty, this is a request for TCA use variance and special permit. The project started 3 years ago when the petitioner responded to RFP issued by the Watertown Housing Authority (WHA). Verizon is proposing to install 12 panel antennas behind 4 sided wireless screen wall, all located on existing wall and completely camouflaged. Brian Costello, Director of WHA, has no problem with installing a generator on the roof, which will be used for emergency only. WHA will be beneficiary of monthly payments from Verizon.

Gideon Schreiber, applicant requests SP for installation of 12 panels antennas on the roof of the existing building. The proposal includes a natural gas fired generator and battery cabinet. The equipment will be fully concealed. The staff has suggested that the generator not be placed on the roof. A condition will be added that future users can use the equipment.

Victor Manougian, we are not allowed to place the generator on the ground. We are open to sharing the generator but every company wants their own.

Jeff Brown, the equipment has to be accessed 24/7 from the roof. How will it work if the roof is covered with ice and snow.

Kate, were all the residents notified, is there a limit how many companies can place the equipment on the same roof?

Gideon Schreiber, once one company gets approved, others can come. It depends on the owner of the property.

Jeff Brown motioned to remove conditions #11 & 11a from the staff report.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the TCA Use Variance Wireless Telecommunication Facility based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and conditions set forth in the staff report.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

- **485 & 615 Arsenal Street;** BP Arsenal Group LLC – Master Plan Special Permit

John Hawes, the first presentation of the above petition was done on October 20, 2016 without a staff report. Staff report and traffic report are ready tonight.

Bill McQuillan, Boylston Properties, few changes were made since the last meeting.

Jeff Heidelberg, Boylston Properties, the proposed connection to Greenough Boulevard has been removed as well as 30,000 s.f. of retail space.

Giles Hamm, Vanesse Associates, significant studies of the area have been completed, some are still ongoing. This is a very public process, we had several meetings with staff, DCR, neighborhood meetings, etc. Peer review by World Tech was done. 15% of the traffic will be captured within the site. Access to bicycle path along Arsenal Street. 477 bicycle spaces will be on the site as well as bicycle station. Potential hub way station is proposed. This is pedestrian friendly design. Major improvements are proposed, traffic signals will be modernized, signal timing optimized to provide signal coordination. Traffic movements will be enforced and left turn onto Arsenal Street not allowed.. We are still discussing traffic signals on Elm Street with Town. There is potential for traffic signal at Greenough Boulevard. We will try to reduce single occupancy vehicle use driving to the site by 20%. Residents will get one month MBTA pass, This is significant investment to the community.

Mark Eclipse, PCA, all ground floors of the buildings will be brick. Second floor theater has been removed, impact on Arsenal Street reduced. Cinema entrance has been moved from the front. Materials have been changed making the site more inviting. Some samples of the materials are shown tonight. Pedestrian oriented access and handicapped access is improved, Clapboard will be used on the interior.

Bill McQuillan, we have not talked specifically about this project's benefits to the Town. There will be 76 affordable residential units which will be the same as market units. Additional taxes from 1.4 to 1.95 million. This is a comprehensive plan project, we had continuous debates with the staff about the project costs. We need a 6.5% return which we do not have yet. It is difficult to understand traffic numbers. Watertown Square traffic is adding to delays, Greenough Boulevard is off the table for now. Additional delays from the Arlington/Coolidge intersection, seconds are added by the new projects. All the projects are bringing more traffic, otherwise the project will not work. This is a terrific project with FAR 1.1 in 2.1 zone. We are proposing demolition of 110,000 s.f. of bad buildings on the site. The entire site is incorporated into the design but we need progress. This project will provide 35 million contribution to the Town.

Gideon Schreiber, the site has a substantial amount of history, photos showing the site 1939 are shown, long history of being redeveloped. The site was vacant, 13 acres were identified in 1970 as mixed use project. Variances were given in the 1980 for signage to be visible from the Turnpike. Only variance still needed is 2001 Home Depot, others should be removed. Public comments were received at community meetings. Comprehensive Plan for the area adopted 6/20/15 is suggesting dramatic corridor. This project is in keeping with the Plan. This project has proposed connection of Watertown Greenway to Arsenal Park. Master Plan Special Permit under Section 5.18 – site is appropriate for mixed retail and residential use. The petitioner is proposing 503 residential units for the 15.1 acres site, excluding the Harvard Van Guard building. The proposal is in keeping with the requirements providing more open space per unit and enhancing quality of life. The petitioner is recognizing the historic assets of the site, enhancing the diversity, providing bike connector and taking measures to reduce automobile use. The total of open space will be 3.2 acres. The project meets overall intent of the RMUD. It will not have adverse impact on the neighborhood. Creating active streetscape and public amenities. The site has long industrial history, more mitigation improvements are proposed. Project will be approved in phases, additional improvements will be required. Town is reviewing offsite improvements that are subject to review by the Town. Detailed TDM program has been identified, will be corrected as needed. Necessary documents will be updated and finalized. Substantial review of utilities for the site, storm water review has been accepted. Final plans will be required, some work is conceptual until the structures are build. Landscaping is sufficient for now, each phase will require approval. New

environment will be created with first floor being retail. Additional screening will be provided and Master Plan implemented.

Bike connection will be provided, handicapped parking placed near building entrances. Sufficient number of short term parking spaces. Garages will be more efficient by using technology. Further study needed for pedestrian circulation on/off site, Documents received regarding off site mitigation. Adequate utilities will be provided on site. Will meet LEED certifiable requirements as outlined in US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Screening of equipment. Circulation works for Fire & Police access. Affordable Housing will be reviewed by the Housing Partnership. Staff recommends approval with conditions 1-27.

Steve Magoon, this step is for Master Plan approval, details of individual buildings will be provided at the next step.

John Hawes, the peer review is not available at this time, more information is needed. I am reluctant to leave issues to be discussed until next phase, we need information before. This is a work in progress. Board has to be confident that the numbers are correct.

Jeff Heidelberg, peer review has been done. The disagreements are in mitigation numbers.

Steve Magoon, the peer review is not final. Discussions are continuing between the applicant and peer reviewer who does not feel comfortable until mitigation is resolved. There is an agreement in numbers.

Bill McQuillan, we had lots of discussions with staff and DPW who is trying to get as much as possible. We have said no to providing new sidewalks for the Watertown Mall. This is different than asking for traffic mitigation. The Planning Board vote should not be affected by mitigation. We cannot get building permit without this vote, we need to start construction in the spring.

John Hawes, this Board does not want to be involved in sidewalk issues on other sites.

Gary Shaw, is it our responsibility to approve this without the Town consultant approval giving us level of comfort? If the traffic part of tonight's approval? The project needs to be approved but it is difficult without the recommendation. Is there a traffic consultant working for Town who will review the project?

Steve Magoon, it is the Board's decision to see if they are comfortable without the peer viewer's recommendation.

Fergal Brennock, I do understand the traffic study. There will be additional traffic generated by the project. Mitigation will be provided at substantial cost to the petitioner.

Gary Shaw, we cannot rely on expertise of one member.

John Hawes, the Board just approved Athenahealth that was recommended by the same peer reviewer.

Fergal Brennock, Greenough Boulevard is now off limits, it would have helped with Arsenal Street. Additional negotiating with DCR might be necessary.

Bill McQuillan, WorldTech works with the PB staff. If we accepted the additional cost, would this project be approved?

Steve Magoon, the submission material for Arsenal Project is not adequate.

John Hawes, what is needed in mitigation to make sure that the traffic will not affect the vote.

Gary Shaw, it should not be issue of peer review. I want to make sure that the application is properly processed.

Bill McQuillan, it is typical to have some changes.. I am asking the Board to look behind that. We need to come to an agreement, to have progress.

John Hawes, I am asking the Board if they are comfortable with the conditions of the Master Plan and to address other issues later when individual projects come before the Board for approval.

Jeff Brown, did the traffic study take into account all the other projects in the area? Storm water evaluation has not been submitted.

Gary Shaw, I am disappointed that the Town consultant is not here to reassure us that the project is correct, ready for the Boards vote. David Gamble is positive about the building design.

Fergal Brennock, staff agreed with the numbers but is reluctant to say SO.

Janet Buck, mitigation seems to be the issue, it is important part of the process. The petitioner and the planning staff are here to answer our questions, not DPW.

Bill McQuillan, we have been negotiating for the last few weeks. This evening shines some light on this process. We cannot spend more funds until we have approval. If the Board wants to wait until January to vote, we will do everything we can.

Gideon Schreiber, David made suggestions after hearing comments from the Board. Based on staff's review, submitted materials addressed the concerns.

John Hawes, we should let the mitigation package go for now and address the traffic.

Steve Magoon, this project will have traffic impact on many residential neighborhoods. DPW is trying to get best deal for the Town. How does it relate to this project, both sides are under pressure?

Jeff Brown, we have more questions about building G, could it be smaller, 10 stories? More information about the materials is needed as well.

Bill McQuillan, we do not have any specifics about building G. We actually need more units than proposed. It could be rental, or condos which would change the character of the structure.

John Hawes, could we see elevations looking at the site from the park? Images showing what it would look like from the Turnpike.

Janet Buck, we appreciate the changes presented tonight, especially the relocation of the cinema. Main entry to the site is lost opportunity to convert to site and River.

Jonathan Bockian, how does the pedestrian path connect to Greenough path – crosswalk will have to be approved by Conservation Commission and DCR.

Michele Cokonougher, according to design standards Special Permit should only allow 2 additional stories. Design Guidelines encourage 3-5 stories, 7 additional stories is not modest change. This is a significant development.

Dave Martin, 229 North Beacon Street, this project will add more trips during the year. What will happen during the holiday season? The project needs to be scaled down, this is a 68% increase in density.

Deborah Peterson, School Street, the Planning Board needs to address all 33 intersections in surrounding areas will be affected. Traffic studies deal with averages. Conditions require lot of discretion. The community relies on the Planning Board, more information is needed.

Jason Cohen, Common Street, this is a great project, major improvement of the existing situation. Town needs the additional revenue. Traffic will definitely increase.

George O'Matian, Bigelow Ave, it is important to make sure that people from Watertown will get hiring preference.

Jeff Brown motioned to continue the Project to the 1/11/2017 meeting of the Planning Board.
Gary Shaw seconded the motion. Vote: 5-0 In Favor.

Jeff Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 PM.
Fergal Brennock seconded the motion. Vote: 5-0 In Favor.