

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: June 14, 2021 PLACE: Virtual Meeting TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting – Continued from 6/9/2021

PRESENT: Jeff Brown, Chairman; Jason Cohen; Payson Whitney; Janet Buck
Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Board; Steve Magoon, Director of DCD&P; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner; Larry Field, Senior Planner

REGULAR MEETING

Jeff Brown, tonight is the continuation of 311 Arsenal Street from Planning Board meeting on June 9, 2021.

CONTINUED CASE

- **311 Arsenal Street; ARE_MA Region No.25, LLC – Amendment to Campus Master Plan**

Dante Angelucci, the entire presentation was completed on June 9, 2021. Concerns expressed at the last meeting and questions from the Planning Board will be addressed tonight.

Gideon Schreiber, we will have a public comment session but questions will not be answered during the presentation.

Caroline Braga, all new buildings met the design requirements, same principles were used for landscape design. Sidewalks have been added and accessible drop-off locations are shown on the map. 38 parking spaces are required, we will provide 48.

John Sullivan, some modifications were made to East and West garage, spaces were not taken away, bike spaces and showers are moved closer to entry of Building 1. 6 handicap spaces at west garage are in the same area to provide safe access. We will take down some physical barriers to allow access to the campus.

Jason Cohen, we have received countless emails regarding number of trees being removed. Detailed survey of all the trees is requested including species, conditions. Is there a full inventory already that is available to the public? I am in favor of Building 2, Building 1 is next to the garage, it is unfortunate that trees will be removed. It looks like a beautiful design for a garden but why can't the existing trees dictate the design? There are 15 mature trees. Building 2 is near Kingsbury that has a nice row of trees. The building's new design will remove trees which will disrupt the natural space and will make it less accessible to people. Building 131 is a very nice building, I appreciate the team's effort to approach net 0. We need to assure that the energy use reduction will not be discarded.

Payson Whitney, the overall plan is improvement over the original Masterplan but it has very large impact on existing trees. Removing trees to put underground stormwater system is not a good trade-off. The site has very sandy soil, this may be a unique case. I am concerned about trees next to Building 312. Most of the about 70 emails that we have received are about taking trees out. I urge the petitioner to look at the design again. Building 1 design compliments the Arsenal, Building 2 does not fit onto the campus. David Gamble has the same comment. Same design as Building 1 would be preferable, more can be done to achieve better fit. We have 3 SPR, are we going to have several motions or just one?

Gideon Schreiber, Master Plan is the first motion. Buildings can be done together or separately. The final stormwater peer review and mitigation & transportation are not completed. Tonights meeting will not have final staff recommendation.

Janet Buck, Site Plan Review (SPR) is one motion. If the planning Board suggests modification to one building how will it affect the vote? Issues regarding the stormwater were raised by Jason Cohen and Payson Whitney. We do not know how many trees will be removed.

Gideon Schreiber, it can be done separately or the applicant can request one motion.

Dante Angelucci, we have tenants who are interested in those buildings, they want their own design. We need to move quickly. We will work with the Town on what is more important, trees or stormwater infiltration.

Steve Magoon, it makes sense to have conversation with DPW regarding the stormwater. We will have answers at the next PB meeting in July.

Janet Buck, I am pleased with the petitioners efforts. We would like to see some flowering trees. There is still room for improvements.

Jeff Brown, I agree with Jason Cohen, it is unfortunate to take trees down to create new garden. Some of the existing trees are not so large, could they be relocated? Why is Building 2 needed, there are many structures on the campus. Will this happen in phases?

Dante Angelucci, we have pre-approved square footage of buildings, there is not much space left. This is now the best location, the market demand is high. We want to capture the existing demand, buildings will be done within 14 months.

Jason Cohen, Building 2 is very close to Building 131. The structure is just squeezed in, it is an unfortunate location.

Janet Buck, Bldg 2 is described as glass box. Could it have smaller footprint if there was additional story ?

John Sullivan, connection point is providing pedestrian connection. It has lots of wonderful details, lighter lab space, opportunity for more pedestrian activity.

Dante Angelucci, Building 2 is smaller then originally approved. It is less impactful in this location. 22,000 s.f. of reserved space will be used for open space. We will not built any additional buildings.

Tom, 475 Arsenal Street, my balcony overlooks the area, I appreciate meeting with Alexandria, we need to have different screening proposal, plantings should be placed on their side of the fence.

Sharon Broomberg, 101 King Street, 24 trees will be transplanted, will they survive? Will Alexandria provide equipment and labor to transplant the trees? They should come up with feasible plan that would work with the Town. Save as many trees as possible.

Brian Hebeisen, 170 Worcester Street, I would like to thank the developer for the updated design. As a member of the Energy Committee, I have some issues that we have expressed in emails.

Dante Angelucci, we have received the emails and will address the issues. It is not required by code but we will answer.

Ari, how close are Buildings 1 and 2. 91% net0 condition, the last 9% is very difficult to remove. We have compared our buildings to other ones in the area, ours are always more efficient. A

40% reduction in fossil fuel in the last ten years. There are some major reductions but some are very difficult to get rid off, the buildings are 90% electrified. Very little space to place equipment on the roof.

Mark Sideris, Town Council President, I have participated in meetings with Athena, Alexandria's proposal is much better. Lot of questions have been raised and answered. Dante Angelucci and Alexandria did great job, this is a large company that wants to be part of the neighborhood. Significant contribution is given to the Mossessian Theater. We need to give them a chance.

Libby Shaw, 73 Templeton, we are glad that Alexandria's arborist is here. We do not want to lose the trees, is it possible to have alternative plan? Underground stormwater equipment will damage the tree root system. The trees are healthy, they support each other. We went through the very detailed list, many are listed as being in good condition but some are stressed. The existing trees can be incorporated into the new landscape design. It is very expensive to transplant trees. They need to be prepared, Watertown does not have enough space to transplant such trees, it would not be practical. Building 2 is south facing, the wall of glass will be cooking the trees, please preserve as many as possible.

Debra Peterson, Westland Rd, more needs to be done in this area, other transit option should be provided.

Genie Johnston, 12 Green Street, there have to be guidelines for trees to be planted. We need large shade trees, not as many and not very close. If they are too close, they will start dying.

Cathy Martin, 475 Arsenal Street, we would prefer to have screening shrubs on the 311 Arsenal Street side of the fence. Tinted windows and lights that would not glare into our units.

Elodia Thomas, compliments to Alexandria regarding the design. I would prefer 1 story higher and reduced footprint of Building 2. Watertown has very limited space, we need to work around what is there, we are all trying to make Watertown better.

William Rwombly, 75 Marion Rd, I am in support of the project. The park should be developed around the existing trees not to remove them.

Jason Cohen, are the trees in the garden area viable?

Caroline Braga, they are 4"-6" trees that are 20 year old that provide some echo system benefits. Two smaller trees are red maples.

Janet Buck motioned to continue the above petition to Monday, June 14, 2021, at 7 pm.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In Favor

Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:50 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 6/14/2021 available in the DCD&P office.