

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: May 10, 2023 PLACE: City Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

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

Payson Whitney motioned to approve Minutes of the April 12, 2023 meeting,
Abigail Hammett seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0 In favor

CASE PENDING

- **90 School Street;** Robert & Sandra MacKerron – Special Permit/Site Plan Review

Ken Leitner, Atty, the petitioner came before the Board previously. This is a request to construct a dormer on the third floor, increasing pre-existing non-conforming half story, and to convert existing two-family to a three family by converting the basement living space to a third unit, no change in FAR. The property is located in Neighborhood Business District. The dormer will allow to provide additional space for a bathroom. Second unit is located on first floor, first unit on second and third floor.

Larry Field, staff recommends approval. The large site accommodates 3 units. The dormer will provide additional 84 s.f. in the already non conforming attic area. The proposed use is not substantially more detrimental. Revised site plan has been submitted showing the landscape. There is sufficient parking for 6 vehicles.

Payson Whitney, did the building and fire departments review the basement unit ? How do you keep the snow from piling up against the windows/doors?

Abigail Hammett, a snow sensor might be appropriate for the entrance to the basement unit.

Libby Shaw, Trees for Watertown, is there any provision for shade trees on the property? More green friendly space is needed.

Gideon Schreiber, the petitioner is proposing garden but not new trees.

Payson Whitney motioned that the Planning Board recommends to the Zoning Board of Appeals that the Special Permit/Special Permit Finding under Sections 5.01(d) & 4.06(a) 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: 4-0 In Favor

CONTINUED CASE

- **104-126 Main Street;** O'Connor Capital Partners LLC/O'Connor Management LLC – Special Permit/Site Plan Review

Janet Buck, the Planning Board heard this project presentation last month. At that point we have closed the public hearing, the Board was very much in favor of the proposal. The petitioner addressed some of the issues and we have received revised plans. The purpose of tonight's meeting is for the Planning Board to deliberate. We will forward this project with recommendation to the Zoning Board of

Appeals for final decision. I will not open Public Hearing tonight, public was heard on April 12. The public will have another opportunity to speak at the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on May 24.

Gideon Schreiber, public testimony was closed at the Planning Board meeting in April. Planning Board is recommending body, final decision will be made by Zoning Board of Appeals on 5/24.

Abigail Hammett, can the petitioner make presentation of the changes only tonight? Members of the public were trying to submit tonight a document called Watertown Square Design district that was completed in 1986.

Jason Cohen, we get materials at the last minute continuously, it is difficult to review the documents at that time.

Gideon Schreiber, a thorough public process was followed at the last meeting, everyone had the opportunity to speak. The public hearing was closed very late, today is time for the Board to deliberate.

Janet Buck, I am asking the developer to present only the changes now.

Brett Buehrer, O'Connor Capital Partners LLC, we have received some constructive comments at the last meeting. New plans that include the changes have been submitted tonight. The Board wanted to see an increase of 3-bedroom units and color scheme of the façade. Make the plaza more inviting. Add exterior views to the submitted plans.

Matt Mariotta, ICON Architecture, we have modified the unit mix, 2 additional 3-bedroom units have been added. Building is setback, consistent color scheme, attention given to building behind townhouses, access to parking provided. Screening toward the adjacent neighbors, substantial landscape added, light will not affect adjacent properties.

Nancy Ludwig, Landscape Architect, a connection with public art and seating area has been improved. Façade pulled back 5 feet, creating 15' opening. Landscape pulled back creating 10' opening in the back. Art installation is proposed on the side of the garage, a strong welcoming connection created.

Matt Mariotta, we have added dark grey corner element, dormers on the 4th level and pedestrian plaza. Artwork installation and outdoor seating. String lights will be added so that public can utilize the space.

Jason Cohen, the petitioner addressed comments from the last meeting, making the open space more inviting to the public.

Payson Whitney, this presentation was very helpful. New plans are very useful. Elevations should be required in future project. Changes in the façade materials helped a lot, it breaks up the mass. The 6th story makes this building look like 461 Arsenal Street. The impervious pavement in the plaza, what material is that?

Nancy Ludwig, pavers will be a crushed stone.

Janet Buck, if the color would be all grey, it would be better. I appreciate opening the wall and providing outdoor seating. Art District in the Watertown Square is under consideration, it will bring life to Watertown Square.

Abigail Hammett, I appreciate the changes. Including 3-bedroom units can be challenging, these are all positive changes. This is a controversial project, the design team made an effort to make it appropriate to this area. Lot of work was made to make it feel appropriate.

Jason Cohen, the project now looks like many different buildings. The walls could be angled, and a mansard roof would be more appropriate.

Jason Cohen motioned that the Planning Board recommends to the Zoning Board of Appeals that the Special Permit/Site Plan Review for 5 lots (104&116-126 Main St, 2 Cross St, 53 Pleasant St, vacant lot corner Cross St/Pleasant St) into new mixed-use development under Sections 5.01(k)(2), 4.10, 5.05(f), 6.01(e)(f), 5.07, 4.06(a), 9.12, 9.03-05 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: 4-0 In Favor

Janet Buck adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm.