

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: May 8, 2013 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:03 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

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

ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Fergal Brennock motioned to approve Minutes of 4/10/2013.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Steve Magoon, the next meeting will be on May 20 at the Middle School. This will give people opportunity to weigh in on other exercises during the beginning of the meeting. Topics that represent the Town will be discussed. The interactive website called Mind Mixer Envisioned Watertown will allow people to express their opinion. A display in the Main Street library has been placed near the WSB room, questions can be answered and left in the box. Additional material will be added to the display.

CASES PENDING

- **90 Westminster Avenue;** Michael Bedig – Special Permit Finding

Carl Dumas, Kneeland Construction, this is a request to add 13'X26' addition above the existing kitchen, it will provide additional bedroom and will allow the roof line to be conforming to the neighborhood. This is a very modest increase, it will not be more detrimental. We have shown the plans to the abutting neighbor and they are in support. Staff report is very positive, we are asking the board to approve the petition.

Gideon Schreiber, the original 18x26' dormer was built in 1999 in middle of the roof. Staff recommends an approval of the proposed change.

Marilyn Petitto-Devaney, 98 Westminster Ave, I live next to the petitioner, on the right side. When the first dormer was build, we asked them to make the dormer bigger. Now it will look better aesthetically. We are in support of approval.

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: 4-0 In favor

- **65 Main Street;** New Cingular Wireless, LLC/AT&T Mobility Corp., c/o Brown Rudnick LLP – Special Permit

Edward Perry, Brown Rudnick, AT&T is trying to build out its coverage gap in the area. This proposal will allow for improvements. Antennas will not be visible, all screened will fiberglass screen wall. Service for AT&T customers demands 12 antennas. Equipment shelter has been set up.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a 10,000 s.f. lot, the structure was built in 1969. The equipment is allowed by special permit, the for criteria for granting have been met. This is an appropriate location for such a use, there are no residents within 50 feet of the building. Staff recommends approval.

Steve Magoon, describe the need that these antennas would address?

Edward Perry, we have received approvals for other sites in Watertown in the past. The goal is to get coverage and get rid of drop calls.

Jeff Brown, this seems to be extensive equipment installation. How much more equipment can be added if other companies come?

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Sections 5.13, 9.05, based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Neal Corbett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

- **40 Union Street;** William Fitzpatrick – Variance

William Fitzpatrick, this is a request for a variance to allow the entire frontage with a continuous curb cut to park 4 vehicles in front of an existing 3 family house.

Steve Magoon, the next 2 cases are before the Board because the Town is doing major reconstruction road project that includes new sidewalks and curb cuts. In many cases, it is difficult to see where sidewalk curbs and planting areas are. This is an opportunity to correct the driveway size situation and bring them to compliance with the Zoning Ordinance requirements. Zoning Ordinance allows two separate 11 foot openings or one 22 foot opening. Both these cases have much wider curb openings. We saw that the properties will be impacted by the changes and recommended to the home owners to apply for a variance.

Gideon Schreiber, this property was split with a parcel that fronts Elliot Street. The property does not have any rear or side yard setbacks. The petitioner is asking to keep the entire width of the property as a curb cut. The structure was built prior to zoning, 1904-1910, prior to parking needs. Literal enforcement criteria have not been met. The project would gain value with the street improvement. Sidewalks would improve streetscape. The present situation is dangerous for pedestrians. The property is located near public transportation on Galen Street. The proposed use is a substantial derogation from the intent of the Zoning Ordinance, a 5 foot buffer required by the Ordinance will not be provided. There are other similar issues in the neighborhood, staff recommends denial.

William Fitzpatrick, this is a unique situation, there is no other space. We can add some greenery in the middle. When were the rules created? We are providing off street parking which benefits the Town. It is difficult to rent with one parking space only. If we knew about the dimensional regulations, the application would have been different.

Jeff Brown, the Town is improving the streetscape, there are many houses in similar situation. The Town has the right to set standards.

Steve Magoon, front yard parking is not allowed, this is consistent with other streets in Watertown that were reconstructed. The allowance is one 22' wide curb cut or two 11' curb cuts, regardless what happens tonight this is what is allowed.

Gideon Schreiber, if the Board votes tonight, modifications can be made between this meeting and the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting in 2 weeks. The staff acknowledges that this is a very small lot with a large structure.

Steve Magoon, time frame is important, decision has to be made before the street reconstruction project starts. We will work with the applicant, they can wait until June. We would prefer positive vote tonight and the ZBA would see the changes.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, the curb cut is not driven by the number of units, there are other similar sites in Watertown. The Planning Board will make a recommendation, the ZBA will make the final decision.

Mark Sideris, 30 Union Street, this is the only 3 family on our street, it was built when there were no cars. The policy of one 22' or two 11' curb cuts was put in place to provide uniformity. By continuing this petition for another month, it would give the petitioner an opportunity to make changes.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the above petition until the June 2013 meeting of the Planning Board.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 in favor

- **27-29 Union Street;** Hector Marquez & Dylan McKnight – Variance

Hector Marquez, 27 Union Street, Dylan McKnight, 29 Union Street, we are trying to find a solution to parking 2 cars in the front of each unit. The structure was built in 1890 as a school house and then turned into a 2 family house. We are proposing to introduce greenery, to increase the house value. The Ordinance is here to improve the streetscape, the changes that we are proposing will be at substantial expense to us. We have talked about this improvement for awhile, we are asking for 17.5' opening where 11' is allowed. There is no other place to park the cars.

Dylan McKnight, we spoke with the neighbors, they agree with the changes, there is no other space to park the cars.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a proposal to remove the existing front yard pavement and provide two 18' green spaces in the center. This is a 4,750 s.f. lot, the condo documents stated that there is a continuous parking for 2 vehicles for each unit. To lose the spaces would be a substantial hardship. The proposed granite curbs will improve streetscape. The proposal is derogation from the intent of the Zoning Ordinance, the openings could be reduced to 14'. Staff recommends denial.

Steve Magoon, the Watertown Citizens group offered comments about the negative aspects of wide openings. If the Planning Board recommends the granting of the Variance, the front yard can be replaced with pervious pavers with the 14' opening.

Fergal Brennock, the plan is showing 15.2' length of the driveway, typical car length is 16'. The cars should not encroach on sidewalk, it is important for cars not to stick out.

Mark Sideris, when the homeowners bought the condos, each had 2 parking spaces included. The cars do not encroach onto the sidewalk. We need to be consistent but occasional exceptions should be granted. The entire parking area is now asphalt, this proposal is a significant improvement. Exception should be considered by the Board.

Steve Magoon, couple of other property owners from Union Street have come forward, others made the opening 11' or 22'. We have had conversations with the applicant trying to meet the intent of the Zoning Ordinance. The first application has room to discuss the plan, this is different.

Richard Moynihan, 17-19 Union Street owner, Mrs. Fitzpatrick has owned the property for 70 years, I have owned ours for 40 years. A small Yaris is parked at this petitioner's parking space, a larger car like Camry is about 15'6" will be on the edge. There are many cars that overlap, you cannot put restrictions on the size of the car. Where will the petitioner put snow in the winter? Wide openings will take space from street parking. There is virtually no green space on this street. These are unique situations that predate zoning. This is an excellent location for transportation, tenants rent because of the location. I am opposed to granting of the variance.

Hector Marquez, snow is a big issue, we move it manually to the side of the house. There is no direct public transportation to our jobs, we have to drive in.

More discussion followed. The sidewalk is 5' wide. There is lots of nonconformity in this part of Town. There are always compromises but we are setting long term plan.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the above petition until the June 2013 meeting of the Planning Board.

Neal Corbett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 in favor

DRAFT HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

Steve Magoon, this is a regional plan related to Section 40B. If approved by the State there is a potential to avoid 40B project. This Board will have to take an action, public hearing will be scheduled, and we are now looking for comments.

Jenny Raitt, MAPC, we have been working with the staff and Watertown Housing Partnership since 2012. Some Planning Board members attended the October meeting. We are working together with Lexington and Belmont. Goals and strategies are part of a draft document dated May 2013. The elderly population increase increased in the last decade. The Town has incredible housing stock, many varieties. There is an even split between family and non-family housing with a very low vacancy rate. Multifamily housing has increased, many new units are under construction. Median income has risen as did the sales prices. 10% of each large project is set aside as affordable. We recommend to maintain diverse housing and to provide seniors and persons with disabilities with greater housing choice.

Steve Magoon, comments should be send to the staff within the next 2 weeks. Adjustments will be made and public hearing scheduled. The completion date is June 30, it will be send to the Planning Board, then to Town Council.

OTHER

Jeff Brown, is there a document that states how many votes are needed for Planning Board vote? Could the Planning Board have alternate members?

Steve Magoon, the State law explains the voting process. An amendment by the Planning Board and Council would be needed for alternate members.

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 5/8/13 available in the DCD&P office.