

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: August 14, 2019 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

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

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Update

Jason Cohen, representing Planning Board in CPC, I will provide update as the process continues. SPC was adopted in 2016, funds will be provided for Open Space, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing, etc. We will solicit applications and provide recommendation to the Town Council. Funds are collected from taxes.

CASES PENDING

- **6 Hovey Street; Sharon Seltzer & Ron Gilboa – Special Permit Finding**

Ron Gilboa, Sharon Seltzer and I have purchased this house to allow our families to move in together. This is a request for a Special Permit to build a new shed dormer to allow for additional usable floor space within the half story. The rear yard setback will remain the same. The space will be used for master bedroom, closets and bathroom. Walls will be rearranged on the second floor. Space will be conforming, 3/12 slope maintained.

Gideon Schreiber, the petitioner provided detail description of the proposal. This is a positive change, dormer is appropriate. This is a corner lot with a door on the side. The proposed change is not more detrimental. Staff reviewed the petition and recommends an approval.

Janet Buck, this is a positive change, the petitioner was responsive to the staff comments.

Jason Cohen, is the height 5' or 4'?

Gideon Schreiber, 2 calculations were provided, ½ story – anything above 4' for new construction, above 5' for existing construction.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit Finding under Section 4.06(a) 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

CASES PENDING

- **22 Priest Road; Keith Nardone – Special Permit/Special Permit Finding**

Keith Nardone, this is a proposal to restore 2-family house and retain period details. The existing roof will be raised for 3rd floor egress stair within the side yard setback, reconstruct existing 2nd floor rear deck and provide egress stair to rear yard within the rear yard setback. Building FAR will increase from 0.483 to 0.620. Landscape buffer on the right side of the driveway will be provided. Walls will be moved, space made more energy efficient. Top floor will remain the same, roof raised by couple of feet.

Andrea Adams, the petitioner is asking for increase of FAR. Lot is little over 5,000 s.f. located in a T zone. The roof line will have steeper space to allow for more living space. The pitch is similar to other

homes in the neighborhood, the change will have minimal impact. The site is appropriate for such a use, site and landscaping will be improved. New dumpster enclosure will be added. All Special Permit and Special Permit Finding test are met.

Janet Buck, the height shown on the application is different than the one on the plans. Is the structure occupied?

Keith Nardone, this is an estate sale, the structure is empty.

Payson Whitney, we have received a letter from an abutter in the rear of this property expressing some concerns and being against the proposal. A trash enclosure is proposed, will the tree be saved? The tree provide nice screening, can the enclosure be moved?

Jason Cohen, an email was received from a neighbor, it is hard to understand.

Gideon Schreiber, the deck was originally moved closer to the property line, which has now changed.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommends to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 5.04(r) and Special Permit Finding under Section 4.06(a) 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

CASES PENDING

- **72 Townly Road; Jason St Clair – Special Permit Finding**

Jason St.Clair, we have lived in this house for 10 years, we now need more space, and we are proposing to build a second story. The undersized 5,830 s.f. property is located in S-6 zone, the side yard setback is 7.3 feet where 10 ft is required.

Mathew O'Connell, Architect, the nonconformance of the undersized lot will not be increased. The existing first floor cannot support the second floor, additional beams will be added which will allow for additional 3 bedrooms and 2 bathroom.

Gideon Schreiber, the original ceiling height was 9', reduced now to 8'. The proposed design is in keeping with the neighborhood. The house will have more than 4 bedrooms, it will have to be modified, otherwise additional parking space would be required.

Jason Cohen, what materials will be used on the second floor?

Mathew O'Connell, the brick and vinyl siding will match the first floor.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommends to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit Finding under Section 4.06(a) 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

CASES PENDING

- **101-103 Morse Street; Mouhab Rizkaliah, La Court Affordable Trust LLC bvgf – Special Permit Finding**

Mouhab Rizkallah, LaCourt Affordable Trust LLC, this is a request for Special Permit Finding to allow change from nonconforming commercial use to a less nonconforming multi-family housing. This proposal is consistent with the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Two proposals came in front of the Board in 2017 and 2018 proposing residential use. One withdrew, the second was forced to sell the property due to financial limitations. Our company has extensive experience in restoration of historic buildings. We are proposing to extend the 1871 historic Dalby Knitting Mill structures to 37 rental residential units which will include 6 affordable units. The prior owner was looking for approval of 48 units, next owner received approval for 36 units including 5 affordable but did not propose restoration. Watertown Housing Partnership is satisfied. This project represents the oldest structures in the neighborhood. We are proposing numerous indoor displays and street plaques. Black steel railing will be at the waterway replacing the current aluminum. This is a historical experience, we are trying to capture historical concept. Granite curbing will be next to the asphalt parking lot. Handicapped parking will be provided. Trash area will house totes, not a dumpster, and will be covered with trellis. Parking easement for residents and neighbors. Easement spaces will be striped yellow, regular spaces striped white. Courtyard will have handicapped accessible ramp. Exercise room, storage lockers, bike room, laundry room, will be provided. The previous unit design was complicated, handicapped units will be located near elevator. We are required to provide 2 but will provide 4. Hallways will have seating areas and displays. The property does not have irrigation system, storm water system is already in place.

Andrea Adams, the petitioner was very thorough, Special Permit Finding is required for use change from existing nonconforming commercial to nonconforming residential. Historical Commission expressed concerns to any outside change, that issue was addressed. Skylight will be added, windows remain the same. Informational meeting was in June, all issues have been addressed. We have received two positive comments. This is a consistent change from commercial to residential. 37 units are proposed, 49 parking spaces are required, 40 will be provided, which is in keeping with the Zoning Ordinance. All zoning requirements have been met, public transportation is nearby. The entrance area will be widen, landscaping and trees are in good condition, all should be retained. Affordable Housing – 1 extra unit will be provided. Staff recommends conditional approval.

Jason Cohen, I am impressed with the presentation, the petitioner has good intentions for this property. The architect is not present tonight. The submitted plans look very similar to previous submissions. Lots of attention is given to the historic aspects of the property, should some of the ornamentation be restored?

Mouhab Rizkallah, some changes might happen when the construction starts. We are not concerned with the cost. 50 parking spaces are out limit, we do not want to come back for more relief.

Jason Cohen, the concept of the walkway is nice, but very close to the window units. Will people know there is additional parking at Casey?

Mouhab Rizkallah, if somebody occupies the units, they will understand.

Janet Buck, this was a very good presentation, we appreciate that the petitioner studied previous proposals. When do the solar requirements kick in?

Gideon Schreiber, that is for new construction only.

Payson Whitney, I commend the petitioner on studying previous history of the property. Is the site now occupied or empty? I like the concept of walkway but I am not comfortable with cars backing up to the parking spaces. Will the snow storage be on town land? Where is the storm water going to go? The plans are not properly signed and stamp.

Mouhab Rizkallah, the layout is not yet perfect but there might not be other option.

Gideon Schreiber, if the cars back in, it might be easier. All will be reviewed by DPW as well, parking lot will be improved.

Jeff Brown, some board members have seen this project come several time. Will there be steel or wood columns? The windows are fiberglass framed? The units are all rental, will the petitioner keep the ownership?

John, 76 Capitol Street, how will the trash be picked up, will there be 37 totes lined up on the sidewalk?

Mouhab Rizkallah, we will have private trash pickup, trucks will come on the property.

John, the project is detrimental to the area. This area has lot of traffic and now there will be 37 more families added to the area.

Joan Vachon, 93 Union Street, we are direct abutters and we are anxious to see something attractive on this site. The buildings are empty, animals are on the property. We do like this proposal, there will not be that much difference in traffic.

Erminio Formato, 46 Brookline Street, what type of project will make it conforming? We need to look at this from the neighborhood standpoint. We are concerned with traffic, this proposal does not make sense to the neighborhood.

Jason Cohen, the previous use, Cortiva School, was not welcomed either. This will not be more detrimental.

Gideon Schreiber, maybe three 2-family homes would make this conforming. 50-80% of our 2-families are nonconforming. These buildings are older than our zoning ordinance. This site is protected under the Zoning Ordinance rules. This is a very old neighborhood that is non-conforming.

Janet Buck, this is a private property. Town cannot encourage the owners to tear it down.

Andrea Adams, there will be significant decrease in traffic from Cortiva.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit Finding under Section 4.06(a) 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

CASES CONTINUED

- **19 Loomis Ave;** Arthur Harutyunyan & Nune Khachatryan – **Special Permit**

Janet Buck motioned to continue the petition to the September 11 meeting of the Planning Board.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 in favor

OTHER

ARSENAL YARDS SIGNAGE REQUEST

Laura Portney, signage for the site was approved as part of the Master Plan trying to minimize the tenant presence. We are asking the Planning Board to consider the installation of tenant signage along the west elevation of the B.2 garage.

Tom Wilder, my job is to attract tenants, we need to make sure that they thrive on this site, and there is too much competition. We are building neighborhood. The proposed scale of the new signage will fit with the new garage. It will make the signage more visible for our major tenants. These are fabric banners, fairly large, but no exceeding the cap per tenant.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a minor amendment. The developer is here under other business. We do not recommend approval of this amended signage. Master Plan allows more signage for this property already. There is not retail presence in this garage area, the major tenants should not be advertised on this wall. This is a significant change. The Master Plan allows more signage for this site than anywhere else in Watertown. This is the primary access to the garage, not to the retail.

Payson Whitney, we have received a memo from the Planning staff. These banners are very large, the eye goes directly to the large sign, not to the civic area. I cannot support this proposal.

Janet Buck, this is where private property and public property join, we can do better, this looks like an entrance to the garage. The Arsenal Park is in the rear – forgotten.

Andrew Copelotti, this request was brought to our attention by Marshalls. We need to think ahead and revisit the proposal. There is a need for something on the west side, I am sure we will be back.

Gideon Schreiber, are you proposing 3 years of temporary signage?

Jason Cohen, commercial advertisement in an area designed to be gateway to the Arsenal Park. Boylston/Wilder is asking for lots of things, why did they not ask originally?

Andrew Copelotti, RMUD zoning process is making us come back. We did not envision all these changes, combination of construction and cutting off Marshalls visibility. If this does not get approved tonight, we might come back.

Gideon Schreiber, this is not a retail area, this was going to be a corridor leading to the Arsenal Park with no retail signage allowed.

Tom Wilder, we are trying to reinforce the connection to the Arsenal Park. We need to enhance the graphics on the banners.

Janet Buck, I don't want to lose Marshalls, maybe you need to come back with different design.

Gideon Schreiber, the developer should take direction from the memo dated 7/30/2019 and come back.

Andrew Copelotti, we will be back in September.

Janet Buck motioned to revisit the request in September.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In Favor

Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting and public hearings at 9:40 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:40 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 8/14/2019 which is available in the DCDP office.