

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: March 13, 2013 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:03 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Linda Tuttle-Barletta; Fergal Brennock; Neal Corbett
Steve Magoon, Director; Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve Minutes of 2/13/2013.

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

CASES PENDING

- **33 Grenville Road;** Anthony & Nicole Lamacchia – Variance

William York, Atty, this is a request for a variance as to height of the proposed structure. The existing nonconforming structure that is 3 stories high will be razed. The 19,908 s.f. lot is unusual in shape, located in S-10 zone, the new 3,500 s.f. structure will be lower, 2-1/2 stories high. The design is consistent with the neighborhood. The impervious surface will be reduced.

Gideon Schreiber, the unusually shaped lot is located near the Oakley Country club. The 2-family structure is not historically significant and was approved for demolition. Staff reviewed findings for granting of a variance, all have been met. The site rear yard has a substantial 26' drop from the street to the rear of the lot. Literal enforcement would involve substantial hardship. The new structure will be architecturally appropriate for the neighborhood. Staff recommends approval.

Neal Corbett, will the attic area be used?

William York, the area will remain unfinished at this time.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Variance under Sections 5.04 & 5.05(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: 4-0 In favor

- **65 Oakley Road;** Dean & Elena Poillucci – Variance

Dean Poillucci, this is a nonconforming 5,103 s.f. lot located in an S-10 zone. The existing side yard setback is 6.5' where 15' is required and front yard setback is 23.4' where 25' is required. The side yard setback will remain, the front yard setback will be 17.5' for the main house and 14.3' to the covered front portico.

Gideon Schreiber, the variance is requested to construct a single family house with nonconforming setbacks, to demolish the existing structure and to retain the foundation. The house was built in 1959. The four criteria for granting of the variance have been met. The irregular lot is triangular, the front stairs will be relocated. The proposed house will not be detrimental to the neighborhood. The lot is adjacent to the Oakley Country club. The proposed structure is more architecturally appropriate for the neighborhood. Staff recommends approval with standard conditions.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Variance under Section 5.04 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: 4-0 In favor

CONTINUED CASE

- **192 Pleasant Street**; John B. Wise, Burkhard Corporation – Special Permit with Site Plan Review

Steve Magoon, in the previous 2 cases, the Zoning Board of Appeals is the permit granting authority. This property is located in the PSCD (Pleasant Street Corridor District) and the Planning Board will be the permit granting authority. The approval will require unanimous vote.

William York, this petition was continued in January to allow the petitioner to address staff and resident concerns. The petitioner, Jack Wise and his team are here tonight to answer any questions. The project is in full compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. The design is small in scale, the lot is not used to its full potential. The building coverage is 31% where 50% is required. The proposed height is 3 stories on the Pleasant Street side and 4 stories in the rear, where 5 stories are allowed. The number of units allowed is 22, the petitioner is proposing 14 units. This project will assist in residential/commercial transition. The community access to Charles River will improved bioretention area will be created. The plans have been reviewed by all town departments and approved by the Conservation Commission.

Jack Wise, we have made number of changes in the last 45 days. The major concerns were massing, rear façade, drop off, guest parking, size of windows, brick work and color scheme. Reduction of roof elements now sets the building back in front and rear, visually reducing the massing. 3 parking spaces have been designated as guest parking, one being restricted for 15 minute loading and unloading from 7 am to 8 pm. We are proposing to have a Condo car available to condo owners for rental. We are trying to attract people who are retiring or downsizing. Approximately 3,500 s.f. of previous pavers will replace the existing asphalt paving along the rear to further control runoff.

Ben Nickerson, Architect, the original design is showing the hip roof and half a circle along the front roof line, making it look like another story. The new design is showing the roof line pulled back. We have increased the size of the windows and changed the façade design. The massing roof structure has been eliminated, corner landscape planters have been added on the roof to soften the edge of the roof. The brick has been retained to bring the scale down. The rear wall has been pulled back, balconies have been redesigned to make them more symmetric and less chaotic. Side elevation approach will show lesser impact.

Jack Wise, the reorganization of the elements makes the structure look less massive. The new design will have significant financial impact on the project.

JP Shadley, Landscape Architect, we have met with DCR and the Conservation Agent. We have incorporated received suggestions. 6 trees will be maintained in the rear, some plantings are over 8' tall, and the area near the bike path will be pruned. The layout of the handicap ramp has been redesigned to allow for more landscaping. The proposed fencing will be residential in scale.

William York, alternative roof design, flat or hip roof, has been presented to the Board, the façade will be the same for both. The petitioner is prepared to go the option that the Board prefers.

John Hawes, if the roof color was different and the seam would be removed, the height might be less obvious. The trim around the brick should be removed to unify the section. The roof planters will not look as good during the winter. Pulling the structure away from the street makes the building less massive.

Fergal Brennock, the rear elevation is much improved but it still needs little more.

Neal Corbett, the rear design does not look very different.

Richard Cass, property owner, many Watertown residents worked in the building until the company was sold. We have received many proposals for the site, all between 20 to 30 units. The proposed design will benefit the area, it is much smaller, only 14 units. Parking in the area is a big issue, I let the neighbors use the lot for parking, but liability is a concern. The neighboring homes have insufficient parking. This project will provide on-site parking for the condo owners.

David Odette, 100 Pleasant Street, we have lots of traffic in the area already. The construction of Repton Place is starting. The Pleasant Street reconstruction just finished, will the street be dug out again? How many affordable units will be provided? Crosswalks were removed during the street reconstruction and never replaced.

Steve Magoon, 10%/1 unit will be affordable. If necessary, the street will be redone by the petitioner. A new crosswalk at the Myrtle Street lights is safer. No additional street lights are proposed for the area.

Nicky Kokoros, 53 Green Street, there is too much traffic in the area already. My mother was hit at the Myrtle Street crossing. She would not be able to use crossing that is further away. All these condos will add additional traffic.

Steve Magoon, we always look at the traffic with each project. All main arteries will be looked at during the Comprehensive Plan process. This project will increase green space in the neighborhood.

Lee Hsuehtze, 98 Pleasant Street, I am concerned with increased traffic, cars go at very high speed. The traffic has increased since I moved to the area 10 years ago. Safety is a major concern, as well as the wetlands. As a biologist, I am concern with the fragile echo system.

William York, this is a very low density development. The peak hour traffic will only increase by 6-7 vehicles. There are many smart growth aspects of this development. Conservation Commission is in support of this development and approved significant improvement to the area.

Dorothy Brown, 32 Cuba Street, 4 streets are leading into this intersection. Kids need to have crosswalk near the MDC pool area. Watertown is changing.

Elaine Bean, 29 Warren Street, I agree with the safety issues in the area. If the top floor is used as a living space, it would be 5 stories in the rear. How high is the hip roof version? I would rather see this size of building than what is there now. We do not want to see another large building.

Steve Magoon, there are 3 floors in the front and living space under the roof, the rear has 4 stories plus the garages under.

William York, the roof is pulled back 16 feet in the front, there are no windows on the Pleasant Street roof area. Both designs are 31' high in the front, higher in the rear because of the slope.

Mathew Keys, 202-204 Pleasant Street, if this project gets turned down, the next proposal will be for 20 or 30 units, or 40B project. Larger project will bring more traffic. I support this project, it is a good design.

Steve Magoon explained, 40B would allow larger development with mandatory 25% of the units affordable.

Tom Shusde, 123 Pleasant, there was lots of opposition to 140 Pleasant Street project. The area was improved, much better than an auto repair shop. Tonight's project will be good for the area. The last crosswalk was lost during the street reconstruction and needs to be replaced. Drivers use Pleasant Street to avoid going on Main Street. Speed limit sign need to be added, some cars are going 50 mph. This is a nice building that will replace an eyesore.

Maddie Simpson, Pleasant Street, nobody is watching Pleasant Street, it was supposed to be beautified.

Susan Delong, 26 Conant Road, I have given up, there are too many new projects on Pleasant Street and the neighbors are not represented. This design is better but people park everywhere to use the MDC pool, new crosswalk is needed. The area has been blocked off three times because of flooding. The building at 140 Pleasant Street does not look like the plans that were submitted. Verizon trucks for the development are parked on Conant Road, we could not access our street during construction. There are parking, traffic and many other issues in the area. This new design of 192 Pleasant is much smaller. Pleasant Street has changed, new projects are coming one after another.

Joan Gumbleton, 47 Waltham St, another project at Bacon Street will add 41 units to the area. They all need guest parking spaces. How many will be in this project? Are the roof plantings going to survive the winter? Is there enough space to have snow plowed?

William York, we are proposing 28 spaces under the units, 3 parking spaces will be designated for visitors. 13 units will have 2 bedrooms, one will be 1-bedroom. Some snow will be placed in the rear and extra snow will be removed from the property.

Cynthia Nelson, 193 Pleasant Street, some residents on Pleasant Street reached a tipping point. The Zoning Ordinance allows 40 ft. high structure, we deserve more than that. Steve Magoon stated that developers work with the residents. The building is too big, too close to the River. This is the first time that Conservation Commission allowed to build within the 50 ft. no build zone. I bought my condo in 2002 because I like the diversity of Watertown. Developers want to make money. Don't let our neighborhood become North Cambridge.

Siobhan Murphy, 79 Myrtle Street, traffic is already bad even before 270 Pleasant St is open. This proposal is modest, but on top of all the others it is major. We are looking for a legal advice, these issues should be addressed by Town officials. I am asking the Board not to approve this project tonight.

Luke Delorme, 195 Pleasant Street, this proposal is the same as the one submitted in January. The proposed structure will create bigger mass than 3 townhouses. There will be a developer who will come with proposal for 9 units.

Colleen Sexton, 193 Pleasant Street, this cannot be compared to Haartz-Mason project, sewer easement runs through this property. The new proposal is still the same height, the shadow study would be the same. I have no objection to build on this property but we could get something smaller. The existing traffic light at Myrtle Street is not near access to the path. We are playing with pedestrian safety. Another light is at the Rosedale intersection, it provides much better access to the River. I hope that the Board will consider the residents.

Steve Magoon, development is important to the community, we need to grow, cannot stay the same. It does not have to be large buildings. Neighbors have participated in the PSCD (Pleasant Street Corridor District) process, not everyone understood that we will continue to make changes. Economic Development Study looked at other parts of Watertown, primarily industrial areas, on Galen Street,

Grove Street and Arsenal Street. Diverse land use is very important, it will be part of the Comprehensive Plan discussion. We do not have all the answers. Internet and email allows for quick reach to residents, as well as advertising in the local papers and posting in the Town Clerks office.

Sarah Mack, 195 Pleasant Street, I am sadden with the Conservation Commission approval, it will be a precedent for future projects. This is a significant use change, creating potential for more vehicles. Jack Wise stated that rain storms could flood the garage, residents would have to move their vehicles – to where? There are 2 parking spaces per units, 1 handicapped space and only 1 visitor parking space left. Residents feel frustrated and helpless.

John Hawes, we have 2 options, flat roof versus sloped/hip roof, which has less impact?

Neal Corbett, the hip roof seems to be more in keeping with the neighborhood. More improvements in the rear are needed. This design is better than other developments in the area. Some of the requirements of the PSCD have been met. There are options that could be worse.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, the flat roof design improved what appears to be massing, which is an issue. It also is not fair to blame this developer for all that is happening on Pleasant Street. Residents need to participate in the Comprehensive Plan.

Fergal Brennock, I do prefer the hip roof. How many people have participated in this redesign process? Sometimes the Board is perceived as being biased, we are trying to be neutral.

Luke Delorme, 195 Pleasant Street, I reached out, there was no attempt by the developer to reach out to us.

Steve Magoon, we have received emails expressing the resident concerns but no interest or participation in redesign. The roof line was not the issue for most residents. The developer stated that the project would not work without the 4th floor.

John Hawes, even with 3 stories, the abutters across the street would lose the view. Residents need to pay attention to the Comprehensive Plan. The first presentation and workshop is on March 21 at 7 PM at the Middle School. The only projects that have been proposed for the PSCD are residential. More balance is needed.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve the Special Permit with Site Plan Review under Sections 5.01.1 (f), 5.06, 5.07, 5.16(e)(3) and 5.16(d)(4)((B) 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: 3-1 In favor
Linda Tuttle-Barletta against
Motion Denied

OTHER

Steve Magoon, a first public meeting for the Comprehensive Plan has been scheduled for March 21, 7:00 pm at the Middle School. It is important to talk about our vision for the future of Watertown. The Consultant, VHB, conducted several interviews with different stakeholders. The consultant and staff took a tour of Watertown. The format of the meeting will allow residents to participate and keypads would be used. Outreach via email and kiosk in the Library will be used. Resident will have the opportunity to register comments on a website as well.

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John Hawes, this stretch of Pleasant Street should not have been included in the PSCD zone. Since the Planning Board is now permit granting authority for this area, all the PB members have to be present. Watertown has a very nice river scape from Watertown Square to Cambridge.

Susan Falkoff, Town Council, when going through the PSCD, we did not think that each site would be maximized. This project was punished because of the previous developments.

Steve Magoon, this developer did not maximize the site.

Chairman John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:25 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:25 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____
For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 3/13/13 available in the DCD&P office.