

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: February 9, 2011 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:05 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Jack Zollo; Fergal Brennock; Jeff Brown
Staff: Steve Magoon, Director, Danielle Evans, Senior Planner, Ingrid Marchesano, PB Clerk

Chairman John Hawes opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Jack Zollo motioned to approve the minutes of 11/17/2010 & 1/20/2011.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

Voted 4-0 In favor

CASE PENDING

- **320 Main Street;** John Paicopoulos – Special Permit

Jeff Brown motioned to allow the above petition to be continued to the next meeting.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

Voted 4-0 In favor

CASE PENDING

- **80 Walnut Street;** Amleto Martocchia – Variance

Mel Martocchia, this is a request to allow the building front yard of the proposed 2-family structure to have a driveway to access the garage under the building. Each unit will have 2 garage parking spaces. The existing house will be razed and two 3-level townhouses will be constructed. Each unit will be 20' wide, setback 16' from the property line.

Danielle Evans, the 8,474 s.f. site has an extreme slope. The property is located in a T zone, directly across is I-3 zone. Substantial hardship will be created if not approved. Abutting properties have similar layout. The proposal is allowed by right if the setback requirements were met. The relief needed is under Section 6.02(j) Driveway within the front yard leading to a garage setback less than 23 feet.

Richard Marcus, 68 Walnut Street, houses in this area is almost on the sidewalk. People park on the sidewalk also, it should not be allowed. If approved, the cars in this driveway will encroach onto the sidewalk also.

Steve Magoon, 16' is at the narrowest.

Paula Halpin, 86 Walnut, as an immediate abutter I oppose the granting of the variance. The proposed house will be 4 stories, 53 feet, high. The design is not very attractive, the large hill behind this house, has a spring. As an abutter, I request that analysis will be done, so that my property is not damaged. It is a 2-car garage, but it is unlikely that cars will not be park on the sidewalk.

John Hawes, the setback is accurate, the requirements for constructing the house have been met. The petition before the Board tonight is only to allow front yard access to the garage.

Jack Zollo motioned to approve the petition for variance under Section 6.02(j) to allow the building front yard to be used to access the 2 garages under the dwelling.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

Voted 4-0 In favor

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- **70 Chapman Street;** Margaret Woodruff, Bristol Development Group – Special Permit Finding & Variance

Margaret Woodruff, Bristol Development, I have purchased the property in December 2010. The existing side yard setback is 6', new laws require 10'. Rear yard setback is 19.5' where 20' is required. The bungalow was built in 1930, part of the rear foundation was never used. We are proposing to build on the unused foundation to add a new half a story. The second story would allow a third bedroom and a second bath.

Danielle Evans, the SPF is required to alter a nonconforming structure located on a 4,000 s.f. nonconforming lot, adding dormer and the rear addition within the required setbacks. A variance is required to construct a 1-1/2 story rear addition on top of the existing foundation that would be located 17.5' from the rear lot line where 25' is required. The proposed change is no more detrimental than the existing nonconforming use, the change will not be visible from the street. The criteria for SPF have been met, impervious surface will be reduced. The existing garage will be removed. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Jeff Brown motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit Finding under Section 4.06(a) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set out in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion

Vote: 4-0 In favor

Jeff Brown motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Variance under Section 5.04 based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set out in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

Voted 4-0 In favor.

- **270 Pleasant Street;** Andrew Kaye, CPC-T, LP – Special Permit

Steve Magoon, this case represents a different set of circumstances. Usually, the Planning Board acts as an advisory Board and the cases continue for final vote to the Board of Appeals. Pleasant Street Corridor District (PSCD) has a different approval process, Planning Board is the Special Permit granting authority. This property is located in the Planning Board Corridor District and therefore the new process applies.

William York, Atty, on behalf of Criterion Development Partners (CDP) Development Company, this is a proposal to redevelop the former Haartz-Mason site and the nearby commercial lot on the corner of Pleasant and Howard Street. This plan is committed to the community following the guidelines of the PS corridor. It will bring residents to the Charles River by improving the access. The tax base will be enhanced and future developments in the area will be encouraged. The submitted plans have been reviewed by town departments and commissions. A neighborhood meeting was attended by the neighbors as well as several Town Councilors. The Special Permit is required for increase in FAR and the project being more than 3 units for lot 1.

Heather Boujoulian, CDP Development Company, we are a multifamily developer, located in Bedford, Massachusetts and Dallas, Texas. A Riveredge in Medford was redeveloped by our company, all units are rental. It is a high quality development providing many amenities. We are proposing to raze the existing buildings and construct a high quality studio, 1-bedroom & 2 bedroom units. A five story building consisting of 139 units will be build on Parcel 1 near the River, 35 units will be constructed on

Parcel 2. The site is close to public transportation, 10% of the units will be affordable. Parking facility will be build under the structure, access to Parcel 1 will be from Pleasant Street, Parcel 2 will enter only on Pleasant Street and exit only driveway on Howard Street. Small retail and café will benefit people using the bike path near the River. We are proposing bike and car share program on the site, the site will not be maxed out, all construction will be to very high standards. The staff report is acceptable. We are proposing to remove few units on the top floor to allow for double step. We will work with Conservation Commission on bike path improvements. The existing buildings are in disrepair, this will create new property and excise taxes, and allow for additional spending in the community. We will meet with the abutting Riverbank owners. We are proposing to start demolition in May, construction in July, and complete the project next year.

Brian O'Connor, Architect, the primary and secondary site will create community pedestrian edge and improve access to the River. Parking structure is below the building and a court yard near the River with pool elevated above the bike path. We are responding to the PSCD guidelines by placing the building closer to the street. The structure will start near the Pleasant/Howard Street intersection. Our building will become part of the streetscape. The site has a great connection to public transportation, the building will be constructed in compliance with Energy Star Home program.

JP Shadley, Landscape Architect, we are responding to both sides of the property and we will work with the nature by preserving existing vegetation where possible. Trees will be planted along Pleasant Street, dense shrubs planted. Large seasonal flower pots will be placed near the circular drop-off area. We have met with DCR and will work with the Conservation Commission. Lots of plants, such a poison ivy, will be removed, good habitat with open views will be provided. Significant trees will be kept. There will be a direct connection between the path and the development. The landscape will be of very good quality.

Timothy Williams, Allen & Major Assoc., during the Pleasant Street reconstruction, all utility lines were made ready. Parcel 2 site will have one way circulation. The properties are subject to wetland protection act. Site was under water during last spring floods. Series of floodplain elevations are going through the site. The amount of storm water runoff will be reduced, compensatory flood storage will be created. Water will be treated and discharged into the Charles River through water quality system. This is a sustainable development, land disturbance will be reduced as well as water and energy consumption.

Brian Beisel, Conley Assoc., 2 peak periods were considered, morning and late afternoon, national averages were used. The former property had several curb cuts which will now be consolidated. The existing use was industrial, 115 employees at the site. There will not be any truck traffic generated from this development. There will be 72 vehicles coming and going. We will offer Charlie cards to the residents to take advantage of the nearby public transportation, bicycle and car sharing will be promoted.

Danielle Evans, this is the first development located in the Pleasant Street Corridor district. There will not be any adverse effect on the neighborhood. Adequate facilities have been provided, traffic has been improved during the Pleasant Street reconstruction. The proposed development will greatly improve the site, the building is appropriate for the site. It exceeds the open space requirements. Pedestrian and bicycle experience will be enhanced by the site improvements. Drainage will be reviewed by the Conservation Commission in March, proper screening of equipment and machinery will be provided. The proposed lighting will minimize spillage onto the abutting properties. Watertown Housing Partnership will meet on February 15 to discuss the 17 affordable units provided by the development. Staff recommends approval of the proposed petition.

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Steve Magoon, the wording of the conditions was discussed with the applicant. The parking area plans are very conceptual, the applicant will meet with DPW regarding the scope of parking near Main Street.

William York, the applicant met with Dan Driscoll of DCR and we will work with Conservation Commission. The parking will benefit the Town and the project

John Hawes, in the future, all the items provided must be listed. The Zoning Ordinance references 4 steps for granting of the Special Permit. The intention was to have definite link. The façade facing Pleasant Street is very large, long and high. Some units will be cut on the River side, could the same be done on Pleasant Street?

Jeff Brown, every previous traffic report said that there will not be a major impact from development, this report seem to be saying the same. How will this large development affect the Pleasant Street traffic?

Fergal Brennock, the crossing of Pleasant Street at the Howard Street intersection needs to be improved.

Brian Beisel, Pleasant Street traffic changes daily, it should operate the same way when this project is complete. The crosswalk is offset from the bike path, it will be relocated.

William York, the building is 270 feet long, the Canistraro building is 260 feet and Riverbank 250 feet. The design is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, step down along the River is preferable.

....., 34 Howard Street, we are very excited to see bike access, setbacks on the River are more important. This developer has done a great job.

Maria Saiz, Bicycle Committee, the property is in horrific condition. This development will make a significant difference, it will align with the existing path. It is important to increase the number of indoor bicycle parking spaces to provide 1 space for every 15 car parking spaces. Parking is a significant issue. The Bicycle Committee is willing to work with the developer. This is the beginning of real transformation of Pleasant Street.

....., Repton Place, the outdoor bicycle parking is adequate, but the indoor is insufficient. We need 2 spaces for every unit.

Paul Reiser, 77 Watertown Street, the petitioner is adding great development. The Planning Board should not place too many restrictions. This will help the Watertown economy.

Chuck Langenhagton, 111 Pleasant Street, the front of the building should be moved from Pleasant Street about 10'. I am very concerned with the size of the building being next to the bike path. This is a five and three story proposal. What type of restrictions will be placed on the retail space? How can Pleasant Street handle all the additional traffic? Cars will backup from Main Street to Howard Street. When will we reach the capacity of Pleasant Street?

Alan Kaplan, 290 Pleasant Street/Riverbank, we are very excited about this project but share the concern about the mass of the building on Pleasant Street. The bike storage is a problem in our building, because of the closeness to the River, many people use bicycles.

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Steve Magoon, the use will have to comply with the ZO requirements, the applicant might be more restrictive.

Heather Boujoulian, the existing bike path will not be affected by the construction. The building will have recycle shoots on each floor, and compactor. There will not be any outside containers.

John Lawn, District D Councilor, I have received numerous calls about this development and met with people regarding safety. I am in favor of this proposal, we need to work with the developer.

Steve Corbett, Councilor At Large, I am in favor of this project. The area was rezoned and this is the type of project that we encourage. It will allow for new housing option, economic benefit, and support local businesses. We have already reached the traffic capacity, traffic concerns are everywhere, but development is needed.

Rena Baskin, Franklin Street, this is a great project that will improve the area. The building should be moved a little from Pleasant Street to allow for greenery.

John Donohue, Councilor At Large, this is a vital project for the Pleasant Street corridor. Boston Scientific will be developed soon and will bring more people to the area.

Vincent Piccirilli, District C Councilor, we have worked hard to create the Pleasant Street corridor. It is exciting to see this development. This is the entry to the Pleasant Street corridor, I am in support of the proposal.

Cecilia Link, District B Councilor, it is important to have the step-down towards the River, the project will have minimal impact, I am in support of this project.

Mark Sideris, Town Council President, this is a very important project. I have met with the development team numerous times. The developer had discussions with all departments. The developer will well manage all the issue, the existing site is blighted, this development is worthy of Planning Board support.

John Hawes, some of the issues can be addressed by the planning staff.

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the Special Permit with Site Plan Review under Section 5.01.1(f) Multi family residential 4+ based upon the finding that it meets the criteria setout in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Jack Zollo seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the Special Permit under Section 5.16(h) Development Incentive Credits based upon the finding that it meets the criteria setout in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the construction of the above project in the Floodplain district

Jack Zollo seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

Chairman John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:55 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:55 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 2/9/2011 available in the DCD&P office.