

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: March 14, 2012 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Jeff Brown; Neal Corbett; Fergal Brennock;
Linda Tuttle-Barletta
Steve Magoon, Director; Ingrid Marchesano, PB Clerk; Danielle Evans,
Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 2/8/2012.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

Voted 5-0 In favor

CASES PENDING

- **24 Green Street;** Mark & Heather Hartsman – Special Permit Finding

Mark Hartsman, we are proposing to expand 3rd floor to convert to extra bedroom, maintaining the nonconforming side yard setbacks.

Steve Magoon, this is a proposal to raise the hip roof to replace with a gable roof and two gable additions. Staff finds that creating a half story within the third floor will not be substantially more detrimental than the existing nonconforming roof and recommends approval with conditions.

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

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

- **21 Franklin Street;** Robert Velcollone & Becky Hoffman – Special Permit

Becky Hoffman, this 3,800 s.f. house has been used as a single family home with a kitchen on all three floors. We are proposing to convert the house to two units and create a second form of egress to the second floor unit. This is a Victorian structure built in 1874 and we will maintain the character. There will be 4 – 9'x20' parking spaces provided

Danielle Evans, the 14,000 s.f. lot is located in the SC – single family conversion district. The proposed change will not adversely affect the neighborhood. The property has a large curb cut that we recommend to be narrowed to 22' with 5' setback from the sidewalk to make it safer for pedestrian and 4' buffer zone. Staff recommends approval with additional condition #5.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 5.01.1(B) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions and additional condition #5 set forth in the staff report.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

CONTINUED CASE

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

Steve Winnick, Atty, the petitioner appeared in front of Planning Board on November 11, 2011. We have presented a 3 building design with a total of 222 units. The petition was continued and at the next

meeting in December, the project has been reduced to 211 units. Planning Board suggested that traffic analysis for the project should be done independently. The project has been substantially revised, downsized plans are being submitted tonight.

Kevin Maley, VP of Wood Partners, we have revised the plans and presented the new plans at the neighborhood meeting on March 8. The plans have been reviewed by Fire, DPW, etc. We have received many emails from the neighbors regarding issues that have been discussed at the meeting and will be addressed tonight. The original project consisted of 3 buildings, two 5-story and 1-4 story with parking under. Tonight's plan has been revised to 155 units, we have reduced the density by 30%. Building #2 abutting the Waltham Street has been replaced with seven 2-story townhouses setback 23.7' from Waltham Street plus 1-story clubhouse. Building #1 has been reduced to 4 stories, 68 units. Building #3 has also been reduced to 4 stories, 80 units. The number of parking spaces has been reduced from 364 down to 256 where 253 are required. We are not asking for any incentives, the buildings will not exceed 54', the ends of both buildings will be 3 stories high. Additional surface parking has been added behind building #1. We will provide indoor bicycle storage. The clubhouse first floor will be used by residents, second floor for management offices. The Walker's Pond will be cleaned, we will clean-up the area, and the sewer system on Stanley will be upgraded. We will contribute to the DPW pilot program to address flooding and drainage issues, \$1,000 per unit. Sidewalks will be created along the property on Waltham Street.

Matt Kealey, VHB, the original traffic projections were for 222 units, the project is now reduced to 155 units. The movement difference weekday has been reduced by 496 car trips, Saturday daily by 526 trips, Saturday at midday peak hour by 32. The smaller project will reduce the traffic by 26-36%. We recommend trimming the overgrowth along Waltham Street to provide better visibility, four way stop at Waltham/Bridge Street intersection, and sidewalk bulb-outs for pedestrian safety. Some vehicles travel 40 mph which is not appropriate for residential neighborhoods, we recommend speed bumps and raised crosswalks.

John Connery, this is to illustrate long term factors associated with this project. We have tried to meet all of the neighbor requirements and address their concerns. An entire building has been removed and replaced with 7 townhouses which will provide much better operational and visual transition to the residential neighborhood. All the development criteria have been met and revised proposal is presented tonight. This is a change that is appropriate for this time.

William Carlson, Eng., Design Consultants, we have examined the VHB original study for 222 units. 8 intersections have been analyzed, the neighborhood streets were studied. Automatic traffic recorders have been recommended. Future conditions will be increased by the growth factor. Traffic from the recent 4 projects in the PSCD has been added. The numbers for 222 units were correct, we agreed with the suggestions of alternative uses. We agree with proposed improvements by adding 4 way stop on Waltham/Bridge Streets and trimming vegetation on Waltham Street. We conclude that the VHB traffic impact and access study was conducted in conformance with industry standards for traffic impact studies. Mitigation for local neighborhood streets should be looked at.

Danielle Evans, this is the fourth update of the staff report. The developer is no longer seeking incentive credits, the criteria are met. Staff finds that this use is allowed, this site was picked as appropriate for higher density residential. The Town is in need of such housing stock. Total population of Town has decreased but # of households has increased. Fewer vehicles are owned, over 7.5% less are registered in Watertown. The demographics of the Town are changing. This project will not adversely affect the neighborhood, it will improve the blighted site. More pedestrian connection will be created through Stanley Avenue. Adequate facilities will be provided, long range parking facilities for

bicycles are provided, as stated in condition #23. Is the Fire access lane still necessary, if not, it could allow for denser buffer. Staff recommends conditional approval of the petition.

Steve Magoon, it was suggested at the last neighborhood meeting to provide traffic calming measures at the expense of the developer. Options will be discussed by the DPW Superintendent and myself and public will be involved in the decision.

Jeff Brown, the unit reduction is very impressive, I have never seen it done before, and the graphics presented tonight are very helpful. Will the entire pond be cleaned up?

Kevin Maley, we will clean-up the entire pond and surrounding area. The smaller pond retains water, rain gardens will be planted. Landscaping will be added. We have owned properties for many years, each has property management team. We do keep some, others get transferred ownership. Depending on the approvals, the construction will start late summer/early fall.

Neal Corbett, the buildings have too many colors. Consistency between them would be much better. How will the public access Walker's Pond? Any concerns with security of the area?

Kevin Maley, signage will be provided. The property management group will make sure to police the place.

Fergal Brennock, there were lot of comments at the neighborhood meeting. We need to find a balance between the pro and cons. People on Gore Estate might not have been very happy when the Edwards/Evans neighborhoods were built 100 years ago.

Steve Magoon, what are the management hours? What if the public space becomes an issue during the night?

Kevin Maley, the property management will be present 8am to 7pm weekdays, 5 hours on Saturday. Some properties have staff that lives on the property. If there are problems, we have provisions in the lease that the renters can be terminated.

John Hawes, could the townhouses/pool be flipped toward the site? It might generate less noise affecting the neighborhood.

John Lawn, State Representative, this is a very sensitive neighborhood. We would rather not see any such development. We are concerned with traffic. The neighbors are asking that the petition is delayed to allow the neighbors to come up with alternative. Something with less impact would be preferable.

Resident, 33 Puritan Rd, the neighborhood meeting was very impressive, but this is a broader issue and we are skeptical. Many people have become very active because of this project. We are asking for more time to absorb and define all the fears. We want to meet with the staff.

Danielle Evans, all the plans and materials are available on the Town website.

Carol Blackwood, 27 Evans Street, teacher, the student enrolment in Town is increasing every year. There are 24-27 children per class. Where are the kids from this development going to go? We now have fewer schools and more children. I am not saying no to change but this has to be considered.

Timothy Eaton, 27 Olney St, this will be burden on the neighborhood. More units are coming to Repton Place.

Mary Ryan, 13 Bromfield Street, this project has downsized but more cars will be added by the Aetna Mills project. People drive through the neighborhoods to avoid lights. We cannot expect the police to be on all the streets. The study was done in February when the parking ban is in place. When the ban is lifted, cars park on both sides of street. I like children to come back into the neighborhoods, the streets are not safe for them now.

Rena Baskin, Franklin Street, I am concerned with cumulative traffic from all the projects, existing and proposed. Why is the parking above ground, will there be another access to the Pond?

Kevin Maley, the area has high water level, it would be too expensive to build underground parking. The original design had the parking on a platform. Portion of the Pond will be donated to the Town.

Maryann Mulligan, 23 Falmouth Road, the changes are substantial but the traffic questions and concerns remain. Can the neighbors be part of the decision? We would like to see the project continued, to sit-down with the staff and come up with solutions.

Resident, 50 Rutland Street, I would rather pay more tax` and keep the site as is. We do not want to turn Watertown into Cambridge.

Joan Gumbleton, 47 Waltham Street, we need more time. Will there be security cameras on this property? This would be perfect setting for teenagers to meet. The Rosedale/Waltham Street intersection is very dangerous. If the Town owns Walker's Pond, it will be additional expense. Please consider postponing the decision.

Genevieve Jones, 68 Jensen Rd, how is it possible that the additional cars will not add traffic? Let's wait and see how the new projects work before we add more.

Resident, 36 Jensen Rd, I have lived here for 11 years, residents are not happy with this development. Residents need to have better life. Since the Police station opened, I am constantly cleaning the area.

Resident, 17 Evans St, this is a neighborhood issue not a town wide problem. It will affect us.

Marilyn Pettito Devaney, former resident of Bromfield Street. This proposal will change the neighborhood, this development is not appropriate. Renters do not contribute to our community, there are over 1100 new units in the Pleasant Street area. They will need services, the number of fireman per shift has been reduced. We need to protect our neighborhoods, this might be the last open space. Listen to the neighbors, we can have a better plan.

Steve Magoon, if the Planning Board decides and the petitioner agrees, the petition can be continued to next month.

Steve Winnick, we have been responding to the neighbors' concerns. We agree, one month delay would be appropriate.

John Hawes, this is a good plan, only some tweaking is needed. Traffic is the biggest concern, the Town needs to take responsibility, and traffic issues should be addressed. This street is a great cut through, I urge VHB to review these issues.

Watertown Planning Board
March 14, 2012
Page Five

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, we base traffic on our living experience, how much more can the neighborhood absorb? This project has come long way, we always want more reduction.

Kevin Maley, we know that this is a process and we will continue to address the issues. Neighbors can email us, we want to be part of the process.

John Lawn, past meetings were cancelled, information flyers had to be delivered to residents. Could reverse 911 system be used to notify neighbors of large project if meetings get cancelled? We will work with Woodland Partners.

Steve Magoon, the neighbors need to meet as soon as possible.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the petition to the April 11 meeting of the Planning Board.
Jeff Brown seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Chairman John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:45 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:45 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____
For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 3/14/12 available in the DCD&P office.