

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: November 16, 2022 PLACE: City Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

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

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Janet Buck motioned to approve Minutes of 10/12/2022 Planning Board meeting.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

CASE PENDING

- **700 Pleasant & 171 Watertown Street;** Stop & Shop Supermarket Company LLC – Special Permit

William York, Atty, this is a petition to allow designated parking spaces for outdoor transfer of retail goods to customers. 700 Pleasant Street is located in Pleasant Street Corridor District 3 & Limited Redevelopment District, 171 Watertown Street is located in Two Family & Limited Business Districts. Both petitions were heard together but will be voted on separately. A special permit is needed to allow this use. Most cities allow this use with building permit only. Watertown wants to make sure that it will not be a drive through which is not allowed.

Larry Field, the staff recommends conditional approval for 700 Pleasant Street. Planning Board has to recommend approval to the Zoning Board of Appeals for 171 Watertown Street. Location is appropriate for both.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board approve the request for Special Permit for 700 Pleasant Street based upon the finding that the proposed project meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommends to the Zoning Board of Appeals that the request for Special Permit for 171 Watertown Street be approved based upon the finding that the proposed project meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

- **Community Preservation Committee Designee**

Jason Cohen, I would prefer not to continue to participate on CPC and to allow other member of the Planning Board to participate. If there is no interest, I would continue for another year. The CPC meets once a month, it consists of reviewing submitted documents.

CASE PENDING

- **490 Arsenal Way-** Columbia Massachusetts Arsenal Office Properties LLC – Special Permit/Site Plan Review – Amendment for site improvements and new construction of 68.5 ft/4 story, 104,000 s.f. Laboratory/Research Development/Office Building

Brian Murrihy, this is a proposal for a Lab/office building LINX II, 104,000 s.f. located in I-2 zone. The total land area of 374,304 s.f.. Allowed building coverage is 50%, we are proposing 40%, 50% Lab and 50% office space. The existing public space will remain. Four stories are above grade, penthouse is over sub-grade parking levels. The building has a small footprint, the map is showing other lab buildings on Arsenal Street. LINX II is 65 feet, 100 Forge is 135 feet. Lab buildings utilize less parking. Traffic will flow out via Arsenal Way. Parking is provided below grade. Lab buildings need lots of mechanical equipment. Materials will mimic LINX I, exterior terrace will be at level I, as well as bike parking, showers and locks. The goal is to reduce the mass of the structure, 50% of the roof will be solar., total of 12,500 on site.

Jeff Brown, part of the garage is underground, what type of ventilation will be provided?

Carl Frushour, Landscape architect, we will provide mechanical ventilation. The footprint is not very large, it is a good opportunity to increase landscape on Nichols Ave. More native street trees will be added, adaptive grass mixes. Additional lawn space and pocket park facing the neighborhood with tables and chairs. Connectivity from street and blue bike station. Safe pedestrian crossing leading to Greenway, painted intersection and new concrete walkway. Good pedestrian connectivity between Phase I and II. Nice environment between visitors and employees. 22 trees will be removed but 43 planted. New materials are proposed within stormwater basin. This is a bike friendly site with facilities on site.

Scott Norton, VHB Associates, we have completed standard traffic study, 9 intersections were reviewed, it is consistent with Phase I. Access provided from Nichols Ave and Arsenal Way. Counts were done during weekday trips, morning peak hours and evening peak hours. We will continue TMA membership including shuttle service, monitoring, hosting of Blue Bike station. Enhancing pedestrian crossing & bicycle operation with improved push boxed.

Jeff Brown, if a driver enters the site by mistake it is very tricky to get out. Will there be a plan how to exit the site ? Wayfinding is very important, it needs to be addressed. The site is shared by LINXI and II, if you knew before would the garage be larger?

Abigail Hammett, staff report is looking at the worse scenario. Is there an option to address this? If the structure be leased to commercial tenant, would they have to come back?

Scott Norton, the numbers are conservative.

Brian Murrihy, we are proposing 50% Lab and 50% office, requirement for the project is to be monitored.

Gideon Schreiber, R&D is some office, the intensity would be the same. The numbers are in the Zoning Ordinance.

Jason Cohen, in the marketing/leasing strategy, do you have preference for office or labs?

Brian Murrihy, the most likely tenant will be life science company, flexibility is important, the building can be multi-purpose. We are replacing stormwater system, there will be 35% reduction of indoor water usage. Light pollution will be reduced, 40-45% site energy savings.

Janet Buck, I walk the path daily, the garage and parking areas are empty, even the parking deck. I am requesting that synthetic lawn is not used in the pocket park.

Jason Cohen, I am concerned with circulation. There is a stop sign for traffic leaving but not for coming in.

Payson Whitney, the parking on Arsenal Way is dangerous, 33 cars are parked, every car is passing them which is an opportunity for accidents. This is the only such layout in the city, are there spaces needed? There are parked and backing out vehicles, accidents will happen.

Brian Murrihy, the 33 spaces on Arsenal Way are necessary. We looked at angle parking, it would be even more challenging.

Scott Norton, the parking spaces are relatively far from the building, we are proposing razed crosswalk. Arsenal Way is 22 feet wide which is sufficient for such a use.

William York, the same angled parking system is on Nichols Ave. The structure is 100 feet away from the street.

Payson Whitney, why 4 stories, asking for height relief plus the penthouse? It would fit better as a 3 story. Could the 33 parking spaces be used as shadow parking?

Abigail Hammett, I appreciate the effort to make the footprint smaller. It feels that the public space is facing the campus, the terrace will not be open to the public. LINX I has nice public space and good relationship with Greenway but the edge of Greenway is treated as a parking area. Could there be more parking spaces provided in the garage?

Carl Frushour, we will highlight the open space. The parking spaces will be used as an access to the Greenway.

Brian Murrihy, there is a significant grade difference between the areas.

Gideon Schreiber, the site is unusual. When it was occupied by Verizon, it was all parking. We have people waiting to express their concerns about this project.

Larry Field, staff recommends that a favorable recommendation be made to Zoning Board of Appeals. An addendum to staff report was submitted this afternoon. The conditions are the same as the last lab projects. That were approved.

Payson Whitney, previous conditions will be superseded by the new ones.

Barbara Ruskin, Church Street, the main concern is bio hazard and the height of the building. An article in the Boston Globe expressed concerns with noise coming to the surrounding neighborhood. Are there any policies in place by the Health and Fire Departments?

William York, these questions are addressed in the conditions of the decision. The project is in full compliance with City requirements.

Janet Buck, I am a neighbor, and we never hear any noise.

Abigail Hammett, all departments review the proposal before they come to us, they all have policies.

Ellen Rhotman, all equipment is internal, carbon emission net 0. We can share results of the study.

Gideon Schreiber, the site has several public amenities. Zoning Board of Appeals will vote at their next meeting.

Peter Pavone, I am opposed to this project, there are using the same contractors as on the last project, they do not meet the standards, use lower rates. Local resident that meet the standard should be able to work on these jobs.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a Planning Board hearing, it is about criteria of the Zoning Ordinance, union concerns are not part of this approval.

Jason Cohen, this is not criteria that is part of our decision. We are not playing a role in economic issues.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommends to the Zoning Board of Appeals that the request for Amendment for site approvement and new construction of a 68.5 ft/4 story, 104,000 s.f. Laboratory/Research & Development/Office Building including shadow parking, shared parking on lots within site and reduced parking for office use be approved based upon the finding that the proposed project meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report with additional condition that the parking spaces along Arsenal Way and to place additional stop sign for coming onto the site.

Abigail Hammett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

- **99 Water Street;** 51 Water Street LLC – Special Permit/Site Plan Review

Jeff Brown, this case will be presentation only and will be continued to December 14 Planning Board meeting.

David Manfredi, Water Street site has changed, there is an enormous amount of topography on this site and significant retaining wall. We want to restore the nature of the site, we are trying to restore the nature of the site, trying to recover the natural topography, have an access to the DCR land, improve circulation, provide new drain chambers.

Timothy Talun, Project Manager, we will create open space were is most usable, open corridor from Galen Street. Create relationship between 66 Galen Street and 99 Water Street. We will provide 3 levels of parking, taking advantage of topography and internal connection to 66 Galen Street. The enhance from Upper Water Street, bellow grade, lobby on the east side and active programs. Loading will be internal, daycare will be provided and intended for both buildings and the public. There will be a dedicated play area. Each floor will have access to 2 outdoor spaces. All equipment will be located inside the penthouse, minimal equipment will be on the roof., 25,000 s.f. of solar equipment is proposed. Materials similar to 66 Galen Street are proposed. New materials introduced will be copper coated metal. T stop will be relocated.

Jeff Dirk, Vanasse Assoc, we are looking at both buildings together. 99 Water Street is smaller than 66 Galen Street. Driveway has been moved to allow neighborhood to access safer pattern at intersections. New traffic signals will be installed.

Shawna Gilles Smith, Landscape, 54,000 s.f. of open space has been created, upper park will be connected to 66 Galen Street, sloping park and accessible connection will be added. This project will connect to sloping way, much more robust. Each space will have slightly different character. Large lawn area, addition of open pavilion that can be used for concerts, performances, etc. Pull up area for food trucks. Park will be slightly raised above the walk area, but all connected, build in seating throughout. Various plans of different areas are shown, areas connected between both buildings. Intergrated lighting within the project.

Timothy Talun, sustainability is fundamental value, achieved in different ways with building design. 100 year storm event under the open space.

Jeff Brown, this was a fabulous presentation, some parts of this proposal have not been reviewed.

Payson Whitney, I am concerned with trucks stopping on Water Street where is a curve, how are cars going to be aware that trucks are backing in. The plans are showing kitchen, bathroom and amenity space in the penthouse, as per Section 4.10 of the Zoning Ordinance living space is not allowed.

Board members were concerned with daycare access, where can the parents park and bring the children in. Could they have access to the garage, will the garage be open to the public? Is DCR declining to do anything? Petitioner stated that it is challenging to deal with DCR, they have decided to keep the land as is, maybe in the future.

Payson Whitney motioned to continue the petition to the next Planning Board meeting.
Janet Buck seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 10:00 pm.

