

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: May 10, 2017 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:05 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Hearing
Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Payson Whitney, Jeff Brown; Gary Shaw; Janet Buck
Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to Planning Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

John Hawes welcomed new planning board member Payson Whitney.

PUBLIC HEARING

ZONING AMENDMENT – Assisted Living

Gideon Schreiber, this is a request by the owner of 100 North Beacon Street property to add Assisted Living as a Principal Use by Right or by Special Permit with Site Plan Review in the Industrial I-3 district. This is a mixed use zone, residential and commercial, as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. A letter was received from the Watertown Housing Partnership, who is in support of including affordable housing requirement for assisted living projects. Staff finds this to be appropriate location and use. We now have two assisted living facilities, Brigham House and Residences on Summer Street.

Elodia Thomas, it is important to consider units of low/moderate income in these facilities.

Jeff Brown motioned to recommend to the Town Council approval of the proposed zoning amendment to add Assisted Living as a Principal Use by Right or by Special Permit with Site Plan Review in the Industrial I-3 District.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

REGULAR MEETING

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 4/12/2017 meeting.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

CASES PENDING

223 Palfrey Street; Nicole Vaianni – Special Permit Finding ZBA-2017-07

Ken Leitner, Atty, the property was purchased by the petitioner while living across the street. The couple are lifelong residents of Watertown. They are proposing to add second story with a low pitched roof, directly above the first floor. They are some concerns by the neighbors to the right about blocking their view.

Gideon Schreiber, the 7,955 s.f. property is located in S-6 zone. The proposed changes are substantially more impactful than the existing structure. The petitioner could add 600 s.f. on the site which would impact the neighbors. The proposed second story is truly within the existing footprint. 2 letters expressing concerns were submitted. Staff is in support of the proposal.

Gary Shaw, this is a reasonable proposal but it will impact the neighbors. If the Boards do not approve the proposal before them, the petitioner can build larger structure to the rear and side.

Ken Leitner, the petitioner is trying to keep the integrity of the house, they could build something much larger by right. Immediate neighbors would prefer building over the house and not expanding the footprint.

Gideon Schreiber, they could build T or L design, 2-1/2 story high. The petitioner would like to preserve the yard and open space. Abutting neighbors have similar structure..

Gary Shaw, they can use different design that would enhance the house.

Janet Buck, I have visited the site and looked at the surrounding neighborhood. It seems to be an appropriate addition. The petitioner needs to demonstrate to abutters how the design would look.

Jeff Brown, this Board has a tendency to listen to abutters. We do not have visual presentation showing different option.

Payson Whitney, the property has lots of grade changes. The abutter's only comment is the views.

John Hawes, the view will not change a lot. It might be better to keep it one floor and expand in the rear. The main ridge line is the full length of the house, 2 full floor plus the peak.

Nooshi Robertson, 215 Palfrey Street, we are surprised by the proposal, we did not pay attention initially. We have purchased our house 17 years ago, the property has beautiful view, that we would now lose the view and sunlight if the abutting house is built as proposed. More time is needed to see the options.

Raffi Karagozian, 22 Bartley Street, abutting the property in the rear. The project as designed will cause excessive massing. We now have unobstructed view, our house was purchased above market price because of that. The plans are not consistent with neighborhood architecture. Light, shadow, etc. will be altered.

John Hawes, I would prefer to continue the petition to allow the petitioner to present other options. The balcony at the bedroom does not fit. The petitioner could meet with the planning staff and one of the Board members.

Janet Buck, the petitioner can continue discussion with the neighbors, showing them options.

Gary Shaw, there were concerns with similar projects, digital models are very helpful.

Jeff Brown motioned to continue the petition to the next meeting of the Planning Board to allow the petitioner to address some of the issues.

Gary Shaw seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

485,615-1, 617 Arsenal Street – BP Arsenal Group, LLC – Site Plan Review Approval PB-2017-01

Payson Whitney, I am a direct abutter to this project but that will not affect my vote.

Jeff Heidelberg, representing Boylston Properties, this is a request for final site plan review approved under the Master Plan Special Permit. This is the final review for Buildings A and E.

Some tenants will stay during the construction, utilities will be moved underground, parking will be reconfigured.

Mark Eclipse, Architect, some structures will be demolished, other restored. We want to encourage tenants to help with the design. It will be open and transparent to streetscape with space provided for signage. There is a potential for tenants to come in and design the frontage. Building E is showing tighter pattern. We will open the windows on the side facing Arsenal Street, making it more visible. All tenants will receive introduction documents to follow our guidelines and the Watertown design Guidelines. We have created design standards specific for this site. Full signage masterplan will be created. Anchor tenants will get to express themselves to be more prominent.

Chris Jones, Landscape Architect, we will create place where you want to spend time. Zones will be created for seating, planting, signage and large furniture. Where there is surface parking, heavy landscape will be provided. Pocket locations will be placed throughout the site. Visually consistent materials will be used making it feel like pedestrian environment. Connections toward the River will be provided with planting zones for people to rest. Opportunity for parents with children. We will provide mix of uses, different sizes for different users.

Jeff Heidelberg, insulation within the buildings needs to be upgraded on walls with exposed bricks to be silver certified not to meet zoning code requirements.

Gideon Schreiber, this is the first step of the approved Master Plan to be implemented. Some buildings will be reconstructed and some demolished. The plan was approved in 2016 and this is the first phase, commercial space only. Five community meetings were held last year and the Planning Board held three meetings. Passive park space between the buildings is proposed with direct access to the Arsenal Park. Substantial storm water system improvements are proposed. Transportation Demand Management Program requiring monitoring and remedies to limit offsite parking. Pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity – connections through the site and facilitate off-road access through the site and into Arsenal Park. Existing Building E 1/E 3, of 80,000 a.f. plus 7,000 s.f. of common area with proposed use of retail/restaurant. Existing Building A 167,000 s.f. plus 12,000 s.f. of common space with proposed use of retail/restaurant. Updated River Green with no actual grass. Suggested water fountain, new and existing areas designed to provide seamless transition. Check list was submitted to Town for the DCD&P staff to sign off on the conditions: pedestrian & bicycle connection to Greenough Boulevard, railing on the lower level to be removed. Documents showing that DCR has signed off on the proposal. No changes to Arsenal Street proposed, setting stage for future phases, all is now internal. Car share parking & charging station locations. Eversource does not want underground equipment. Meetings with DPW to discuss the phasing program. Dumpsters will be kept at the same location for now. LEED checklist has been submitted. Screening has been met, there will be further review of transformer and switches placement. A slight change of design, proposed lighting is in keeping with Master Plan, limit of 20 feet in height. Gamble Associates participated in developer's conference and is available for comments tonight. This is an opportunity for more sustainability. Architectural palate of new buildings can be simplified. Arsenal Park entrance will be part of Phase 2. Staff recommends approval of Phase 1.

Payson Whitney, condition #8 regarding the reuse of magazine roof, we should add that the determination will be made by the Town. The landscape plan in front of Building E does not include

trees. A water feature near the Green should be incorporated. It would be a shame if the interior brick wall is covered.

Jeff Brown, this was a great presentation. Does the insulation have to be on all the interior brick walls? Will the cinema be part of the design? What is the construction timeline ?

Janet Buck, Building A is a 2-story structure, will there be a separate second story ? Most of the stores will have storage in the rear, there is no reason to have the brick's exposed. The Arts Center utilized different type of insulation to maintain the look of the brick. The exposed brick should be kept where the look is of value. The south elevation of Building A is not very attractive. Is there a possibility to open with windows? It could be a great place for green wall.

Jeff Heidelberg, we need to review green walls to be attached to existing brick.

Eric Brown, synthetic turf is very successful at other projects. A SYNLawN is a variation of grass that looks very natural.

Gary Shaw, I am supporter of this project, a balance between new and old buildings are important. Arsenal has personality and character which is difficult to reach with new buildings. Sustainable environment and LEED silver certifiable is important.

John Hawes, the brick is the most impressive where there are great heights. It should be kept exposed where it has a big impact.

William McMullan, there is a tall wall at the food court. We have a problem with insulating the space and meeting the zoning requirements. That wall is very important to the character of this building. We will be coming back with more information.

Gideon Schreiber, we have added "mixed use development" to the Zoning Ordinance for new development. This is "New Development" but existing structures, flexibility is important, consistency with RMUD.

John Hawes, there might be some leeway, we should adjust the Zoning Ordinance. Concessions will come from this Board to make it happen.

Nicholas, 66 Cottage Street, I urge the Board and the developer to use responsible contractors. The Boards scrutiny has made Watertown desirable community. This is a historic site, it should provide jobs for Watertown residents. Other communities have created check lists to make sure that developers meet the standards.

David Gamble, Gamble Associates, this is a very good project, transformative for Town. Preserving the existing buildings and very creative with the new. Character of the campus is created by landscape. Design of future buildings is detrimental, it should be more complimentary to existing.

Tony Palomba, Town Councilor, I support Boylston Properties hiring people who are paid living wages. We should be flexible with LEED certifiable. This Town has history with artificial turf, such as Victory Field, there are health issues associated with that.

Elodia Thomas, 67 Marion Road, artificial turf does not make any sense on this site. This will be a great project.

Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor, I like the idea of water feature on the site. I encourage the developer to provide more information regarding the artificial turf before the Board makes a decision.

Michele Cokonougher, 37 Paul Street, I am very disappointed that the developer is proposing artificial turf. Will there be any disruptions to people using the Arsenal Park during the construction ?.

William McQuillan, we are proposing 3,500 s.f. of artificial turf, Victory Field has 80,000 s.f..

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the request for Arsenal Yard Master Plan Phase 1 be granted with conditions based upon the findings that this Phase is in accordance with Watertown Zoning Ordinance Section 5.18 (TMUD) to implement the first Phase in redevelopment of approximately 23 acres for a mixed use proposal that includes a mix of residential, Commercial, Retail and Restaurant uses.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

586 Pleasant Street; 586 Pleasant Street Realty LLC – Special Permit with Site Plan Review PB-2017-02

Harout Kelian, Architect, the site is 38,153 s.f. parcel, and the proposed development will not have detrimental effect on the area. The footprint and height of the existing building will remain the same. The structure will comprise into 8 two story commercial condominium units with 43 parking spaces. The development will comply with all storm water management and disposition rules

Ara Barsomunian, owner, the warehouse has asphalt paved floor. The first floor would be used for storage of vehicles, second floor for general office use.

Gideon Schreiber, some changes were made from the original submission. The site is located in PSCD-3 and is accessed by Right of way. This is a pre-existing non-conforming use, completely paved site. The use will be all interior, office on second floor. Landscape will be added, access drive around the building creates one continuous site entrance/exit. The site will not be redeveloped for residential use due to environmental issues. This type of use is identified as to continue. This is commercial/light industrial warehouse, criteria has been reviewed by the staff. This is an appropriate location for such use, it will not have adverse effect on the neighborhood. First segment of the fence is decorative, chain-link fence with barbwire will be removed. Bicycle racks will be included. 43 parking spaces will be provided, each unit will have a dumpster in the rear.

Gary Shaw, does the site have enough open space ? Should they comply with 20 % requirement ?

Gideon Schreiber, Pleasant Street changed from 10 to 20%. They are exempt from DPW requirements because they are removing paved areas, they will be more in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. Most of the landscape will be in front of the property. Russo's has 65 spaces that are always full. Different users of the property need parking.

Jeff Brown, how did the petitioner decide the size of each bay ?

Payson Whitney, are these rolling dumpsters ? Will parking be striped ? Is the stucco finish complying with the Comprehensive Plan ?

Gideon Schreiber, the width of bays is based on spacing of the beams. This is a re-facing of metal building, material is up to the Board to decide. This type of project is exempt from the Guidelines.

Ara Barsomunian, the site is currently 100% asphalt, this is a commercial area where parking is needed. There is no parking on Pleasant Street.

Jeff Brown motioned that the Planning Board approve the petition for Special Permit with Site Plan Review under Sections 5.01.5(c)(2) & 5.02(f) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

CASES CONTINUED

15 Arden Road; Richard Williams & Jeanne Segal – Special Permit Finding

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the Request for Withdrawal of the above petition.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0 In favor

Jeff Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 PM.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0 In favor.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:05 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____
For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 5/10/17 available in the DCDP office.