

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: December 11, 2013 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Hearing
Regular Monthly Meeting

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

33 Mt. Auburn Street; Robert Bray, Manager, 33 Mount Auburn Street Realty, LLC - Special Permit with Site Plan Review – REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE

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

PUBLIC HEARING

Amendments to Zoning Ordinance: Industrial District Text Amendment

To modify the dimensional requirements for Hotel Use in the I-1, I-2, and I-3 Zoning Districts, by defining the height for the first story, maximum building height, setback from the street, and required open space, as well as specifically identifying parking and off-street loading requirements. The amendment would also allow stacked parking by Special Permit, as allowed in the CB District, for all uses in commercial and industrial zones.

Steve Magoon, the Economic Development Plan identified the need for adequate hotel space. Fortunately there is a developer who is interested in such a significant project, potentially on Arsenal Street. A change to the Zoning Ordinance is needed for such a project to happen. Necessary changes to the Zoning Ordinance are – See Attached.

Jeff Brown, this amendment applies to hotel & motel, could it be changed to hotel only? We do not want to series of 1-story motels in Watertown.

Steve Magoon, the proposal is for hotel with separate restaurant on the first floor. All Zoning Ordinance requirements for a restaurant will have to be met.

Cecilia Lenk, District B Town Councilor, this is a great economic development proposal. It is important to remember that some of the Arsenal Street properties abut residential properties in the rear, how can we prevent hotels next to those sites? It might cause problems in the future.

John Hawes, it can be controlled with dimensional requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Barbara Ruskin, the Comprehensive Plan is not complete, developers are rushing with projects before it's completed. Why do we want to allow such a large developments now? We have neighborhoods with historic houses, it might be a precedent for having tall buildings scattered in Town. This proposal will go to the Town Council, it should not be voted on in one night. It is a major change in development. When complete, we can use the Comprehensive Plan to guide us.

Steve Magoon, the Comprehensive Plan will be a long range planning document. The draft is already identifying the need for a hotel in Town. This is an opportunity to move forward with project that would benefit the Town. If the Planning Board feels that not all I-3 zones should be included, we are open to such a change. The dimensional regulations of the Zoning Ordinance will be followed.

John Hawes, this amendment is site specific, can we restrict the amendment to I-1? The site is completely surrounded by other industrial sites. We will have control with Special Permit process. Ultimately higher buildings might be desirable.

Barbara Ruskin, do we need to have this change before the project is proposed?

Bill Dylan, I have a client who owns property in I-2 district and is also interested in similar proposal.

Fergal Brennock, I-1 zone is away from Watertown Square, there are other areas that are closer and could provide benefit to the Square. We should not limit the amendment to I-1.

Steve Magoon, tonight we are talking to allow this change in industrial zone. It can be revisited after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Bill York, Atty, representing Boylston properties, this developer is trying to present a proposal in I-1 zone. The proposal is time sensitive, the approval would allow the project to move forward. There are not many locations where a hotel could be build. This property is in the Arsenal Street corridor.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Town Council the approval of the attached amendment in the I-1 zone only.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

CASES PENDING

- **700 Pleasant Street;** The Stop & Shop Company LLC, Larry Grant - **Special Permit**

Larry Grant, we are offering a new service to allow customers to shop online and to choose a pick up time for grocery pick up at the store or delivery to their home. Groceries will be stored in temperature controlled totes. Customers never leave the car, the total transaction at the store takes 3-4 minutes. We will designate 4 parking spaces for this use.

Danielle Evans, the petitioner's request is for SP Outdoor Service Window as a business accessory, Outdoor display and storage of new merchandise. The parcel is located in Flood Plain District and a SP under 5.06 is required. This request would legalize the existing storage lockers, seasonal merchandise display and Blue Rhino propane cylinder exchange display. The proposal meets all four criteria for granting of the special permit. All building, health and safety requirements have been met, staff recommends approval of the petition.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve the Special Permit under Sections 5.02(i)(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

- **11 & 13 Union Street;** Anthony Psikarakis - **Special Permit Finding**

Anthony Psikarakis, one side of the 2-family duplex is rented, the other side is occupied by our family. I have lived in the same neighborhood for 40 years. I am proposing to build 2 dormers, one on each side, to add a ¾ bathroom between 2 existing bedrooms. The design is similar to a structure at 61-63 Union Street.

Danielle Evans, this is a request for a Special Permit Finding under Section 4.06(a) to allow expansion of a nonconforming 2-family structure. This is a minor alternation, in keeping with the architecture of the neighborhood. Staff recommends an approval with conditions.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve 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.

Neal Corbett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

- **354 Arsenal Street; Ziad Nabbout – Variance & Special Permit Finding**

Halim Choubah, Engineer, representing the owner, the 7,857 s.f. property is located at the corner of Arsenal and School Streets, I-1 zone. The property has 4 pumps and a small kiosk. A small 2 story building is also on the site. The owner is proposing to raze the existing kiosk, islands, pumps and block building and construct a new 750 s.f. retail store, one island with 3 pumps and 66'x20' overhead canopy. The existing underground tanks and fuel lines will be replaced, new concrete pads, paving and landscape provided. The traffic in and out will be one way. We have met with the planning staff and all criteria have been met.

Danielle Evans, Special Permit Finding is required for alteration of nonconforming uses, Variance is needed for front, side and rear yard setbacks. The petitioner is proposing to replace existing gas station with a new station and upgrade the site. If the required setbacks were met, there would not be any buildable area left. The improvements are more appropriate for the site. Sidewalks will be added, the new building will be more architecturally pleasing and landscaping added. Staff is recommending an approval with conditions, and additional condition #8 that air pump should be installed.

John Hawes, who owns the billboard, it is an eyesore?

Steve Magoon, the billboard is located on DCR property.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals an 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

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals an 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.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

- **192 Pleasant Street; John P. White, Jr., - Special Permit with Site Plan Review**

Bill York, Atty, we have met with the Conservation Commission which approved the last project for this site. We are going back on January 8, 2014. The site is an eyesore, 93% of the site is previous, and it slopes towards the River, ending 1-2 feet from the River walk. We are proposing 7 townhouse units, 2-1/2 story high on Pleasant Street, 3-1/2 story high on the River side. The structure is the same height as the abutting 2-family homes across the street, located in PSCD (Pleasant Street Corridor District), where Planning Board is the permit granting authority.

Bill Dylan, I was here with the previous applicant, who proposed 14 units. The neighbors felt, that it was too many units, and the design facing Pleasant Street was not attractive. The new developers, Joseph White and Jon Wardwell, are local and experienced in historic properties. Hans Strauch is international architect located in Cambridge. 30 neighbors attended the neighborhood meeting, including Town Councilors and direct abutters.

Hans Strauch, HDS Architecture, this is a strong neighborhood, it would be easy to turn our back onto Pleasant Street. We will address the street, it is not just a pass through. The property slopes down to the River and on the westerly side. This project does not max out the site, the building is 35 feet tall on Pleasant Street, 54 foot height is allowed. The proposed site design will have one curb cut and is setback of 10 feet plus 2 feet allowance for the windows. We are proposing 2 bicycle spaces per unit, the residents will be interested in the bike path located in the rear along the River. The public access to

the River will be improved. A discussion at the Conservation Commission meeting regarding pavers in the rear and on the side has been continued to their next meeting on January 8.

Lorayne Black, Landscape Architect, the goal is to create landscape that would complement the neighborhood. We are proposing small maples along the front to create landscape along Pleasant Street. Majority of plantings is rain garden on east side with a small strip of grass. We are proposing mixture of evergreens in the rear. Some pines that would serve as a competition to the maples, will be removed, green buffer created. Texture and colors of plants will provide habitat.

Danielle Evans, the 4 criteria for granting of Special Permit have been met. The site is appropriate for such use. The Conservation Commission saw the new proposal and the application has been continued due to its proximity to the River. Pedestrian access path from Pleasant Street to the River will be installed. The traffic study found that the project will have minimal impact. All parking will be on site and adequate facilities will be provided as well as adequate number of bicycle spaces. Open space will increase from 7% to 28.5%. Improvements will decrease impervious surface. All utilities will be below grade, trash and recycling collected by private company. All applicable federal, state and local laws have been met. The project is subject to Affordable Housing requirements, 10% on site or for less than 10 units cash payment of \$182,105. Staff recommends conditional approval with additional condition of CC approval.

Jeff Brown, the scale of the project is acceptable. Will the units be condominiums for sale? What is the pitch from Pleasant Street to the River?

Hans Strauch, the pitch is 10% from the building to the River, 3% in the back. We will use all energy saving equipment. The intention is to place equipment away from the abutters. A small fence will be placed between our property and the pathway.

Steve Magoon, the Conservation Commission was concerned with the pitch and surface material.

John Hawes, the dormers facing Pleasant Street side should be removed. The Commission on Disability was pleased with the access to the pathway.

Cynthia Nelson, 193 Pleasant Street, directly across from this site. Our view will be forever altered but I am in full support. I have spoken against the previous proposal. This developer listen to the neighborhood and made changes, working with Watertown residents.

Colleen Sexton, 193 Pleasant Street, this new project fits into the neighborhood. We were dissatisfied with the previous project and planning process. Despite the fact that we will lose views, I support this project. The size and scope of the project has changed, this design will improve quality of life in this neighborhood. We are asking the Board to approve this proposal.

Barbara Ruskin, Mr.Dylan requested neighborhood meeting and Mr. Magoon made the arrangements, the 24 hour notice was not adequate. Many residents including Town Council members attended the meeting. The entrance to the bike path is important, we are very happy with this project.

Elaine Bean, 29 Warren Street, will the landscape be maintained? Will the mechanicals be visible from the street?

Cecilia Lenk, Town Councilor, access to the path and the pervious surface are important.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve the Special Permit/Site Plan Review under Section 5.01.1(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

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve the Special Permit under Section 5.06 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

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to accept a cash payment of \$182,105 in lieu of an on-site affordable unit under Section 5.07 Affordable Housing requirement.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor

OTHER

Steve Magoon, the consultant and staff are working on the final language. A discussion with the Planning Board will follow fairly soon.

John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:30 PM.