

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: January 20, 2011 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Linda Tuttle-Barletta; Fergal Brennock;
Staff: Steve Magoon, Director, Danielle Evans, Senior Planner

CASE PENDING

- **165, 183 & Lot 1505-2A-0 Grove Street;** David Barnett, President, the Proprietors of the Cemetery at Mount Auburn - Special Permit

William York, Atty, the proposed parking area will be the first green parking lot in Watertown. Good engineering design is in keeping with horticultural mission of Mount Auburn Cemetery. Relief requested under Section 5.01.3(c) Commercial parking lot for more than 50 parking spaces. Mount Auburn Cemetery is entering into a 10-year lease with Mount Auburn Hospital (MAH) to construct satellite parking lot for 364 car parking spaces, which includes 8 handicapped, and 25 bicycle parking spaces. This will result in consolidation of other parking lots and result in additional 96 parking spaces. Mount Auburn Cemetery is national landmark and arboretum. The long range plan includes turning the Grove Street entrance into another front entrance. The image of the street is critical. When the Aggregate site became available, the cemetery acquired the property. The Cemetery created a perfect partnership with MAH. The income from the lot will allow the Cemetery to proceed with the proposal for their property facing Grove Street as well as to enhance the Grove Street corridor. The 2.7 acre lot will be landscaped and setback the entire length of the site. Security fence will be installed and existing mature trees will be preserved. The parking lot will be open Monday to Friday, closed on weekends and holidays. 70% of the employees will arrive before 7 am and leave at 3:30. This proposal will allow for a long range planning, and work for the cemetery and the neighborhood.

Nicholas Diesso, MAH COO, a number of satellite parking sites will be consolidated by allowing this project. We have not received any complaints from abutters, the site will be vacant weekends and holidays. This lot will simplify the shuttle route. Attendees will open and close the lot. Lighting will be similar to the new hospital campus, with timers, motion detectors will be on some. The shuttle will run continuously during rush hour.

Vinod Kalikan, Traffic Engineer, VHB, several versions of traffic reports have been done in the past for this property. The last proposal was for a residential structure with 350 parking spaces and it was not approved. The property is located 1.2 miles from MAH. Many of the employees travel in this area, this proposal will allow for consolidation of the trips. Peak traffic is around 8am, 75% of the employees will be gone before the rush hour starts.

Brad McKenzie, Civil Engineer, McKenzie Engineering Group, the site does not have any vegetation, water migrates towards Grove Street. Our goal in designing the drainage facility is to bring it to full compliance with state regulations. This plan incorporates a green design and is in full compliance with the DEP Storm Water Management regulations.

Danielle Evans, staff reviewed the request, the conditions of Section 9.05(b) have been met. The site is appropriate for such a use, the parking lot will be screened and the entrance will enhance the appearance of Grove Street. Access is limited to 2 curb cuts and will be used mainly during off peak hours. The drainage plan has been approved by DPW. Staff recommends approval with conditions, with an additional condition that when the 10-year lease expires, it cannot be used as a parking lot for gain. The Town will be able to relocate the existing Town Recycling Center to the portion of the site in front of the Shick House.

John Hawes, this is a commercial agreement between the Cemetery and MAH, isn't there a form of tax ? How will the property be secured? We do not have a full landscape plan, we need to add a condition that a landscape plan will be reviewed by the staff.

Steve Magoon, the Town has been in talks with the Petitioner regarding a PILOT agreement and for assessing taxes at the commercial tax rate for the parking lot during the 10 year use. This proposal will provide some return to the property owner and allow the owner to participate in long range planning effort for Grove Street. It will give the Town the opportunity to relocate the existing recycling center.

Bill York, if this proposal is approved, it will be taxed, the owner will enter into an agreement with the Town. The fencing will be placed 8' back along the property line. The former Aggregate site will be used for storage, the front area as a small nursery and maybe some community gardening. We do not have a landscape menu yet.

David Barnett, president of Mount Auburn Cemetery, we do have an estimate, approximately 20 trees and 150 shrubs will be planted. We will also save as many existing trees as possible.

Bob Airasian, president of WBCC, we are in support of this proposal. A letter of support is being submitted tonight. The Cemetery plan is in line with the long-term development strategy by the Town.

Michael Shade, 71 Barnard Ave, Watertown Community Foundation, we had discussion with David Barnett regarding the community gardens. We are in support of this proposal.

Maria Lane, 10 Coolidge Hill Road, I was not in favor of the Hanover proposal. I hold Mount Auburn Hospital and the Cemetery in highest regard. I am opposed to granting the Special Permit for commercial parking, 364 cars are too many. The neighborhood will not gain anything but increase in noise and pollution. Roads are too narrow, too much traffic already, non peak times do not matter.

....., 21 Hall Ave, how will this additional traffic relate to the Tufts traffic? This is a great site for community gardens. Could there be trees planted to mitigate the lot and obscure the parking areas?

Bill York, the traffic study addressed this site and the Tufts site. There will not be large trucks related to this site. 100 bike spaces are already at the MAH site. We can accommodate bicycles at this site.

Alyson Karakouzian, 143 Grove Street, I am speaking on behalf of the neighborhood. This proposal is a very passive use. It will consolidate all satellite parking lots for MAH. Commercial tax agreement with the Town is appropriate. The proposal is beneficial to the neighborhood, all concerns have been addressed by the petitioner. We are in support of the proposal and both organizations.

Angie Kounelis, District A Councilor, I feel very strongly about the PILOT program and I commend Mount Auburn Cemetery on entering discussions with the Town. We have discussed the same parcel 20 months ago, I am disappointed in the process. This is not the best use of the parcel, 10 year lease is a long time. We utilize services of the Cemetery and the MAH. Previous parking study indicated that the nearby intersections are not able to handle any additional traffic. I would like to see a 6 months review of the project and to make sure that in 10 year time, no structures facility will be build on the site.

Mark Sideris, 30 Union Street, I am in support of this project. The Hanover proposal was for 170 units which were too much for the neighborhood. This is not the highest and best use of the site but the owners understand that the Town is in development process. There are many areas in the community

that have traffic problems. This proposal is something that the Town can live with, all conditions have been met.

Vince Piccirilli, 203 Orchard Street, a large project like this will have an impact on the community. I am very pleased with the process, neighbors and owners have reached an agreement. Long term plan will be more beneficial to the community.

Thomas Cooper, 2 Brigham Street, VP of MA Cemetery, the Board is fully determined to make the Grove Street entrance very attractive and to improve the corridor. We do approve of the 10 year sunset clause.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 5.01.3(c) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set out in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report with additional condition that the landscape plan will be reviewed by the staff and that no parking of any kind will be permitted after the 10 year lease.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-0 In favor

- **70 Phillips Street a/k/a 100 Parker Street;** Chico Sajovic – Amendment to Special Permit/Special Permit Finding/Variance

Chico Sajovic, the use of the property changed from industrial to educational 7 years ago. Originally, the front parking area was used for drop-off and pick-up only. This is a petition to allow the existing 10 parking spaces and 8 spaces along the fence to be used as full time parking spaces.

Danielle Evans, staff reviewed the petition, this request would not affect the original approval. The proposed change would not have adverse effect on the area. The permanent parking spaces will have less impact than the drop off spaces had. The conversion of these parking spaces is needed to provide adequate parking, staff recommends approval.

Susan Nye, 42 Washburn Street, my residential property abuts this property. I have lived here for 22 years. If I knew what it would be like to live next to industrial property, I would not have purchased my house. The property has enough parking spaces in the rear, this conversion is not needed.

Steve Magoon, the primary use change is within the building, children are not being dropped off. Extra Innings and Full Out Cheer were the original tenants, the batting cages are still there but the other side is used by Inside Playground.

Chico Sajovic, the front parking will be used by the Extra Innings. The Inside Playground is using the entrance in the rear where the main parking area is. The previous tenant was a cheerleading studio, the pick-up and drop-off was in use. There is a fence between the parking area and Mrs. Nye's property.

Susan Nye, the owner of the Extra Innings does not consider the neighborhood, our needs have to be taken into consideration. The door needs to be closed, it is a constant noise. They did not live up to the previous agreement and now they are asking for more. This is an opportunity to improve the situation.

....., owner of Extra Innings, there are no windows in the building. We have large fans, but the only air coming in is from the open doors in the front and in the rear. I have been a very good neighbor. We try to make sure that clients are not congregating outside. This is a seasonal business.

If people cannot park in the front, they will park on Parker Street. I always ask customers to find parking on the lot.

John Hawes, will it worsen the situation if people park permanently in the front? If a fence is placed in front of the door, one parking space would be lost. If an I-3 zone is next to a residential, issues will always come up, people need to communicate. We can add a condition that the application will be reviewed in 6 months.

Steve Magoon, there are other ways to provide ventilation. Open doors will let the sound out, this is not unreasonable request from the neighbors. Landscaping would not help with the noise. The request before the Board is parking, we will discuss the problems with Mrs. Nye and Chico Sajovic.

Danielle Evans, the parking spaces in the front could be used as an overflow. The ZBA likes to add a condition to revisit in 1 year, it is a condition #15 and is written in the zoning office calendar to be reviewed. We can add another condition that the abutters will be notified at that time.

Fergal Brennock, this is a difficult situation, if it gets worse, we can revisit the petition. The Board can make suggestions but it will not be implemented formally. The neighborhood issues are not in front of the Board tonight.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Amendment to Special Permit/Special Permit Finding/Variance #04/38 granted on October 27, 2004 based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set out in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report with additional condition #5 that the project will be revisited in 1 year..

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

OTHER

Steve Magoon, a significant case is scheduled for the February 9 Planning Board meeting. It will be the first case when the Planning Board is the approving authority. The petitioner is Hartz-Mason at 270 Pleasant Street, the existing buildings will be razed and 174 residential units will be constructed. The Economic Development Study is moving forward, a report needs to be produced and submitted to the Planning Board and Town Council.

Chairman John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:15 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:15 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____
For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 01/20/2011 available in the DCD&P office.