

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: January 11, 2023 PLACE: City 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; Abigail Hammett
Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner; Larry Field,
Senior Planner

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Larry Field, two workshop were hosted by the City of Watertown regarding vision and proposed goals. Next phase is to draft goals and strategies, which will be revised based on the comments from the workshops. Full draft will be prepared, and it should be ready by middle of February. Revisions will be made and the Comprehensive Plan will go to the Planning Board and the City Council for adoption.

WATERTOWN HIGH SCHOOL DESIGN REVIEW

James Norton, Architect, 90% of construction documents is done, ready to go out for bid. Completion of construction in April 2026. We have worked closely with the School Committee, staff and individual departments. All documents are uploaded, the design took over 2 years. The structure will be NET 0, 2.0 certification, it is the only such structure in the country. It is a super compact building, as energy efficient as possible. The building has compact footprint, outdoor amphitheater, recreation gardens. The parking garage will be underground. The City Masterplan provided important guidance. The garage will accommodate staff on site and ample parking for visitors. Temporary space will be provided at Moxley playground, maintaining central location during construction and in the future.

....., Landscape Architect, no ramps and stairs outdoors, new crosswalks, green space for outdoor education will be extended. Flexible space at Common Street, learning spaces added, green space created at the rear of the building, trying to have as much space as possible.

James Norton, proposed outdoor gymnasium extension on Barnard Avenue. The building height will be maintained, 4 stories in the rear, there will be no impact on nearby homes. The base of the structure will be granite, grey and brick color with stone features. Samples of the materials are available in the Watertown Public Library. There will be outdoor dining options as well.

Andy Street, Eng. traffic study is part of the process, showing AM arrival and PM dismissal times. PM is very similar to morning times. Snow storage is always a concern, there are extensive walkways and the snow has to be removed, snow storage placement is proposed in several areas, keeping the snow of the roadways.

....., Landscape Architect, multiple access point created for parking garage access from Barnard Avenue. Pedestrian access from Common Street, Fire and emergency access provided. Underground parking garage will provide 128 spaces. Exterior and interior signage will be placed on Common and Columbia Streets. Exterior site lighting, recessed pathway wall lights mount. Safe secured passages provided.

Jeff Brown, what is the general timing?

Jason Cohen, it is a well thought process, the site selection process was very painful.

James Norton, the proposed construction is 30 to 36 months. There are unknown features, availability of materials, changes in construction costs and labor availability.

CASE PENDING

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

Gideon Schreiber, this is a continued hearing. Planning Board will make a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals for final approval.

Bob Doherty, Boston Development, the project was presented to the Planning Board in November 2022, when the Board decided to continue the case to allow us to address the concern. We will answer the question tonight.

Timothy Talun, Project Manager, a full presentation was made 2 months ago. The site is oriented toward Galen Street, it will provide improvements to the area, campus of buildings will be created. Boston Development Group purchase the site, creating new intersection. Truck access to loading dock, space between buildings. Safe pedestrian raised crossing, there will be no conflict with backing of trucks. Most drivers make clockwise backing movements. We have verified that the amenity space in penthouse is within the 2 story allowance of additional space. There is a 20 foot difference in grade.

Gideon Schreiber, Zoning Officer Tony Mancini will make sure that Zoning Ordinance measurements are correct. The height has to be less than 2 stories.

Timothy Talun, we have followed the criteria in the Zoning Ordinance. Open space is 62,700 s.f., 1800 more than required. Height is compatible to 66 Galen Street. The project has extensive street scape and traffic improvements that are part of both projects. We will provide onsite daycare, access for Water Street and also from the parking garage. One drop-off per 10 children, 3 spaces on Water St and 10 in the garage. The project will generate approx. \$3 million for the city.

Bob Doherty, similar system as at 150 Coolidge, teacher will be on sidewalk during peak time walking the children to Scheel.

Gideon Schreiber, this will be a brief staff report. It is a 2 phase project, supporting documentation is included. Peer review is completed, some details needed to be clarified, including crosswalks on Nonantum and Water St. More improvements were made. The original proposal did not include the gas station. Significant improvements to pedestrian sidewalks. Staff is in support of the proposal, peer review for stormwater is completed. It is a multi-step process, final approval will be done by DPW. The petitioner proposed improvements to property owned by DCR but they declined. Existing Water Street will remain, DCR property is adjacent, it needs more maintenance. They are not in support of maintaining the stormwater system. The design of the building, they are asking for increased in height to create better design. The 4 criteria have been met, the project is consistent with the January 2021 approval. All utility poles have been removed, all utilities will be underground. Existing contamination mitigated. 10 criteria for Site Plan Review conditionally met. This is a unique environment and open space is accessible by the public. Significant work has been done on the site and off-site circulation improved. 66 Galen Street will be also modified. Staff recommends conditional approval, conditions are specific to this site. Additional antennas are not allowed on the penthouse.

Ruth Rappaport, 28 Hunt Street, we have witnessed many accidents in this area. We has good conversation with the developer, we are concerned with crossing at the intersections. There is not enough visibility, maybe a flash/traffic signal can be added to ensure safety. Please work with DCR regarding these concerns.

Bob Doherty, we had conversations with Ruth, the intersection will have major improvements. It is a narrow roadway, there is not enough width. DCR is out of our control, we offered to clean up DCR area as well.

Gideon Schreiber, we do not have control over DCR either.

Libby Shaw, Trees for Watertown, it is wonderful to see so many trees proposed. To provide long and healthy life, sole value and water supply is important.

Abigail Hammett, is the café in the lobby publicly accessible? The park is sloped, will kids try to sled on it?

Jason Cohen, there are 2 building interacting with each other, site slopes in different direction. The presentation for this project was excellent.

Janet Buck, I do not have any comments since the last meeting, this is a beautiful design.

Payson Whitney, I would like to see a clarification regarding the penthouse. I have concerns regarding the loading dock. People are coming down Water Street and encountering backing truck, there is a potential for accidents, the area needs to be made safer. Condition #24 regarding the penthouse and mechanical equipment is important.

Jeff Brown, this is a nice complex, older buildings on Galen Street might need improvements.

Abigail Hammett, condition #14 needs to be clarified. 66 Galen Street faces Galen Street, 99 Water Street faces Greenway. The corner of the building could be softer.

Janet Buck motioned that the Planning Board recommends to the Zoning Board of Appeals that the request for Special Permit with Site Plan Review to construct a 4 story Laboratory/Research & Development building with mechanical penthouse 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.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:50 PM

MINUTES APPROVED: _____