

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: November 8, 2023 PLACE: City Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Hearing

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

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Jason Cohen motioned to approve Minutes of the 10/11/2023 meeting.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Janet Buck, we have several items on the agenda where the petitioners asked for a continuance.

Payson Whitney motioned to continue the petition for 10-30 Manley Way to the Planning Board meeting on January 10, 2024.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Jason Cohen motioned to continue the petition for 313&275 Pleasant St/84-86 Rosedale Rd/60 Acton Street to the Planning Board meeting on December 13, 2024.

Abigail Hammett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Janet Buck, we have received a request from Alexandria Real Estate Equities for 2 addendums to the March 2022 approved program.

Addendum #1 – Building Signage Update-one tenant main entrances blade sign at building 311, one wayfinding sign at updated turn-around, and an entrance canopy over a door at 200 Talcott

Suzie Markin, this is a request for blade signage update, adding specific tenant entry points, adding tenant names under the number. At the request of the Watertown Fire Department, we have added signage on top of School Street, to redirect people. A canopy was added over the entrance.

Gideon Schreiber, I can provide more details, there are Mass restrictions as well, to be submitted to the Board.

Susan Markin, as soon as we get the Planning Board approval, the application will go to the Mass Historical Commission.

Addendum #2 – Incorporate Artistic Branded Signage – details added to the campus with 3 sculptures with integrated “lighthouse” branding, and one inlay with compass/lighthouse branding.

Susan Markin, this signage is a artistic branded signage plan, curved aluminum painted. Next is in the North Beacon Street area, sculpture, 3rd is the compass laid in granite, and the final is the fire pit.

Rachael Sack, is there any other signage?

Gideon Schreiber, there will be identifying signage.

Payson Whitney, the signage is open to interpretation. Are fire pits allowed in Watertown ?

Abigail Hammett, are there any plans for Public Art ?

Susan Markin, some will be placed within the pavilion.

Gideon Schreiber, sign changes will be tastefully implemented, more information about the public space is available.

Jason Cohen, this is the most whimsical building in the City.

Janet Buck, the design is very tasteful, I am disappointed that the fire pit is available to employees only.

Jason Cohen motioned that the Planning Board approve Addendum # 1 to March 2022 approved program.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Jason Cohen motioned that the Planning Board approve Addendum # 2 to March 2022 approved program.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-1 In favor

Abigail Hammett opposed

CASES PENDING

550 Arsenal St (and 446, 458, 500 & 550 Arsenal St) – Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc

Janet Buck, we have received addendum to the staff report.

Ricky Golden, Alexandria, several comments were made during the site plan review and more residential components have been added.

Adrian Nial, we have updated the plans, safety improvements have been added.

Victor Pechaty, Architect, we have amended the diagram, aerial renderings are shown, some of the amenities, such as the winter garden, will be open to the public.

Jeff Dirks, Vanasse Assoc., we have added enhancements, flashing lights have been added, raised up crossings, high visibility markings, installed path and street lighting at crosswalks.

Payson Whitney, is there a shared lane at Arsenal Way to access Greenway?

Rich Hollworth, VHB, we have attempted to change texture of the area in front of the garage. Flexible design to accommodate two way traffic, one way option is preferable.

Payson Whitney, raised up crossing will slow drivers, people cannot drive too fast on textured pavement.

Rich Hollworth, there are east and west entrances, some for employees, some for retail, we are trying to provide the safest conditions.

Larry Field, we have provided addendum to the staff report. This project meets the criteria, the petitioner is providing more parking than the demand. A condition that the garage is to be setup so if

there is a reduction of parking spaces, surface spaces can be converted to landscaping. The garage design should make it easier to convert. We have chosen not to make any changes to conditions, we will wait until we have a set of approved conditions that can be amended.

Gideon Schreiber, the garage at 480 Arsenal Street will have to be approved by Zoning Board of Appeals.

Larry Field, 480 Arsenal Street is included in Phase 1, the others are in the future.

Payson Whitney, we need to have flexibility in the garage and in the Mall design. Condition #8 & #13 to add wayfinding measure for construction vehicles. Condition #9 to add Site Plan Approval Decision has been provided **and reviewed** to the general contractors. Leaving some open door for residential in mixed use. Address snow removal. I still have some concerns on OL3 and OL2 height.

Bill York, we have been looking at some additional housing. Residential and Lab do not work well together, especially ventilation.

Jason Cohen, is P2 less likely to be converted ? More flexibility than P1 is needed.

Abigail Hammett, some of the conditions limit shadow parking elsewhere on the site before they cross the Greenway.

Ricky Golden, underground parking is more tricky, we are maximizing surface parking. The design of this proposal is of a very high quality.

Payson Whitney, this is a Masterplan, not a final vote.

Janet Buck, we cannot predict long term need, we are juggling several options. Is there a possibility of winter parking for the neighborhood?

Libby Shaw, I have a real concern with the winter garden, there are guidelines for such buildings to protect birds.

Janet Buck closed the public hearing at 8:15 pm.

Payson Whitney motioned that the Planning Board approve the requested Master Plan Special Permit with Site Plan Review pursuant to §5.01 (k)(2) mixed use development under §9.03 and §9.05, based on the finding that the proposed project meets the criteria set forth under §9.05, with the general purpose of the Ordinance outlined in §1.00 of the Watertown Zoning Ordinance, with the Petitioner to phase the project as proposed, with each phase requiring site plan review, and with conditions and changes to conditions #8, #9, #13 in the staff report.

Abigail Hammett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

Payson Whitney motioned that the Planning Board approve the requested Master Plan Special Permit with Site Plan Review pursuant to §5.01.5 (a,c,e,j) new construction light industry, office, lab & R&D; §5.01.3 (a,b,c,e,f,g,h,i,j) business, office and consumer service uses including retail, commercial under §9.03 and §9.05, based on the finding that the proposed project meets the criteria set forth under §9.05, with the general purpose of the Ordinance outlined in §1.00 of the Watertown Zoning Ordinance,

with the Petitioner to phase the project as proposed, with each phase requiring site plan review, and with the following conditions and changes to conditions #8, #9, #13 in the staff report.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

Payson Whitney motioned that the Planning Board approve the requested Master Plan Special Permit approval shall include the dimensional relief requested, including §4.10 increased height rooftop mechanicals and screening; §4.11(d) expanded build to line; §5.05(f) increased contiguous walls and building length in keeping with Design Guidelines; §5.05 (i) and §5.18 (c) (2) increase FAR; §5.18 (c) (5) (B) height as part of the Master Plan Special Permit; §6.01 (e, g) TDM/parking management for cross site shared parking provided on another lot, with the following conditions and changes to conditions #8, #9, #13 in the staff report.

Abigail Hammett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

Payson Whitney motioned that the Planning Board approve the requested Special Permit Finding under §4.06(a) for alteration of an existing, non-conforming structure (Target).

Rachael Sack seconded the motion.

VOTE:5-0 In Favor

Payson Whitney motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve the petition of 480 Arsenal Street based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and conditions set forth in the staff report with additional condition that parking for the neighborhood will be provided during snowstorm.

Jason Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE:5-0 In Favor

Janet Buck adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:30 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____