

## WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: May 14, 2014 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting  
Public Hearing

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

### ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 4/9/2014.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-0 In favor

### CASE PENDING

- **216 Highland Ave**; Lorraine & Kenneth Seacrist - Special Permit Finding

Lorraine Seacrist, we are proposing to construct a second story addition to have all the bedrooms on the second floor.

Gideon Schreiber, the 6,621 s.f. structure is located in S-6 zone. The original house recording states the property address on Gleason Street, it was confirmed by the Zoning Officer. The petitioner is requesting to build a new addition by raising the height of an existing wall one half story. The proposed addition will not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval 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: 3-0 In Favor

### CONTINUED CASE

- **917 Belmont Street**; Walker Home & School – Site Plan Review

Frank Elliott, Architect, it was suggested at the last meeting to move the proposed structure 10' forward, away from the abutters. After two neighborhood meetings, we have moved the building 5' south from the rear lot line. This is the best alternative with minimal issues linking the 2 buildings together. This will place the new structure 37' from the neighbor's house.

John Hawes, the additional 5' is a good compromise.

Frank Elliott, the number of students will remain the same, the gymnasium and center is required by the State.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve the Site Plan Review under Sections 9.03, 5.01.2(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: 3-0 In Favor

### CASE PENDING

- **311 Arsenal Street**; Athena Health LLC - Special Permit

Larry Beal, Beal Associates, this is a wonderful campus but something is missing. We are proposing temporary retail and small business area in the green space in front of the Art Center. It will include demolition of the existing fountain and placement of three 10'x20' shed structures. The structures will include sliding doorway, window and counter and rigid canopy. An ADA compliant ramp will be added. Each shed will be connected to nearby electrical, water and sewer infrastructure. A stone pathway will be added to encourage pedestrian traffic. The temporary wood frame sheds will be used from June to end of October.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a request for a temporary Special Permit. The project proposes to demolish the fountain, which has already been removed and to construct three 10'x20' temporary wood sheds located on new

stone dust area replacing grass. It was stated that this 30 acre site is important historic landmark. The criteria for the Special Permit have been met, it is an appropriate area for such a use, there will be no impact on roadways. Temporary utility service will be provided, any connections will require DPW approval.

Leslie Brunner, Senior VP of athenahealth, most of our employees live in Watertown. Some retail is needed on site, we want to provide this service for employees and Watertown residents are welcome.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, is there a sample of such structures, is it being used elsewhere?

Larry Beal, the 10'x20' sheds are made of ponderosa pine, the walls are 8' tall.

Casey Whitney, Arsenal Street, the plans are showing a fountain that has already been removed. The work in the area has been going on for a month.

Steve Magoon, Carolyn Reckman & athenahealth are not experienced in development process. I have informed them that they have to follow the process, timed to get the early start. This will not happen again.

Cathy Santoian, 279 North Beacon Street, I am a direct abutter. I hope that the Board will proceed cautiously and consider the neighbors. All the additional employees and visitors will generate additional traffic. Extended working hours will affect the neighbors.

Barbara Ruskin, Spring Street, I am concerned with retail as an amenity at this location. It might hurt small businesses in the Town. October deadline sounds reasonable for this experiment.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval the Special Permit for temporary structures under Section 9.11 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: 3-0 In Favor

#### *PUBLIC HEARING*

#### AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE

#### Arsenal Overlay Development District (AODD) Text Amendment

Steve Magoon, this is a request from athenahealth to amend the text of AODD (Arsenal Overlay Development District) as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance. At the first reading on April 8, the Town Council referred the amendment to the Planning Board, who will send it back to the Town Council for final vote.

Leslie Brunner, Senior Vice President of athenahealth, this amendment will allow us to follow our vision to the year 2025. The company is 17 years old, and has 3200 employees, 1300 employees are at the Watertown campus. We are here to request a text amendment that would allow us to proceed with our vision for this 30 acre site. Major goal is to turn the property into more green space. Change walkway along Building 311, remove roadway, and create more pedestrian roadways. The walkway will have adequate strength to support access of emergency vehicles. Amphitheater will be built in the rear area. The existing parking lot will be removed and more cars move indoors, it will provide better storm water management. We are proposing to create indoor/outdoor space in the rear of Arsenal Center for the Arts building to be used all year. We have a similar facility in Belfast Maine. Our major goal is to place all the cars indoors. We would like to create a destination type restaurant overlooking the River and connection between the property and River. We are proposing to build terraced garage on the west side of the property, with green roof.

Steve Magoon, the AODD zone was created for the Arsenal site only. The amendment of the Section 5.12 of the Zoning Ordinance is as follows – See Attachment

Tonight, the petitioner is not here for their Master Plan Approval. We have received comments from Barbara Ruskin representing the Neighborhood Network and Jonathan Bockian.

John Hawes, the Zoning Ordinance is a legal document, the changes need to be ironed out, this will not be conclusive evening, the discussion will be broader tonight.

Larry Beal, the existing garage is fairly dark, we are proposing to add couple of floors of office space. The new garage on the west end will have 11' ceilings which will allow more light. This is a former superfund site, we have to build above ground. We are sure that 90' height will be sufficient. Presently there are 1300 parking spaces in the existing garage and 820 ground parking spaces.

John Hawes, 90' height will be a huge presence in Watertown, this is more Boston scale.

Leslie Brunner, we are planning 6% of surface parking and the rest in the garage.

Rena Baskin, Franklin Street, a 7 stories hotel is proposed on the former Saab dealership site. The 9 stories at the west end area of Arsenal site will be huge. We are trying to show people how to live with fewer vehicles. How will the public access the green space?

Cecilia Lenk, Town Councilor District B, I prefer to go higher to minimize the surface parking and increase the green space. The design of the garage is important.

Larry Beal, the separation between Building 311 and the parking garage is important to allow public access at Kingsbury and Talcott Avenues, pathway connection to the Commander's Mansion. We will deal with Mass. Historical to move the fence.

Jeff Brown, it seems that the Master Plan for the site is further along. The 79' height is already in the Zoning Ordinance, why should it be increased to 90'?

John Hawes, the 79' height is for the hotel amendment and the Pleasant Street Corridor District (PSCD) only. Developers go to the max but it is important to have flexibility.

Jonathan Bockian, 165 Irving Street, the proposed 90' height is out of place, even 79' is higher than other buildings on this site. The rules for the site are legal documents. 90' should not be allowed without any mitigation/trade off. I urge the Board to add standards, not the max but moderate allowance for flexibility; it allows the Board more power with legal basis. The original vision of the WADC was an entryway to the site at School Street, going through Building 311, which was not very practical. It is very important to allow circulation pattern on site. Another major development is being proposed for a site near Irving Street. Arsenal Street will get more congested. I urge the Board to maintain control.

Barbara Ruskin, Sustainable Watertown, the organization has looking at the proposal. We need an explanation from the Planning Board not the developer.

..... 77 Riverside St, the site has lots of surface parking. The goal of eliminating that is important. Athenahealth seem to be committed to reduce car use and promote bicycles. Employees now park on North Beacon Street, I am in support of the garage, and it can be very attractive.

Cathy Santoian, 279 North Beacon Street, I am opposed to the 90' or 79' height. The traffic in Watertown is out of control because of the development. There are alternative ways to get to the site. The Master Plan proposal will cut off our neighborhood. The proposed garage is twice as large as building 311.

John French, Birch Road, the plans presented tonight are year old; it is hard to evaluate this proposal. Almost 4000 new employees will be added, we are already at traffic capacity. We need to have comprehensive plan for entire Arsenal Street.

Tony Palomba, Town Councilor, no specific plans are available for the site. The proposed changes are based on someone's idea. We need to have better sense of what is being proposed.

Larry Beal, we need to comply with National Historic rules. We have filed for permit for Building 60 and received it in 30 days. We have also filed applications for the sheds and the fence, but did not hear back yet. If rejected, we will not proceed.

John Hawes, this site is a jewel, it is very unique. What kind of effect will a 9 story parking garage have on residential areas?

Rena Baskin, the Board has to be extremely careful with the decision.

Charles LeRay, the garage will be 90 high at average grade, it would be lower at Arsenal Street. Terrace will be created and green space on the roof. Current tenants will be leaving and new employees will take their space. We will come back with final details.

John Hawes, before the amendment continues to the Town Council, we need to see what it means. 10' setback is on Pleasant Street, 25' setback on North Beacon Street. The height has to be balanced. We need to continue the public hearing.

Steve Magoon, the staff and the Board can meet with the applicant

Leslie Brunner, the site is always open to visitors.

Jeffrey Brown, we need to see circulation of the site. Some incentive should be provided for employees to use alternative transportation.

Linda Tuttle-Barleta motioned to continue the petition to the next Planning Board meeting.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-0

#### OTHER

Steve Magoon, the Town Council subcommittee suggested that the Planning Board and the Town Council should have a joint meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Plan draft.

John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:40 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:40 PM MINUTES APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 5/14//2014 available in the DCD&P office.