

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: December 11, 2019 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

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

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Payson Whitney motioned to approve Minutes of the 11/13/2019 Planning Board meeting.
Janet Buck seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In favor

CASES PENDING

- **99-101 Lexington Street; Michael P. McDade – Special Permit Finding**

Michael McDade, we are proposing to expand existing nonconforming driveway with a reduced 1 foot buffer where 4 foot buffer is required.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a request to extend existing nonconforming driveway with no buffer. Minot landscaping will be provided, staff is supportive and recommends approval with conditions.

Michael McDade, it is difficult to park our truck. If the buffer is reduced, the tires will be on pavement. There are 3 cars parked in the driveway, one is for tenant.

Jason Cohen, the existing fence needs to be replaced.

Libby Shaw, is there any landscape in the rear?

Michael McDade, there is 10 foot of landscape in the rear

Gideon Schreiber, a 10 foot buffer is required in the rear. The existing tree will be preserved.

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) to allow expansion of a pre-existing driveway with no 4 foot buffer based upon the finding that it does meet the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions in the staff report.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

- **28 Nyack Street; Arsen Janikian – Special Permit Finding**

Ken Leitner, Atty, the petitioner has owned the property for 17 years. The petitioner is proposing to construct a second story addition above the main house and a portion of the rear porch altering the house from Cape Cod to Colonial, extending the nonconforming front yard setback of 19.9' where 25' is required, side yard setback of 10.2' where 12' is required and extending the lot coverage of 28% to 30.5% where 25% is allowed. The criteria for SPF has been met, it will not be substantially more detrimental than the existing nonconforming use.

Gideon Schreiber, initially the plans submitted are showing more mass in the rear. New plans submitted have been submitted, there are similar houses within Watertown neighborhoods. The setback is average, this submittal is not substantially more detrimental, and staff recommends approval with conditions.

Janet Buck, there are some typos in the submitted plans, we need more information.

Ben, Architect, we have not discussed the siding with the client, my recommendation would be to reside to whole house.

Jason Cohen, some errors need to be cleared before the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, setback dimensions are not clear.

Gideon Schreiber, bump out encroaches into the side yard. Nothing will be build within the setback, we can tell from the plot plan.

Jeff Brown, this is an area with many ranch houses. Is this one going to stick out? Zoning allows 2-1/2 story, there are few similar homes in the neighborhood.

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) to construct second floor addition based upon the finding that it does meet the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions in the staff report.

Gary Shaw seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

- **122 Grant Avenue; Bonnie Dirr – Amend Special Permit Finding**

Bonnie Dirr, this is a request for minor modifications to increase building coverage by 1.2%, move mud room wall, enlarge front porch to accommodate space for disabled person to be seated and caregiver to open door, small porch to allow protection from elements.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a request to allow expansion of the previously approved mudroom off the garage, increase lot coverage by additional 173,22 s.f., allow new balcony in the rear, increase the size of the front porch, increase total building coverage of 30.7% where 25% is allowed.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Amendment of Special Permit Finding to increase nonconforming building coverage based upon the finding that it does meet the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions in the staff report.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

- **164-166 Main Street; Saracen Properties, LLC - Special Permit/Site Plan Review**

Eric Brown, CA, there have been numerous meetings with the staff and many neighborhood meetings. New set of plans is submitted tonight. We want our building to fit into the neighborhood. We will provide ground parking and small commercial space. Building steps back, outdoor terraces in the rear, total of 5 floors. The elevations show 4 residential floors with terraces. We are committed to be silver certifiable, owner is in contact with solar company. It is a quiet building, red brick, pre-stained wood panels and little metal on front canopy.

Kate Orancek, Landscape Architect, we are proposing green space along Main Street, with series of benches and plantings. 2 existing trees will be preserved, additional tree added. One large and one small landscape in the rear, retaining wall divides the space. 5 canopy trees are proposed, vines will camouflage the wall. Ground cover will be added on the small space with seasonal plantings. Pavers placed where bicycle parking is located, we are proposing plants native to the area.

Robert Michaud, MDM Transportation Consultants, we have approved TDM program. This is not highly generated project, only 34 units that will not affect the traffic flow. There should be 34 parking spaces provided but because of membership with Watertown TAM, there will be 25% reduction to 25 parking

spaces. Peak demand on the site is at night, 25 spaces. We are providing appropriate access and warning devices for pedestrians. Bicycle stations are on site indoors and outdoors.

Jeff Brown, is there visitor parking on site? How many guests can visit at one time?

Robert Michaud, visitor parking is part of the ratio, we are looking for 20% reduction not 25 as allowed. 4 spaces will be reserved for visitors.

Gideon Schreiber, the site has an existing building that will be demolished and replaced. We have received few comments, couple in support, some concerned citizens came to the office. This is a vacant site and the new proposal is in keeping with the comprehensive plan. Parking is provided under the building. The site is located within walking distance of 7 bus lines. The project is located toward the western edge of Watertown Square, across from the Town Hall and Saltonstall Park. Charles River is located less than 2 blocks away. Abutting the property to the south is residential neighborhood. Pedestrian amenities will be provided. Bicycle storage is increased and 3 benches added. There are 10 criteria for site plan. A small amount of landscaping is in the rear. Existing chain link fence will be removed. This is a well-designed project, 20% of open space is required, and 6% will be on site, the rest incorporated into open space terraces. Site circulation is met, surface garage has 30 spaces & 22 bike parking spaces with exterior parking for 16 bikes. DPW will have final sign off. LEED Silver certifiable requirement will be met. Proposed screening is appropriate, there are limitations on type of lighting. The project was reviewed by Watertown Housing Partnership and staff, total of 5 affordable units will be provided.

Payson Whitney, I like the concept of reusing the site. No shadow study has been submitted, the height will have effect on condo buildings to the west, how much of a distance is between the buildings? How many deliveries, trash pickup, etc., is fire department satisfied with access? Are there any time restrictions? Are the building materials too similar to the others?

Bill York, Atty, there is 14 feet to the next building, which only has 5 feet to the lot line, the rear setback is 29 to 30 feet. Business zone does not require setbacks.

Eric Brown, the morning views will be affected. There will be blockage of sun at certain times of the day. There will be roll out bins to the trash truck. We are not trying to match anything, we are trying to transform an existing visually degenerate site to a new modern project. The project will fully comply with all building codes and Watertown Ordinances.

Gary Shaw, are the air conditioning units too noisy? Are people encouraged not to have cars? There are 30 parking spaces for 34 units, how does that work?

Eric Brown, we are trying to find quiet equipment that would be placed away from the edge. Retail unit will be placed on ground floor.

Robert Michaud, we are obligated to select 3 TDM elements, we have selected 4. Street parking is available at night and on the weekend.

Janet Buck, I can't wait to see this build. The only access to the green space is through the garage?

Jason Cohen, we have received a memo from David Gamble stating that the project conforms to Watertown Design Guidelines and Standards. The use of the building is appropriate to Main Street. The structure tapers back towards the residential neighbors. Natural wood siding is preferable to the proposed horizontal fiber cement siding and panels. The site would benefit from higher quality materials.

Eric Brown, we don't have final details yet, little variety will be provided.

Chris Marchaud, how does the parking work with overnight parking invitees?

Libby Shaw, why do terraces count as open space, it should not be counted. Tree trench along the street is nice but structural soil does not have any nutrients, real soil is needed. I am concerned with trees in the rear, there might not be enough soil.

Marcia Ciro, Bay Street, will the first floor business be closed at night?

Paula, Walnut Street, where will the affordable units be located?

Gideon Schreiber, the affordable units will be placed throughout the building.

David Lu, Main Street, I live next door, our building has enough parking for our structure. Where is the overflow of this building park? Will the street parking taken over by residents of this building?

....., abutter, I live in the rear of this property, where will the visitors park? There are 4 units in my building, 8 cars on our site. Cars for 40 units will not fit into 27 parking spaces. I am concerned about the noise and lights coming from the terraces. People staring into out back yards. What will be the working hours during construction?

Gary Shaw, the petitioner does not own the property

Gideon Schreiber, a construction management plan will be submitted. All lighting will be controlled, exterior lighting showing height of poles submitted. Corner lights will be removed. The property owner has to sign off on the petition application.

Bill York, the property is under agreement.

Curtis Whitney, we are representing the owners, we are excited about this proposal. It is a change for better.

Jason Cohen, study of properties on Arsenal Street shows that there is way more parking then needed. The Town is changing, we do not need parking space for each unit.

Gideon Schreiber, it was a region wide parking study done by MAPC. Interns visited sites at night when they are fully occupied. This area has least demand for parking, less than 1 space per unit is needed.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit/Site Plan Review under Sections 5.01.1(k), 6.01(f) (reduced parking), 9.03, 9.04 to construct a mixed use 5-story building with 34 residential units and 1,050 s.f. of commercial space based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions in the staff report.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

- **85 Walnut Street;** 10-85 Walnut Owner LLC - **Special Permit/Site Plan Review**
- **101 Walnut Street;** New Green Apple Limited Partnership - **Amend Special Permit**

Matt Price, we have made progress from the early design. The property was acquired year ago, the proposal is commercial development. The site is located in commercial area abutting residential neighborhoods. We are proposing redevelopment of the Doble Engineering building and a 32,000 s.f.

park on Walnut Street. Site access will be improved, with additional Arsenal Street access improving the connectivity. The new design is based on community feedback.

John Sullivan, Architect, our company previously built the LINKS building. We have a very positive vision for this site. This will be part of the Arsenal Street corridor. It is a 4.9 acre site with frontage on Walnut Street. We are proposing 3 story, 90,000 s.f. garage structure, the site is an important part of the neighborhood. The building will have about 213,000 s.f. of R&D space, 4 story high, maximum of 566 parking spaces, minimum of 398 spaces. There will be 98 interior and exterior bicycle spaces. 30% of open spaces, 37% with shadow parking. The property is higher on the Walnut Street site and slopes down to Arsenal Street. We are placing the building closer to Arsenal Street away from the Walnut Street residential neighborhood. A large amenity, Public Park, will be build close to Walnut and Birch Streets. Transportation analyses are presented tonight. Bike and pedestrian access between Walnut & Arsenal Street, bicycle amenities proposed. TDM plan proposed, site proximity to public transit. We are proposing off-site improvements, adding pedestrian and safety measures, signage at crossings, and making Cypress and Walnut Street intersection safer. New entry at 101 Walnut Street, new signalization providing safer environment. Easement agreement to allow connection of Walnut and Arsenal Street. Emergency access provided, 32,000 s.f. park for the neighborhood. We will try to preserve the existing trees. An amphitheater with natural seating where the property slopes will be fully accessible to public. Focus will be on lighting, minimizing toward the neighborhood but providing safety on site, with sensors in the garage. On site storm water management, energy efficient equipment, high performance materials will be used. We are now LEED silver, our goal is gold. We are proposing native plantings, significant tanks for storm water retainage. Our design is partially inspired by the Watertown Arsenal, looking to provide reference to the history.

Gideon Schreiber, the petitioner provided excellent presentation. The request is to demolish the existing former Doble Engineering building and replace it with a 213,500 s.f., 4 story, Research & Development, office & Laboratory. Changes were made to site, the garage will house 371 parking spaces with ability to house additional floor (102 spaces), and 93 surface shadow spaces. The building is closer to down the hill, below 1 FAR. If residential it would be twice as much. The 32,000 s.f. park near Walnut Street is a key component. This is an appropriate location for such a use, the petitioner has substantial ability to make changes. There will be many changes in the neighborhood. During the winter street parking ban, the petitioner will allow resident parking on their site. They will use very advance light technology. They are proposing solar panels on the roof of the garage. Conditions have substantially improved along Arsenal Street, much safer environment. The petitioner is proposing off site financial support, DPW conditionally approved storm water. Utility will be placed underground, spot lights removed. LEED silver met, the goal is gold. The ten criteria for SPR met, many trees will be retained but some have to be removed. Screening plan has been approved. We have received brief memo from David Gamble, the project is in compliance with Design Guidelines. Staff recommends conditional approval, solar assessment has been submitted showing compliance. The Planning Board will provide recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals for final approval.

Jeff Brown, is the petitioner coming back to the Planning Board for approval of materials used?

Gary Shaw, why is the petitioner asking for solar energy system delay?

Gideon Schreiber, the project is going to ZBA for final approval. Condition #22 of the staff report – the petitioner would like to wait with the garage installation of the solar panels until the tenant is determined, up to a year. The neighborhood does not want taller garage, shadow parking spaces would be used first.

William York, Atty, the top level of the new garage has 102 parking spaces, but will not be built yet. If in a year after the building is 100% occupied, it will be used as an office space not R&D, and more parking spaces are needed, surface shadow parking will be used first. During the construction, we will

provide off-site parking for the workers, we will come back to the Boards with a proposal of off street parking.

Gideon Schreiber, we have received a letter from Conservation Commission Chairman Leo Martin. The CC is in favor of increase of open space from 22% to 30%, regrets the removal of 18 mature trees where the storm water is proposed. We have met with Trees for Watertown Libby Shaw, many of the Norway maple will be saved.

Payson Whitney, this is a solid design concept. The realignment with Louise Street will be beneficial. The park on Walnut Street is a great idea, this is an opportunity for some green roof elements. Condition #24 of the staff report regarding the Community path, it should not state "Consider".

Gary Shaw, I am in support of the project, but there are couple of concerns. A lot of mechanical equipment is proposed for the roof, how will the neighborhood be protected from the noise, is there a screening?

Jason Cohen, the access is proposed from Walnut and Arsenal Street. A very long building is on Arsenal Street, is there a more direct way to get to the building?

Steve Kalmanides, 227-229 Arsenal Street, I have lived in this house for 47 years, this project will add more traffic to already congested area. Everyone is concerned with residents on Walnut, Birch Street but nobody mentions residents on Arsenal Street. It takes me 10 minutes to get out of my driveway.

Gideon Schreiber, large trucks are not allowed on Mount Auburn Street, they go onto Arsenal Street. 65% of the traffic comes from south, 35% onto Walnut Streets. This design will create better flow.

Paula Halpin, 86 Walnut Street, I am a direct abutter to the site. When the trucks come to the site, there will be increase in traffic and noise. The petitioner will provide winter parking, many of the concerns at the neighborhood have not been addressed, and we are concerned with noise and light. Can we get written commitment regarding winter parking?

Matt Price, we are committed through the TDM. The lighting will be addressed, minimized as soon as possible.

Marcia Ciro, Bay Street, the lighting on top of the garage will not be placed until construction completed?

John Sullivan, when the solar panels get added, some lights will be added but no poles.

Chris, Birch Street, I read the staff report and conditions, there is a big difference between consider and commitment.

Lisa Feltner, District B Town Councilor, the petitioner responded too many of our concerns. How long will the construction take, we would like to see estimated time frame. I am concerned that they are proposing 5 story garage, it will increase shadow on Birch Street. The gas meters and other equipment are not screened. There are some mixed messages given to the developer, maybe changes to the Zoning Ordinance are in order. There are lots of exciting things on this project, but many concerns have to be worked out as well.

Gideon Schreiber, the petitioner will submit construction management plan when the building permit is issued.

Jeff Brown, if it's primarily lab space it will be advantage to the community.

Janet Buck, we are now in transitional period, we are pushing developers to create different parking plans.

Jason Cohen, this project has lot going for it. If we do not approve this, we might have to consider moratorium.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit with Site Plan Review for **85 Walnut Street** based on the finding that it meets the criteria set forth under Sections 9.0(c), 9.05(b) outlined in Section 1.00 of the Zoning Ordinance, under Section 5.01.3(a.2) and 5.01.5(c)(e) for new construction of an office, lab, and/or R&D, and allowing for, under Section 5.05(d) reduced side yard setback, Section 4.11(d) for increased build-to-line, Section 4.10 for increased height of building, penthouse and screening, Section 6.01(h)(f) for shadow and reduced parking with conditions as set forth in the staff report.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Amendment of the Control Plans/Decision of ZBA 2017-04 & ZBA-2001-47 for **101 Walnut Street** to allow access easement and reconfiguration of parking and walkway that required the previous access to Doble Engineering be blocked of once they are not a sub-tenant should be deleted since there will be a new Private Way. Control Plan titled 101 Walnut Street Site Plan issued 11/12/2019 as modified to include updated landscape where driveway is removed and show compliant new lighting, if necessary, within the easement area.

Jason Cohen seconded the motions.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

OTHER

Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 10:50 PM.