

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: April 11, 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; Linda Tuttle-Barletta; Fergal Brennock; Neal Corbett
Steve Magoon, Director; Danielle Evans, Senior Planner; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 3/14/2012.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta seconded the motion.

Voted 5-0 In favor

CASES PENDING

- **401-405 Main Street;** Anthasasios & Vasilias Mitropoulos – Variance & Special Permit Finding

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the above case to the May meeting of the Planning Board.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

- **386B Arsenal Street;** Jonah Sturtevant, Boston Mobile Concepts – Special Permit

Jonah Sturtevant, our company installs car radios, remote starters, etc. We are proposing to improve the outside façade. The indoor area consists of small rooms, we are proposing to build a small office and bathroom.

Gideon Schreiber, this is an existing parcel with 2 buildings, and three interior spaces. The space was used as a garage in the past. This proposal requires 11 parking spaces. The rear of the property allows for 8' buffer between the site and the Watertown Greenway. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 5.01.5(f) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

- **24-26 Bridge Street;** Vinfen Corporation – Site Plan Review

John Hawes, as per request of the petitioner, the above petition has been withdrawn.

- **14 Fayette Street;** Ruwen Gao – Special Permit Finding

Helen Gao, my husband and I have purchased the property 3 months ago. It is a very old house that consists of 2 stories in the front and 1 story in the back. We are proposing to remove the existing roof in the rear and extend the height by 24". We will remove the pavement in the front and add landscaping.

Gideon Schreiber, the 2-family house is located on a 4,550 s.f. lot. The 1-story rear addition was built long time ago. The petitioner is proposing to raise the roof from 7' to 9' and provide 2 parking spaces to the right of the house. All the criteria for granting of a Special Permit Finding have been met, the lot coverage will stay the same. Landscaping will be added in the front yard, staff recommends approval.

Jeff Brown, it seems that the work has already started, is there a building permit?

Helen Gao, we are also renovating the 2-story house that requires building permit only. After the approval, the rear structure will be renovated.

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

- **66 Edenfield Avenue; Ara Dermovsesian – Special Permit & Special Permit Finding**

Ara Dermovsesian, this is a 2-family structure that does not have any parking. We are proposing to build a 2 car garage under in the existing basement area and 2 parking spaces. The proposed garage will not adversely affect the neighborhood.

Danielle Evans, staff reviewed the proposal, front yard parking is allowed with a special permit. The garage under is the only way to provide parking on this property. The plot plan is now showing the required 5' setback from the street, which will be corrected by the applicant. Landscaping will be added on both sides of the driveway, condition has been added that at least 1 tree will be planted in the front yard. Criteria for granting of the special permit and special permit finding have been met. Staff recommends that the stairs be narrowed to allow for more landscaping. Staff recommends conditional approval.

Ara Dermovsesian, the space under the house is now a basement, the floor will be lowered.

Jeff Brown, is there a boiler/furnace in the basement? Will it remain in the garage?

Ed Danielson, Architect, the entire house is being renovated completely. A new heating system will be installed, all the equipment will be placed in a small room in the rear. The landing has to be 7' wide because of the doors, but the stairs can be narrowed to 5'.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 6.02(j) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In favor

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.

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, there has been a dramatic evolution of this project, this hearing has been continued three times. The project has been reduced from 222 to 155 units. The original 5 story buildings have been lowered, the townhouses and the clubhouse will serve as a buffer between the remaining 4-story buildings and the residential neighborhood. The traffic impact will be substantially reduced. Wood Partners is committed to maintain all promises, the Walker's pond will be cleaned up including the southern portion that belongs to LIG. Our project team is here to answer any questions. We believe that this project deserves the Board's approval.

Kevin Maley, VP of Wood Partners and project director, few changes have been made since the last presentation. Aerials were shown at the neighborhood meeting on March 24. Some adjustments were made to the pool layout, pergolas have been added as well as fencing. We are proposing to create a small dog park on the other side of Walker's Pond. We had discussions with the abutting school regarding additional landscape along sidewalk on Waltham Street, as well as with Recreation Director Peter Centola regarding improvements to the Bemis Park. Lot 2, which includes part of Walker's Pond, belongs to LIG. LIG is committed to clean up of the southern part of Walker's Pond. The area to the north is probably wetland, we are proposing to tie into the trail system.

Steve Magoon, the neighbors have asked to meet with the developer to get some answers. The meeting on 3/24 at the Police Station was well attended by residents, Town Councilors and State Representative Lawn. Everyone is trying to get better understanding of the project. This is an opportunity to have the developer address some of the issues and pay for it. The developer will work with the community, the traffic commission, etc. The conditions placed on this project will address the traffic concerns on Rosedale, Acton, Edward Road etc. Any additional concerns will be added. Physical change in grade will make cars slow down. The proposed dog park will be the developer's responsibility. Mary Flynn, who attended most of the meetings, submitted a letter of support for the project.

Steve Winnick, as noted in the staff report, all requirements have been met. The project exceeds the requirements of the Pleasant Street Corridor District (PSCD). We have the support of the Police, Fire, DPW, subject to conditions. The project has evolved in the last year, all concerns of neighbors have been addressed. This project is far superior by having lost the height and replacing it with lower structures and town houses. Density of the project has been reduced. Mary Flynn has been one of the opposition leaders in the neighborhood, and is now in support. We are asking the Board for positive vote.

John Hawes, the Board felt that traffic was the most important issue. The traffic impact of this project will be minimal. How much traffic will be added when other projects, such as Repton Phase II, 140 Pleasant, Haartz Mason, and the river project in Waltham are completed?

Fergal Brennock, I have attended some of the community meetings. The frustration is that you cannot do a "level of service" for a street. It is hard to measure what will happen in the future.

Bob Manzelli, 24 Evans Street, a report was filed by the Planning Board 7 years ago for a project that was larger than this proposal. The Board found that the project would adversely affect the neighborhood. The Boards stated loss of open space, increase in density, and that the proposed use would negatively affect the neighborhood. The Board was very concerned with traffic impact, serious hazard to pedestrians and vehicles. Since then, many new projects appeared in the Pleasant Street corridor. We appreciate the developer's efforts but maybe the project should be put on hold until the other projects are completed.

Jim Daly, 89 Edward Road, the biggest issue in the area is the traffic, could speed bumps be added? There are many small children in the neighborhood.

Steve Magoon, we understand the issues, all new Pleasant Street project will not add to Waltham Street traffic. There are some slight exceptions. This project will add traffic to Waltham Street, analysis have been done. The only one that fails is the Bridge Street intersection.

Marilyn Petitto Devaney, 98 Westminster Ave, I am asking the Planning Board to say no to this project. The neighbors did not realize what will the PSCD district allow. I was the only Town Councilor who

voted no on the PSCD. The residents have the right to oppose this project. Cleaning up the Walker's pond will not help this area. Watertown is only 4 square miles. Please vote no and let see what the impact of the other projects will be.

John Lawn, State Representative, we have attended all the meetings and expressed our concerns. We ask the Board to delay the decision. The neighbors met at the Police Station on March 23. We compliment the developer on reducing the project, but 155 units are still too much. The issues will need the involvement of DPW, Traffic Commission, etc. Please restrict the development until all the issues are addressed.

Alberto Panza, 76 Waltham Street, I have lived here for 42 years. Raytheon caused traffic, but only in the morning and in the late afternoon. Now the traffic starts earlier and ends later. People drive 40 MPH, we have constant accidents in the area.

John McEhenny, 17 Evans St, traffic is a big issue in the area. Slight increase because of this project is not an answer. One person sent a letter of support, many who are against are here tonight.

Mary Ryan, 13 Bromfield St, everyone received my letter, including the Watertown TAB. Waltham Street should be blocked off.

Ed Walker, 55 Edward, safety is a major issue, cars are going very fast. It was already a problem before Repton Place was build. Even without this project, the traffic is an issue.

More comments from the residents followed. The area is already at capacity. Safety is more important than adding benches at Walker's Pond.

Dan DeMico, 98 Edward Road, I was a sophomore in 2004, we used to play on the street, now it cannot be done. I hope that the Board votes against this proposal.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, it is important to think about all the concerns. I appreciate the developer's concessions but it might not be enough.

Jeff Brown, I was in the neighborhood at 10:30 this morning, there was no traffic. Something will happen at this parcel, the next proposal might not be better than this project. The resistance of the neighborhood is very consistent.

Steve Magoon, these are appropriate comments. The discussion of 40B was not intended to be a threat. Something will happen with this property. The zoning was adopted by the Town Council as being appropriate for this area. The developer is offering considerable amount to the community. People will be allowed to utilize this property. This Board has the responsibility and role, we should not deny the use of the property because people do not like it. We need to see what the vision is for the community, do we want new projects that provide revenues or do we want to stay as we are. We need to take realistic approach. This project should not be further delayed, moratorium would have to be crafted from legal perspective.

John Hawes, the PSCD district came through Planning Board and the Town Council. It needs to be tweaked. The current project would have been built under the previous zoning. This is probably the smallest project proposed for this site, about 1/3 smaller than the previous one. Additional conditions will be added, the building permit will be issued after the promises are fulfilled.

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Neal Corbett, I am struck by the passion of the neighbors and encouraged by the neighborhood organization. All the improvements will be paid for by the developer.

Matt Clifford, 25 Evans St, we cannot prevent accidents from happening. I am concerned with the environment, exposure to chemicals, etc. I am opposed to this project.

Steve Winnick, the relationship with LIG is unique, they control the parcel. We cannot add conditions that would stop their project. We ask the Board not to add conditions that would pertain to their project.

Kevin Maley, we cannot accept conditions that affect site that we do not have control over. We do not know what the use will be, it might be something that we would allow.

Steve Magoon, condition #15 was drafted by the staff, which is the appropriate approach. We cannot add conditions for future project until LIG comes in front of the Planning Board to be considered. The WP project has not been designed with any connections to the abutting property. If it changes, WP will have to come back with amendments.

John Hawes, it is important to know what will be on the LIG parcel. This board in its action has to rely on the staff report.

Steve Winnick, this is coming about because of a subdivision. LIG is not the petitioner tonight, they will have to go through the process to be considered by the Board.

Steve Magoon, there is no vehicular access to the adjoining property. If the design is amended, WP has to come back.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, there are 24 conditions in the staff report, the Chairman has added 2 more. Condition #25 – building permits will not be issued until the developer's commitments are completed. Condition #26 – access to the property will be provided for emergency vehicles and pedestrian traffic only.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit with Site Plan Review under Sections 5.01(1)(f) & 5.16(d)(6)(D) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions 1 to 26 set forth in the staff report.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-1 In favor
Linda Tuttle-Barletta opposed

Chairman John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:10 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 4/11/12 available in the DCD&P office.