



TOWN OF WATERTOWN

Zoning Board of Appeals

Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, Chairperson
David Ferris, Clerk
Christopher H. Heep, Member
Kelly Donato, Member
Michael E. Brangwynne, Alternate
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MINUTES

On Wednesday evening, February 26, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chamber of the Administration Building, the Zoning Board of Appeals held a public hearing. In attendance: Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, *Chair*; Christopher Heep, *Member*; Kelly Donato, *Member*; Michael Brangwynne, *Alternate Member*; Francis Goyes Flor, *Alternate Member*. Also, Present: Mike Mena, *Zoning Enforcement Officer*; Gideon Schreiber, *Senior Planner*; Louise Civetti, Clerk to the Board; Member Ferris, absent.

Chair SantucciRozzi opened the meeting, introduced the staff and members of the Board, noting the Member Ferris was absent and the Member Heep would be acting Secretary for the evening. The Chair also announced the cases that would not be heard, and continued to the following month. The Chair continued, stating that she would recuse herself from hearing Clyde Road, due to not being present at the previous meeting where the item was discussed. Finally, the Chair acknowledged that the current Clerk to the Board was retiring and that the Board appreciated all her work over the years.

The Board went on to approve the minutes from the December 2019 and January 2020 meeting, with a vote of 5-0-1, Member Ferris absent.

Item #1: 18-20 Porter Street

The Chair called on the applicant for 18-20 Porter Street, to update the Board on the requested item from the January meeting and continue review and consideration of the application to extend a non-conforming driveway.

Olga Ban of Ramol Partners referenced that some changes to the proposed plan had been made. The applicant worked with a landscaped architect to provide a significant amount of landscaping and modified the number of parking spaces requested from four spaces to three spaces and worked with a turning template to ensure that the spaces would work. Additionally, curbing is being proposed to be installed at the edge of the driveway and parking area to prevent parking on the areas with lawn. The lawn in the rear and four foot buffer to the right, would serve as snow storage.

The proposed landscaping would be a mix of plants that would have growth throughout the year and was designed to screen the parking from the neighborhood and the applicant explained the location of the perimeter fencing. The parking spaces would be required to back out of the driveway, which would be pavers rather than asphalt.

The Chair asked whether any members the Board had any questions. Member Donao – asked about a tree, which had been removed recently. The applicant stated that the dead cherry tree had been removed from the center of the property and explained that the remaining trees shown on the plan are located on their property. The member also wanted to confirm that the parking area would be constructed of pavers and expressed her continued concern of the impact to the neighbors.

Member Brangwynne confirmed that there would only be three deeded spaces. Member Flor noted that the turning radiuses were still not shown on the plan as previously requested. The applicant noted that they did work with a template, which is why they removed one space from their request. The Chair also noted and expressed concern of the lack of turning radius, lack of dimensions on the plan, and inconsistencies between the landscape plan and the surveyed plan. The Chair noted that progress was made from the last meeting but more accurate plans and clarity would be needed prior and not inclined to approve at this time.

The Chair opened the meeting up to the public for comment. No comments were provided.

Member Heep suggested the applicant come back at the March meeting with the information requested (property lines, dimensions, turning template, etc.). The Chair also confirmed with the applicant and noted that a section at the rear between the parking and rear entrance should be grass, so it does not become parking. Member Heep motioned to continue the application and Member Flor seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0-1 vote, Member Ferris absent.

Member Heep read the legal notice for **19 Coolidge Hill Road**:

“19 Coolidge Hill Road, 19 Coolidge Hill Owner LLC, 275 Grove St., Ste 2-400, Newton, MA 02466, requests the Zoning Board of Appeals grant a Special Permit in accordance with Watertown Zoning Ordinance §5.01.5(i), 5.05(i), 6.01(f), 9.04, 9.06(b) to construct a new, approximately 73,738 s.f. self-storage facility and 1,000 s.f. public space with shared parking. Located in the “I-2” (Industrial) Zoning District. ZBA-2019-29”

The Petitioner presented the final design and explaining the changes incurred due to the suggestions and recommendations from Staff, the community, the peer design review, and the Department of Public Works. The changed included, setting the building back from both streets, where the existing building is located at the lot line; lowering the height and length of the proposed building by bringing 2.75 levels below grade and increasing the pocket-park at the rear of the property; presenting multiple exterior surfaces with trimmed and incorporating green screens to add visual interest; complying with the solar ordinance by adding a roof-top solar array (not effecting neighbors visual site line); creating an interior community space with access to common restrooms; adding more than required bicycle parking, and modifications to the loading area and auto parking.

ZBA Members questioned how the community space would work; if bicycle parking is included for the community space; if the pocket-park will connect to the town-owned park; what was proposed for signage; if community space could be a coffee shop; what size will the storage units will be; what the hours of operation would be for storage use vs. the community space; if snow storage would be in loading spaces; if neighbors would be able see the roof equipment; and, if the community space would be dark when not in use.

The applicant and staff responded that the Town would program the community space. Staff noted that the topography between the pocket park to the rear of the building and Filipelo Park was too steep for

an accessible path, but that the parking was designed for a potential connection should an option become available in the future. The applicant stated that the storage units would be small units to begin, but the building design would allow units sizes to change depending on demand. Furthermore, the applicant stated that the hours of the storage facility would be between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., when the doors would be locked and access thereafter would only be by a fob and until 10 p.m. The hours of the community space would depend on the programming of the space by the Town and be determined by the Town. The applicant stated that roof equipment, besides the solar panels, would be minimal and would potentially be visible, as you get higher up the hill. The applicant also stated that a low level lighting of the community space would be lit over night to create a resemblance of an active street.

The ZBA commented that the above grade FAR is 1.05; that the plans are well done; they are happy with the limited parking provided, and that the building would be stepped back from the street, and that they appreciate the work that went into the design, and they thanked the petitioner for the design.

The ZBA went on to clarify the conditions regarding trash removal to be between the hours of 9am-6pm (when building is staffed to bring totes to area for pick-up and back into building); the site would be kept clean by the manager; the truck loading/unloading would be limited to 35' trucks; snow storage would be at the rear of the parking area, and if encroaches into the loading area, it would be removed from the site; there would be no code access – access only via fob; and, the maximum number of units would be a maximum 700 in any configuration. Furthermore, the town would determine the hours of the community space after 6pm. The 16 parking spaces proposed would meet the zoning requirements - 11 regular, 2 handicapped, and the 3 in the loading area could be tandem for a total of 19. Low voltage lighting would be added for after-hours. Minimal lighting for safety would be provided in the parking lot (could add bollards with down lighting).

Member Heep motioned to approve the petition for Special Permit to construct a self-storage facility with public space with the conditions stated in the Planning Board report and updated by the Board of Appeals, as it meets the criteria set out in the ordinance. Member Donato seconded. Members Heep, Donato, SantucciRozzi, Brangwynne and Flor voted in the affirmative, 5-0-1, Member Ferris absent.
