

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: August 8, 2018 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting & Public Hearing

PRESENT: Jeff Brown, Chairman; Payson Whitney; Janet Buck; Jason Cohen
Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Payson Whitney motioned to approve Minutes of 7/11/2018 meeting.

Janet Buck seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

Chairman Jeff Brown, the first case heard tonight will be 169 Sycamore Street.

CASES PENDING

- **169 Sycamore Street**; Dan Lombardi – **Special Permit**

Dan Lombardi, this is a request to park a truck that is over $\frac{3}{4}$ ton and allow a home occupation in our house. The house was built in 1890. We have received a letter from the Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding a complaint. My wife has been doing bookkeeping for my company and we would like to change it and allow 2 employees working in the house. The area cannot be used as a garden, there is no sun in the rear.

Gideon Schreiber, we have received updated plans showing 6 parking spaces with 3 vehicles and a box truck. There is a garage to park 2 vehicles. Staff reviewed the criteria for Home Occupation. The single family house is located on a very large lot in a T zone. There will be no change to the exterior character of the house. No noise, smoke or odor, no increase in trips. This is an allowed use, appropriate location, staff recommends conditional approval.

Payson Whitney, if the petitioner gets different truck, will they have to come back to the Board?

Gideon Schreiber, this site is more flexible, we can add it to conditions.

Janet Buck motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the petition for Special Permit under Section 5.02(e) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0 In Favor

- **71 Bradford Road**; Jing Ma – **Special Permit**

Norman Kherlop, Architect, this is a request to provide carport in a 2-family house. The carport will be under the existing building open on 3 sides, 18' from the street at the front yard and 5' away from the side property line.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a request to allow carport on the left side of the building and an existing driveway on the right side. If the sunroom was not on the left side that is where parking would be located. The 4 criteria for appropriateness have been met. The petitioner may need to redesign the location of the stairs so they face toward the side or rear of the property. Staff recommends approval, landscape plan showing the required 4 foot vegetation buffer adjacent to the new driveway will be submitted.

Norman Kherlop, one of the units is for sale, this decision will affect the sale.

Jason Cohen motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the petition for Special Permit under Section 6.02(j) 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: 4-0 In Favor

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Jeff Brown opened the Public Hearing at 7:25 PM.

- **485 Arsenal Street**; BP Watertown Retail LLC – Final Site Plan Review Approval

Mark Dechenes, Boylston Properties, this is a request for a minor amendment to Building A which was previously approved to be entirely used for retail. We are now proposing to convert second story to office space with outdoor space overlooking the Arsenal Park. The demand is now for Lab space, R&D. We are proposing 50% of Building A to be lab space, all on the second floor.

Laura Portney, PCA Architects, we have updated areas to accommodate different use. The ground floor will focus on retail. We are proposing a 2 story entryway. Tenants will bring their own identity. Change in River Green Design, there will be direct access from the garage to office space. The design of south roof is a part of the Master Plan Special Permit (MPSP) design. Skylights have been added. The design will allow office tenants to come outside.

Gideon Schreiber, all phases of the Master Plan, Phase I, II, III and IV, were approved. This is a proposal for flex space of office and R&D lab space on the second floor and retail on first floor. There are some changes to materials, tenant designated areas that require staff review. More landscape on the south side is needed, which will be reviewed by staff. Staff recommends that potential generator and gas storage to be located far from the park. Different lab spaces need different requirements and need to be reviewed by the staff. The design is in keeping with Master Plan, multiple options were discussed. More windows were added to break up the façade. We will make sure that the tenant will not be heavy lab user. Final landscape plan will be reviewed by Conservation Commission and passive recreation area will be provided. Site circulation was reviewed by the Fire Department. No changes to surface water drainage and utility service. The design is not detrimental, multiple conditions have been recommended by the staff. These are minor changes and we did not believe that additional review by David Gamble is needed.

Mark Dechenes, this will be a typical Level 2 R&D. We do not have specific tenants, it will be more pharmaceutical use.

Jeff Brown, will the use be the same as in LINX?

Jason Cohen, I do like the landscape improvements. The proposed changes to the roof – are they done with the Historical Commission approval? Arsenal on the Charles has restrictions, this site has no protection. Lots of skylights are proposed. Phase I did not have an elevator, the location is unfortunate. The window proportions in the mezzanine are inconsistent. The louvers at south roof are very large. It is a tall brick wall, the mechanical equipment will still be visible. Changes to the building are needed because of the new use. This is not best use to screen all the mechanical equipment.

Eric Brown, PCA, this is a 1000 ft long building that will always have penetration for mechanical equipment. This is a successful design, there are louvers, windows and skylights.

Laura Portney, even for office use only, we would have to place the mechanical equipment on the roof. Bricks of various sizes are used for the façade.

Payson Whitney, this is a very helpful presentation. New residents will have lots of deliveries, will there be any restrictions? Will there be designated parking areas for office tenants? If there are problems with signing second floor tenants, it can be changed back to office space only.

Jeff Brown, the new roof design is acceptable.

Elodia Thomas, there is a separation between buildings and the Arsenal Park. I am concerned with Level 2 lab space, which is very restrictive. The community is not aware that Arsenal Yards will have lab space, we need to know more about this use.

Angie Kounelis, Town Councilor District A, I echo these comments, we are concerned about lab space. LINX is a stand-alone building. Arsenal Yards consists of retail space, park, deliveries, Customers are not aware that there are chemicals on the site. We need to know what is going on behind these walls. How will the delivery trucks access the parcel? More consideration is needed.

Bill Dylan, Commercial Real Estate broker, lab use is very good for Watertown. It will create lots of new jobs, retail space is going down. Lab use is located next to residential use in Cambridge, etc. The risk is 0, this is a great opportunity for Watertown.

Mark Dechenes, we have anticipated questions and did a research. Many labs are located next to residential housing. Watertown is a very attractive area, this is a highly regulated business.

Jason Cohen, does the Town provide any restrictions for lab use?

Gideon Schreiber, review of such use is provided by Fire and Health departments. There is no Town Ordinance, the Town follows State level restrictions.

Angie Kounelis, there are many other labs in Watertown, this is a request for change in use. I have concerns, this is an opportunity to discuss such use. We want the petitioner to be successful, but this is about quality of life in Watertown.

Elodia Thomas, where are the existing labs located? The Board does not have enough information to make a decision tonight.

Jeff Brown, the Planning Board is not ready to vote tonight. People are concerned, we need to feel comfortable and have more information.

Janet Buck motioned to continue the above petition
Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In Favor

CASE PENDING

- **80 Elm Street:** Gary Bloch, 80 Elm Partners LLC – **Special Permit**

William York, Atty, a Special Permit/Site Plan Review, this is a proposal to construct a 4 story, 56,475 s.f. self-storage facility and 2,650 s.f. commercial R&D/community space. Self-storage is needed in Watertown, it is consistent with the intent of Comprehensive Plan. The design will complement the area and improve the site. Solar panels will be placed on the roof. The design standards are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Michael Dennis, Architect, the intention is to design a building that does not look like a storage facility. This is not an attractive site, we are proposing to design an inviting building. The façade will consist of corrugated metal panels with front wrapped with glass and wood look slab system. Loading area with

canopy will provide shelter. We are proposing small outdoor sitting area with new plantings and grass. Different colors and textures for the new plantings, lots of building transparency on the first floor.

Hans Strauch, Architect, the loading area will be in the rear with a service elevator next to it. Top of the building will have array of solar panels, the building will have 0 energy bill. Shadow study was done, it will have no effect on residential properties.

Austin Shartier, Project Manager, McKenzie Engineering Group, before the demolition, the site had 90% impervious coverage. The Massachusetts DEP storm water regulations are met. We have coordinated with DPW, all regulations are met as well.

Jeff Brown, who will manage the facility on daily basis?

Gideon Schreiber, the Planning Board will make recommendation to the ZBA, who will make the final vote. The proposed building will have a 14,820 s.f. footprint on a 35,609 s.f. site. More open space will be provided. The site had previous permits that will be removed if current request is approved. The design is in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan, Elm Street is part of the Arsenal Street corridor. We have envisioned more vibrant environment. We have learned that self-storage can be supporting use for office space. Gamble Associates analyzed this project couple of times and all suggestions were incorporated. Glass door will be placed at ground level, substantial changes were made for access. Project meets all 4 criteria for Special Permit. Elm Street is a very small road that provides access to Watertown Mall. 19 surface parking spaces will be provided, it is an appropriate location for such a building. The petitioner is asking for FAR 1. The proposal will have no adverse effect on the neighborhood, all water will be contained on site, and rain gardens will be created. This is the least impactful use for the neighborhood. Staff and the DPW reviewed the proposal, existing sidewalks will be replaced. Updated lighting plan was submitted, it meets the requirements. Landscaping provided, substantial open space, the proposed design is appropriate. Full TDM program is required and will get finalized. If there is a transformer, it will have to be reviewed and approved by the staff, so will the HVAC system, that will be placed away from the roof edge. A substantial solar panel system is proposed. Staff recommends conditional approval.

Payson Whitney, traffic was one of the concerns, this is a low impact use. More favorable comments were heard at the community meeting. I am concerned with lights from the R&D space on the first floor. What is the plan for snow storage?

William York, the facility will have typical office hours and in the community space. If not in use, the lights will be turned off. Outdoor lights are on timer. Snow will be placed on site and if there is a major storm, snow will be hauled away.

Janet Buck, I am pleased with this design.

Jason Cohen, this is the nicest looking storage facility, major improvement.

Elodia Thomas, the petitioner did a great job by addressing the concerns, great design.

Angie Kounelis, a letter dated 5/22/18 was submitted by Patricia Stenson, Manager of the Watertown Mall, regarding the site calling it blighted. Only 3 Elm Street residents attended the last community meeting. Consideration needs to be given to public parking in the area. A memo dated 4/5/18 was submitted by William York regarding public space in the building never mentioned R&D facility, only community space. More substantial plans are needed showing better outside improvements. This is an improvement but East End seems to be dumping ground for unwelcomed uses. I have received comments from area residents Ann Lazaro and Dora who are in support. Others voiced their concerns.

Other passive uses could be proposed. We are concerned with R&D, we were told that it would be community space.

William York, we have proposed 1,200 s.f. mixed use space on the bottom level. The Town does not want to see vacant space. The site plan is improved.

Janet Buck motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals an approval of the Special Permit with Site Plan Review under Sections 5.05(d)(i) and 9.03,9.05;9.06, 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: 4-0 In Favor

- **527 Pleasant Street;** Roshan Bhakta, VBR LLC – **Special Permit**

Scott Oran, this is a request to allow temporary 4 month use on a vacant lot to store 25 Modular Housing Staging. Each unit is 13' wide by 63' long by 11' high. The units will be transported to their construction site at Newton Ausin Street municipal parking lot where a mixed income sustainable housing complex is being build. The units will arrive from Canada, all movements will be done on site during non-peak hours. There will be no more than 6 workers on site, 2 dumpsters and portable toilet. This is low intensity short term use.

Gideon Schreiber, we were unable to coordinate with DPW. Trailer is staying under the module, truck will be moving. The new layout works, the existing two large trees on the site will be protected. We envision slight improvement of the site. Bridge Street is not appropriate street to be used. We did not have enough information, Planning Board will make a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals who will make the final vote.

Janet Buck, what type of fence will be used?

Elaine, 111 Pleasant Street, modular housing units are not allowed on the Mass Turnpike.

Gideon Schreiber, they will use chain fence, the trucks will travel through Waltham to River and Seyon Street. We expect the petitioner to have all the answers at the ZBA hearing.

Jason Cohen, I have worked on modular projects, lots of maneuvering space is needed.

Payson Whitney motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals an approval of the Special Permit under Section 9.11, 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 additional conditions that the project to require a site layout showing modules on site with "Auto-Turn" analysis, and DPW and Police review be submitted prior to ZBA hearing.

Janet Buck seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In Favor

Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 10:40 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:40 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 8/8/2018 which is available in the DCDP office.