

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: February 8, 2012 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: Jeff Brown, Acting Chairman; Neal Corbett; Fergal Brennock; Linda Tuttle-Barletta
Ingrid Marchesano, PB Clerk; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve Minutes of 1/12/2012.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion. Voted 4-0 In favor

CONTINUED CASE

- **Stanley Ave Lot 807-1B-1;** WP Acquisitions LLC – Special Permit with Site Plan Review

John Hawes, a letter from Atty Winnick was received requesting continuance.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the Stanley Avenue Lot 807-1B-1/Waltham Street to the next meeting of the Planning Board.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0 In favor

CASE PENDING

- **20 Summer Street;** David MacKay, Weston Associates Development Co. – Special Permit/SR

Bill York, Atty, this is a petition by Weston Associates to redevelop the 30,088 s.f. site. The existing 14,000 s.f. one story building is currently used by the New England Fuel Institute. We are proposing to raze the structure and replace it with a 81,000 s.f. building housing 90 unit assisted living facility and 1500 s.f. retail space. The proposed use is in complete compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and in keeping with the Community Development vision in CB zone. There is a strong need for assisted living facility in Watertown. It is an attractive design that will revitalize the intersection of Spring and Summer Streets. The facility will provide significant revenue for the Town and create many jobs.

David MacKay, Weston Associates, this company was founded in 1969, developing residential, retail and mixed use. We have developed several properties across the country. Now we focus on Assisted Living facilities in Boston area, within the Route 128 corridor. This is an excellent opportunity to provide Assisted Living Facility for the large elderly population in Watertown. The design is architecturally appealing, it will be a landmark in the Watertown Square. We will have retail on the ground level to ensure pedestrian activity. This project will create 60 new jobs, there will be 3 shifts with 20 employees on each shift. It will provide increased tax base without the use of municipal facilities. Visitors to the facility will patronize local restaurants. This will be a very quiet neighbor, it will be privately subsidized first class facility.

Cheryl Tougias, Architect, this facility will provide home for people needing assistance with daily living but want to live independently. There are 90 units consisting of studio, 1-bedroom and Alzheimer wing, the units are from 355 to 600 s.f.. No cooking within the units. The 78,200 s.f. building is 5 stories high, the garage for 45 cars will be below grade. The service entrance will be on the Summer Street side near the retail area with 4 curbside parking spaces. One of the retail spaces will be occupied by a hair salon that will be shared with public. The parking garage access and drop off will be on Spring Street. Outdoor landscaped area will be in the rear. The mechanical equipment will be placed on the roof, cooling tower over the underground parking entrance. Second floor will be occupied by the Alzheimer unit, the other levels will be mixed 1 bedroom and studio units. This is a sustainable

development and it meets all the requirements for green building. The green roof has been designed as outdoor green space to visit with family and friends. Flower containers will be placed at street level. The building will have high quality furnishings.

Patrick Mallon, there are 4,600 elderly people within 2 miles of the site. Watertown has a very low supply of Assisted Living facilities. Only 172 rooms are available between Watertown and Newton. This is a good alternative for nursing home, it allows elderly to live independently. Elderly are monitored to make sure that medications are taken.

Cheryl Tougias, the shadow impact study was projected for March 21, June 21, September 21, December 21, 9AM, 12PM, 3PM. The shadows cast toward Spring Street in March, no shadow on Summer, 3PM shadow on Summer Street. In June, on the longest day of the year, will be a little shadow onto Summer Street. The shadows in September are similar to March, at 3 PM the shadows touch the buildings on Summer Street. On December 21, the sun is the lowest, shadows are very long, at 3 pm all the buildings on Summer Street will be in complete shadow.

Jeff Brown, is the garage ventilated, upper floor plans are not showing any windows.

Bill York, each unit will have small refrigerator and microwave. Some of the units can be used by couples. The dining area space is adequate, weekly activities will be provided.

Gideon Schreiber, this development is consistent with the Growth Management Plan to encourage mixed use. The Special Permit component criteria have been met. The proposed use will not have adverse effect on the neighborhood. The operation of the facility is in 3 shifts, the height of the building is within the intent of the Zoning Ordinance. 48 parking spaces and 4 public spaces meet dimensional requirement, adequate facilities will be provided. There will be 8 bicycle racks for employees and visitors. The walkways meet the requirements of Disability Commission. A buffer between surrounding properties is adequate, other similar buildings are nearby. Open space and landscape requirements have been met. Storm water system requires DPW sign off. HVAC units will be in penthouse, below grade parking is provided, dumpsters will be screened. The lights will not be shining onto abutters properties. Staff recommends approval with conditions, condition #10 modified to include requirement of easement, condition #16 that the space designated as retail will be available for public use.

Steve Magoon, the sewer capacity concerns will be addressed otherwise the project will not be built. The DPW is in favor of providing 4 parking spaces along Summer Street.

Neal Corbett, how many visitors will be visiting at one time? How will the access to the garage work?

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, will the visitors be able to use the underground parking? There will be visiting nurses, providers, etc. 3 meals per day will be provided for 90+ residents, how will it be delivered? Some of the trucks can be quiet large.

Patrick Mallon, most visitors will come on weekends. The garage is accessible 24 hours a day if needed. Some type of security system/gates will be provided. Kitchen deliveries will be in the rear.

Bill York, the facility kitchen is next to the retail area. Art will be placed in the windows to allow for privacy.

Joseph SanClemente, Traffic Engineer, a complete study was done. The site is currently occupied by the New England Fuel Institute. The proposed use is a lower intensity type project. Most of the

residents do not drive, the car ownership is very low. Employment level goes down during off peak hours, public transportation is nearby.

Susan Miller, 7 Maude Terrace, our property is directly across from this project. There are concerns about the traffic. I am speaking for all 7 properties on Maude Terrace. The neighborhood meeting did not happen until last Thursday, 4 days before this hearing. We are in favor of this project, the existing building is not very attractive, but there are some concerns. We do not see any landscape buffers, trees should be added. Half of the street will be in shadow during winter time. The open space is hidden in the rear, it should be visible to passerbies.

Russ Arico, 49 Fayette Street, the property is located in CB (Central Business) district but it abuts major residential area. The existing 2 story structure will be replaced with 5 stories building. Traffic backs up on Summer Street. If the building was half the size, 3 stories would be preferable, it would be acceptable. Only the developer will benefit from this project.

Tim McGoldrick, Atty, representing the Order of Eagles at 44-54 Mount Auburn Street. We are not opposed, the presentation was well done, and the proposed building is significantly larger than the existing structure. We are a non-profit organization, we do own the parking lot in the rear. We are concerned with the size of the projects, our parking abuts the construction area, and it can cause debris problems. The Order cannot have flooding issues, they rely on the renters.

Chris Mack, 15 Summer Street, there has been a dental office on this site for the last 50 years. The New England Fuel Institute is only 14,000 s.f., the new structure is over 80,000 s.f.. When Summer Street was repaved, we lost on street parking. There is no green space, only in the roof area. There will be 8 month of shadow on our property. The construction process will cause massive inconvenience.

Mary Ryan, Bromfield Street, Spring Street is a one way street, cars will be cutting through Baptist Walk area.

John Donahue, Town Councilor/Standish Road, this project is very positive, but it needs to be sensitive to the abutters. This will bring economic viability to the CB district, There are other tall buildings in the area.

Mark Sideris, Town Council President/30 Union Street, this will be a good minimalistic use of the property. People of that age do not drive, this will create less traffic for this corner. The concerns with the shadow can be addressed.

Jeff Brown, if after a year of being there, some of the spaces remain empty, could some of the parking spaces in the garage be used for community parking?

Bill York, security might be an issue. A security system will be in place.

Barbara Ruskin, 140 Spring Street, I have lived here for 34 years. The planning system is flawed, affordable housing requirement for this project was waved. The zoning amendment for this area was not supposed to relate to specific project. The abutting residents were not aware of this proposal, there was no discussion until now. The vision for Watertown Square needs to be discussed, it should have resident input, and we are only 4.1 square miles. The Boards receive information 5 days before the hearing, we deserve early access to plans and information. We need to have longer approval process, the public needs more time. The frontage of the building on Summer Street is 220 feet long, this is an institution, and it does not fit in historic district. Is this the best use, there are no shops in the

Watertown Square. How will the property be accessed by Fire Engines and ambulances? The facility will not be subsidized, how will Watertown residents be able to afford this? It takes time to understand all this, there are many questions to approve the project at this time. Could the building be 4 stories and still provide profit? We have not been included in discussions.

Steve Magoon, we have talked about this project before the zoning amendment was processed. The amendment will not apply to one project only. When it was processed, it was to apply this use in several districts. It is not fair to say that the staff and Boards did this without the public input. Some people feel that this project is not appropriate, the Boards will make the final decision. Watertown does not have effective Comprehensive Plan to address these issues. We are in the process of developing a plan but we cannot hold up property owners and developers from moving forward. The zoning amendments were advertised several times before the Town Council approval. This new process will involve a lot of public participation, the concerns will be addressed. This applicant scheduled public neighborhood meeting to allow for public input.

Art Venezia, representing NE Institute, the property was shown to many developers. Two of them proposed condos, this developer is offering less money for the property but the owners felt that this was the best use.

Bill York, this is a public hearing and other one will be on February 22 at the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing, as required by law. The CB zone has been in existence for many years, Assisted Living facility is needed in Watertown, it is a very passive use, consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. It is a well-designed building that should be supported.

Steve Magoon, if there are any items to be addressed, it can be done through conditions.

Vince Piccirilli, Town Councilor, due to Proposition 2-1/2, we are limited to raise revenues. This type of project is prime target for economic development. This will be a significant benefit to the Town. It is the lowest type of use, the residents do not drive. Prior to the Zoning Amendment approval, a 5 story apartment building could be build, but not an Assisted Living facility. Market conditions for this type of facility are very attractive. It will allow for the elderly to stay in the community. This is a good type of development for the Watertown Square area.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit/Site Plan Review under Sections 5.01.2.h & 9.03 based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff with condition #10 modified to include requirement of easement and additional condition #16 that the space designated as retail will be available for public use.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-1 In favor
Linda Tuttle-Barletta opposed

Acting Chairman Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:20 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:20 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____
For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 2/08/12 available in the DCD&P office.