

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: October 19, 2017 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Hearing
Regular Monthly Meeting

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

AMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 9/13/17 meeting.

Janet Buck seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

PUBLIC HEARING

Section 6.01(b) Required Off-Street Parking Spaces for Self-Storage Facility

Gideon Schreiber, this is a request by 80 Elm Street LLC to reduce the required number of parking spaces for self-storage facility to 2 spaces per 10,000 s.f. of gross floor area with a minimum of 6 spaces required. Presently the requirement is 1 parking space for every 3 storage units. The legal notice was published and mailed to abutters. Only one comment was received today. The petitioner submitted evaluation of parking with a summary of data and survey of 9 facilities in Brighton, Somerville and Waltham ranging in size of 30,000 to 138,000 square feet. The ratio is now consistent with other parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. The Self-Storage is allowed in the I-1 and I-2 districts by a special permit to be setback by 50 feet from all lot lines abutting residential use. These districts are in the East End, Southside, Elm Street and I-2 district along Coolidge Hill Road, Arlington Street, Arsenal Street and Water Street. 2015 Comprehensive Plan defines Self-Storage as a stand alone use. Staff suggests that the current zoning overestimates the onsite parking demand and recommends approval.

Gary Shaw, what is the basis for current zoning? Is this a use recommend by the Comprehensive Plan that we want in Town? This is an enormous reduction in parking. We need to ask the question if self-storage facilities are appropriate in the Town.

Gideon Schreiber, we could not find the reason, this zoning was part of a larger package of zoning amendments. The amendment tonight is about parking not the self-storage use.

William York, Attorney, this request is about parking not the existing use. One space per 3 units is unreasonable. The report states that it is appropriate in some areas and not in others. Self-Storage will fit well into this area. The average self-storage unit is smaller. Both Boards will have the opportunity to review the project when it comes before them.

Gary Shaw, do we have traffic analyses that were done by the Town for this area? Our traffic consultant should provide peer review.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a zoning amendment request, it does not require traffic study.

Jeff Brown, how big are the units? Not many people will come to the site at the same time.

John Hawes, this is not traffic issue. Should we require peer review?

Janet Buck, I am concerned with the wording. I would like to see the language more clearly defined.

Gideon Schreiber, the larger the unit, more spaces are needed. The definition of self-storage in the Zoning Ordinance is not contractor based. The old requirement is 1 parking space for 3 units, new is 2 spaces per 10,000 s.f., which is more consistent.

Payson Whitney, ITE document data was used, there has been change in the self-storage market.

Robert Michaud, MDM Transportation Consultants, a parking needs evaluation has been conducted for mini-warehouse self-storage facilities to facilitate discussion of zoning for such facilities in Watertown. MDM concluded that a parking ratio of 2 spaces per 10,000 s.f. of GFA as defined with a minimum of 6 spaces is reasonable for peak parking activity for staff, costumers and business activity. This is a very benign use.

Gary Shaw, parking as described in the Zoning Ordinance does not address reality. The Board is not qualified to provide such analysis. This change will allow for the structures to be flattened. We should not vote without further review.

John Hawes, we should ask the staff to speak to our consultant to provide analysis. I am not comfortable without independent review. Density is always a problem.

Gideon Schreiber, if the Board requests review on zoning amendment, it will be done. The Board needs to provide guidance on the request.

John Hawes, we want someone to look at the date. I want to see what the neighboring Towns have in their Ordinance.

William York, doe the Board want the MDA data analyzed by the Town consultant?

John Hawes, some date can be analyzed by the staff, other by the consultant. It will make the Board more comfortable to make a recommendation to the Town Council.

Janet Buck, I cannot think of any other building type and use that would generate less traffic.

Jeff Brown motioned to continue the above petition to the next Planning Board meeting.
Payson Whitney seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In favor

485, 615, 617 Arsenal Street: BP Arsenal Group LLC – **Amendment to Master Plan Special Permit**

Jeff Heidelberg, Boylston Properties, this is a request for an Amendment to the Master Plan Special Permit PB-2016-03 and application for Final Site Plan Review of Phase III, Building F. The amendment is to allow for an additional story and 5'10" more in height of Building F, and to

allow 23 additional residential units. Building F is a parking, residential and retail structure. The retail will be on the first floor, parking below and above retail, three floors of residential. This is a very complicated and expensive building. Originally 58 units were proposed, now there are 81, 6 stories originally, now 7. The structure has 15% affordable housing component. We have met with the Watertown Housing Partnership.

Mark Eclipse, Architect PCA Associates, mix of uses is vital to the site, there are 3 residential levels with brick façade, garage is concrete ground floor, warm color of brick & gray. Light brick color is used for residential areas. Main entrance is near the stair tower. South elevation is showing retail area. Private outdoor space is proposed for tenants. West elevation is showing retail, stair tower, and access to the roof space for tenants facing the River. Shadow study is showing impact of the building on the area. The impact is bigger in the morning with no shadow in the afternoon.

Steve Woods, Landscape Architect, the site landscape is a continuation of landscape already in the park. We are proposing simple clean approach.

Gideon Schreiber, our consultant David Gamble is here to answer any questions that the Board might have regarding his report. This is an Amendment of a previously approved Master Plan. Without the amendment the project will not go forward. Two community meetings were well attended. How will this Phase affect future of the site? The number of units increased from 58 to 81, the total of 424 units for the entire site has not changed because the additional units were moved from Building G. Building F will consist of 45,000 s.f. of retail, 102,000 of residential and amenities. Four more street trees will be added. Wall graphics will be incorporated into the sign program. Staff recommends conditional approval, the design is in keeping with the project. Requirements for vehicle charging stations are part of the building permit. Short term bicycle parking is placed near the retail areas. The petitioner is proposing more parking than is required in this phase. Transportation mitigation was addressed as part of the Master Plan. Surface water drainage is approved, same with utility services. Adequate screening will be provided, reviewed as part of the building permit. A potential for future solar panels. A combination of materials is in keeping with the design, there is no change in roof mounted materials. Watertown Housing Partnership did review of the project on August 30, all criteria has been met. Staff recommends that the request for an Amendment to Arsenal Yards Master Plan Phase Three to increase the height of Building F from 83'6" to 89'4", to increase the number of stories from 6 to 7 and to increase number of units from 58 to 81 – by shifting them from Building G - be granted. The design is in keeping with the criteria with few additional conditions regarding signage.

Payson Whitney, some plans show accessible ramp that is leading to big ramp. The crosswalk is located near the loading area. Driver of a truck that is backing in will have difficult time seeing pedestrians. How can you protect them and bicycles? Could a signage be added to warn them? Conditions #6 and #8 should be reworded.

Jeff Heidelberg, green light technology will be used for the garage, no visitors in residence areas.

Janet Buck, the south elevation is showing Building F as being very close to Building G, more landscape will be needed. Feasibility study was mentioned at the previous presentation.

John Hawes, it is not clear how all this parking will work. Handicapped accessible spaces are in different areas on different floors. Handicap accessible units should be closer to the elevators. It is very confusing; need to indicate which way to go to the handicap spaces.

Dan Campagna, 147 Lexington Street, this is a great design with good materials to be used.

Lisa Feltner, District B Town Councilor, mitigation between I Cubed and this project is very important.

Thomas Gorman, 473H Arsenal Street, I am a big supporter of this project. Does the underground parking extend to Building G? Building G could be higher.

Jeff Heidelberg, one level of the parking is underground, it will be used for Building G, above ground garage for Building F. There is a grade differential between G & F. Parking for Building F residential units will be on the fourth floor.

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the Amendment to Master Plan Special Permit PB-2016-03 under Section 5.18 to increase the height of Building F from 83'6" to 89'4", to increase the number of stories from 6 to 7 and to increase number of units from 58 to 81RMUD based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report with amended conditions #6 & #8..

Janet Buck seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

Jeff Brown motioned to approve final Site Plan Review of Phase III – Building 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 F favor.