

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: July 9, 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; Fergal Brennock, Jeff Brown; Neal Corbett; Linda Tuttle-Barletta
Steve Magoon, Director; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

John Hawes, the Agenda would be adjusted to take the case involving the proposed Hotel at 570 Arsenal Street last. The Pleasant Street Corridor Zoning Text Amendment was being continued to the next Planning Board meeting – August 13, 2014.

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 6/11/2014.
Linda Tuttle-Barletta seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

CASES PENDING

- **11 Yukon Avenue**; *George Ford - Special Permit Finding*

George Ford, this is a proposal to construct a 3rd floor dormer within the existing 10 foot front yard and 12 foot westerly side yard setback where 20 foot front yard and 25 foot side yard setbacks are required..

Gideon Schreiber, this is a single-family house. There are surrounding similar structures. Staff recommends approval.

Angie Kounelis, Town Councilor, stated that she had not heard any negative comments about the proposal, and suggested the addition of a dormer to the house would be a benefit.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit Finding under Section 4.06(a); Alternations to Non-Conforming Structure, 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

- **4-6 Sexton Street**; *Walter T. Ciccolo - Special Permit*

Walter T. Ciccolo, we are proposing to raze the existing 2-family structure and to replace it with another 2-family.

Gideon Schreiber, the Floor Area Ratio in this case can be greater than what the Petitioner is requesting. The Petitioner is requesting a FAR of .584, which is less than allowed in the T-zone. The four criteria of approval have been met. The use was appropriate for the zoning district. Refinements were made to the building façade. The proposed modular structure would not adversely affect the neighborhood. Oak tree in the southwest corner should be preserved, fence around the property and other landscaping is proposed. Parking is provided on site Minimum driveway length and setbacks acceptable with conditions. This new construction may require repairs to roadway edge which should be coordinated with Watertown Department of Public Works. The staff recommends conditional approval.

Angie Kounelis, Town Councilor, I commend the petitioner, no negative comments were heard. How will modular units be staged and erected? I am concerned about entanglement with overhead wires.

Walter Ciccolo, multiple boxes will be delivered to the site and stay overnight. They will be erected by a crane which comes to the address the night before. The dwelling would be erected in one day. Police detail would be used. There will be no issue with overhead wires.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section §9.05(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: 5-0 In Favor

- **21 North Beacon Street:** *Gregory Sampson, Attorney, for US Auto Group of Massachusetts, Ltd., d/b/a Boston Volkswagen - Special Permit Finding*

Gregory Sampson, Attorney, this is a request to replace one non-conforming use with another non-conforming use. The previous occupant was Sullivan Tire. We are proposing to replace part of the use with a showroom for used cars. We are proposing a rehab/gut renovation of the facility. 80% of the site to use for pre-owned auto sales. The existing Volkswagen dealership is also on North Beacon Street. Pre-owned car sales are becoming an increasingly important part of auto sales. We will re-orient the site to accommodate the showroom and reduce service bays to two. The building will be designed by Volkswagen to blend with corporate branding. The service area in the building would be used for trades and pre-owned car sales. We are concerned with some of the conditions in the staff report. The vegetated buffer between the sidewalks can be accommodated and new planting beds for annuals will be created, we are proposing concrete curb instead of a granite curb. Other conditions are related to site operations: Exception for health/safety and allowing exhaust to escape on occasion. Restrictions about cars being located on the site are not acceptable. We agree with body work restrictions, and no engine or transmission work. An exception is needed for code-required security lighting. We will consider replacement of dead street trees.

Gideon Schreiber, this is a proposal to replace one non-conforming use with another. The 13,284 square foot lot has permit history in 1976. Six service doors to access the service bays, stock room, are needed. 1976 approval was a Variance, which allowed less than standard drive aisles. The Variance required that "*a row of planters to be cultivated.*" DCDP staff interpreted this condition as requiring a landscaping bed. Key criteria for approval is for the Planning Board to look at whether the change is more detrimental. Staff suggests the criteria are conditionally met. The conversion needs to be clearly defined as a used auto dealership with an accessory service use. Transportation analysis shows a like-for-like conversion. Need to clearly link onsite service for used vehicles, as Volkswagen already does full service at another nearby location. A concern about generation of hazardous waste. Several proposed conditions limit the types of service functions allowed on site. Limits on the number of vehicles on the site to the amount of on-site parking.

Fergal Brown, does the petitioner own Logan Furniture? Sign on 43 North Beacon? Temporary sign has been up for about 4 years.

Gregory Sampson, the petitioner does not own the abutting building. We want to finish the renovations at 43 North Beacon, including the final signage. This expansion will enable some of the final renovations at 43 North Beacon.

Steve Magoon, the petitioner cannot connect the approval of 21 North Beacon to the unfinished signage at 43 North Beacon.

Neal Corbett, this proposal will improve the site. I am troubled by allowing another non-conforming use in Watertown Square. This project is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Cecilia Lenk, District Councilor, I agree with Mr. Corbett, this use is non-conforming. It is an expansion of the same type of business. I understand the need to follow the Volkswagen brand but it does not enliven the Square. This is a prime piece of real estate, this plan does not include significant landscaping. This is Auto repair shop. I urge the Board to consider whether this is the best use of the property given the Economic Development and Comprehensive Plan. We need strong community character and landscaping requirements for this site.

Mark Krokavitz, 77 Riverside Street, I support Mr. Corbett. This is a lost opportunity, parking again against the street. Concrete curbing seems cheap. Record of this company is poor in terms of maintaining the landscaping at their present location. We need strong landscaping conditions.

Barbara Ruskin, Spring Street, I also agree with prior speakers. We need to fulfill the Comprehensive Plan. Strategic Plan indicated no more auto dealerships in the area. The existing property needs to be restored.

Steve Corbett, 14 Irving Park, I am concerned about the use in that area. I want to enhance the walkability of the Square. We need a use more conducive to that.

Harvey Steiner, 14 Marshall Street, I listened closely to the comments. This is a chance to get this site right, it is the start of Arsenal Street. To revitalize Watertown through good development on this corridor, to prevent the same mistakes as in the Pleasant Street corridor.

Muriel Doherty, Riverside Street, I am concerned about the showroom function, and noise from car repairs, as well as about possible paint fumes. I am concerned about security lighting on the back of the building. Riverside Street is congested with people parking at various businesses. More will be more people attracted to park their cars on Riverside Street because of the park along the Charles River. More congestion.

John Hawes, any response to concerns about lighting at night?

Gregory Sampson, we are not aware of any concerns, the back of building is at the property line. We are not aware of any lighting at the back that would shine on to the condos. Parking will be improved, we will provide nine new spaces. We understand comments regarding the Comprehensive Plan. This application is comparing one use to another use. Employee parking will be provided off-site at another site owned by Boston Volkswagen.

Steve Magoon, broader issues need to be addressed first. This is not the highest and best use of this property. It is important to remember that private property is under the control of the property owner. Property owner made it clear that he would maintain the property in its existing use, this is his right. Staff's perspective is that this is an opportunity to upgrade the site. This is a decision for the Town to make. We recognize situations in Town where the vision is set out. It may take some time for that vision to be implemented. Specific conditions are applied - doors open – minimize the non-conformity, it may create noise when the doors are open. Two bays are still used for car repair – the doors will stay closed. Ventilation is provided by an exhausting system. It is appropriate to limit the auto repair aspects of the proposal. Staff recommended conditions are consistent with vehicle preparation. Full cutoff lights are consistent with security lighting. Direct light will be directed onto the site where it can provide security lighting. We are not concerned with minimal security lighting at night to discourage vandalism.

Gregory Sampson, we are concerned with automatic deactivation of the lighting at night, and about not being able to potentially wash vehicles. Draft "such as" language seemed vague. These conditions may prevent servicing determined to be customary in the future.

Associate of the Volkswagen dealership, the property owner has the right to use the property as is now. The conditions need to be reasonable and clear. We are comfortable with exclusions on body work but want to propose possible alternative language that is being submitted to the Board tonight. We have every intention to keep the doors closed when possible but may need to open the doors when the air conditioning fails. Ducted exhaust is not a cure all. It needs to recognize that there may be times when the bay doors must be opened. We have suggested language on this issue as well.

John Hawes, open-ended questions on the proposed conditions. We need them written down and agreed to. We need a landscape plan. Mindful that LEXUS just put a large expansion on its property. The issue of fairness with respect to use of the property visa vie the Comprehensive Plan. I suggest a continuance to the August Planning Board meeting.

Warren Healer, 1 Lookout Farm Road, Natick, I am speaking for the ownership of the site. The proposed project respects the objectives for redevelopment in Watertown Square. This is an opportunity to move the property towards the objectives of the Watertown Square, movement towards retail, albeit non-conforming retail. Part of the property will be converted to a retail use. A substantial investment in the property is proposed.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the petition to the August 13, 2014 Planning Board meeting.
Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-1 In favor
Neal Corbett opposed.

- **570 Arsenal Street:** *William McQuillen, Manager, BP Watertown Hotel, LLC, - Special Permit with Site Plan Review*

William McQuillen, we have been in discussion with the DCDP staff since the site was purchased in 2012. Watertown's zoning had been changed relative to a Hotel use. We had a community meeting in April 2014 and went before the Site Plan Review group in May. The proposed project is a benefit to the Town that will create tax revenue. It will increase foot traffic to nearby restaurants and other retail shops. We believe that the project is in compliance with zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. It is exciting that the Town Council's vision of bringing a major Hotel to Arsenal Street is being brought to fruition.

Fred Kramer, ADD, Inc. the site is located between the Arsenal Mall and Watertown Square. We are sensitive to abutting neighbors and respectful of the existing community character. We have created a transitional design that looks to the future. It is a great site in terms of nearby amenities with good proximity to bike trails, shopping, and public transit. The structure is set back from the lot lines, street trees and sidewalks will be created. The building meets the street in an open way. There are 148 units with surface parking. The base of the building is open by using large amounts of glass and metal panels. Modeled perspectives showing a street view on Arsenal Street was shown. The ground floor along the street edge would be very active. Amenity space on the upper level will be used for guests. Materials board showed lighter pallet of colors. Cross-section showed how roof-top mechanicals would be screened from views from the street with parapet wall providing screening. The lobby area, pool, fitness center, meeting room and other amenities will be on the ground floor. Guest rooms will be on second to fifth floors.

Karen Staffier, VHB, street trees are proposed on Arsenal and Elm Streets. 24+ new trees will be added along with ground cover and ornamental flowers. This proposal complies with the recently adopted Hotel Zoning Amendment. 115 parking spaces are required, 121 vehicle parking spaces + 9 bicycle parking spaces will be provided under the building cover. Short-term bicycle parking will be located along the main pedestrian access. Loading dock is located behind the building near the building service entrance and trash/recycling room. Proposed dumpster enclosure is planned for if more space needed. Transformer, potential switch gear and generator are located at ground level, near loading area. A new six-foot fence will be placed next to the abutting residential property. Type of fence to be as desired by abutting property owner. Circulation diagrams for anticipated delivery vehicles and Fire Department vehicles are presented. The proposed onsite storm water drainage is provided. New drainage system will reduce volume of runoff and improve the quality of the runoff. We had a meeting with Watertown's Department of Public Works (DPW) and new Town Engineer on storm water issues. We are still working to address the DPW's comments. Lighting will be energy efficient, cutoff LED fixtures. Fixtures and wall packs will be mounted at a 20 foot height.

Giles Ham, VHB, the transportation system is well suited for the proposed project. Arsenal has signals, and a left turn lane into Elm Street. There are 4 driveways which will help disperse traffic. Sidewalks and pedestrian actuation, MBTA busses are in the area. The traffic numbers generated by the project are conservative. Average of 1,338 trips weekday. It is unlikely to generate significant conference traffic. The restaurant is only for Hotel patrons. Arsenal Street about 1700 cars in the Peak Hour. The estimate is 1-2% increase in traffic on Arsenal Street. The site driveways are minimum of 24 feet wide. We will join the local Transportation Management Agency when created. We will implement an onsite Transportation Demand Management plan for employees.

Gideon Schreiber, presented the Planning Staff Report on the project.

Jeff Brown, could shadow parking be provided or could some space be under the hotel structure? Will the hotel be expanded in the future? Is the abutting 3-family house for sale? It is disappointing that there is this much surface parking for one hotel.

William McQuillen, the are no plans to expand. We have been in discussions with the owner of the three family house but he is not interested in selling his property. Putting some parking spaces under the Hotel is \$20,000-\$40,000 per space and is not financially feasible.

Fergal Brennock, the three-family house is not directly addressed on the site plans. The proposed design is good. It is a place to gather and do business. Will the restaurant be for public use? Public use area should be included in the Hotel. I will reiterate that there should be more sensitivity to the Comprehensive Plan and the

maintenance and continued development of the community. The 700 square foot meeting room could be used by members of the community.

William McQuillen, Hotel business has evolved, this is a select service Hotel. Some services such as full food and beverage will not be available. There will not be doorman/baggage service. That will allow the price to remain affordable and competitive. The proposed meeting room is 700 square feet and is available for guests staying in the Hotel only. The restaurant is essentially a free breakfast, not a sit-down restaurant. Bar service is small and not meant to be a community gathering space. We will not cut the public off from coming into the facility to rent a room, or purchase a beverage. We will allow other businesses to rent the conference room.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, it would be nice to have more public amenities that could be used for weddings, gatherings, etc. The exterior materials do not have a relationship to the surroundings, particularly the Arsenal Mall. I would like to have had the façade set back more. There is a need for a Hotel in the Town.

William McQuillen, the space is limited to guests for reasons of security. The amenity space on the top floor will have the same food service as what would be available in the lobby. It will be similar to Marriott Residence Inn in the Fenway. Soldier's Field Road headquarters for Cambridge Bank is an example of the architecture the company is proud of. We did not want to repeat the brick, given the amount of brick already in the Arsenal Mall.

Neal Corbett, light color boxes are placed around the windows. The details need to be projected more. Some liberty with the plantings on the East elevations needs to be taken. Some sides of the structure have more robust treatment which is a step in the right direction.

Fred Kramer, ADD Inc., planes relate to the functionality of the rooms. There is a recessed plane that is vertical. There are challenges of repetitive building type and the stacked functionality of the area which will give the façade some movement. L-shaped concept for the building creates a marquee area with interplay of metal panels, tones, and sheens. East wall elevation shown is intended to be a green wall.

John Hawes, I am disappointed that the major wall is at the property line. I have noted on the second floor plan – could it be moved back one bay? The structure is not as high as allowed, which is positive. I believe that there would be somewhat strange angles on the resultant rooms. I am worried about the actual use of TRESPA materials. The room layout seems odd, although it seems to work together. Some of the window trims look rather random. I understand the tonal variation in the white panels.

Fred Kramer, ADD Inc., if a wing is moved back, the project would lose perimeter and overall Hotel rooms. The TRESPA panels are colored and each panel is integral, horizontal bands are used in this case. We are looking for ways to cut down on the homogeneity of the project. What is on paper must also look proper when used in the field.

Werner Hoffman, ADD Inc., described the installation of the TRESPA panels. The proposed elevations showing daytime conditions are shown. The panels would look different during the nighttime.

William McQuillen, the large TRESPA panel on the corner of the building is the back bedroom wall of rooms in floors two through six. Remaining ten feet is only 18 inches of protrusion. The white portions of the panels have three tones. The design has evolved since the Site Plan Review meeting and is still evolving.

John Hawes, we need to limit depth of comments on the design of the building and materials.

Tony Palomba, Town Councilor, the conditions state that open space requirements have been met. I don't see a lot of open space, where is it? I understand that this is not a full service Hotel. Comprehensive Plan is still under review and is likely to be ongoing into the next year. It seems questionable to include references of the Comprehensive Plan in the report. What parts reflected in the design of this project, including the Land Use Chapter, meet the recommendations of the Plan?

Steve Magoon, Director, conditions on participation in a TMA will be specific to the project. Some of the conversation staff has had relative to the Economic Development Plan and gathering public input was the consistent message of the need for a quality Hotel in Watertown. Once a Comprehensive Plan is adopted, DCDF

staff would tend to refer more to specific recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan as part of development reviews.

John Hawes, the Petitioner is required to meet a percentage of the site to remain open space as stipulated in the Zoning Ordinance in the Central Business District.

Gideon Schreiber, a substantial number of comments was received about the need for a Hotel as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Activation of the street is also a key theme in the Comprehensive Plan. Project is speaking to the concepts that came from the Comprehensive Plan process.

Stephen Corbett, Town Councilor, I support the project in general. Watertown has needed a quality Hotel for some time. This site is right for such a project.

Cecilia Lenk, Town Councilor, I support this project. The more contemporary design is preferable on this site. This Hotel will serve the business community well.

Angie Kounelis, Town Councilor, this is an exciting proposition. I spoke about attracting a Hotel to Watertown for several years. This is an ideal site that provides an entry to Watertown from the Boston area. I had questions about the sale of the property and whether it would be used to house families in the future, also about screening, trash removal, etc. All of her questions were answered by the petitioner. The community meeting had 40 people, but only about one quarter were residential abutters. What conditions would be imposed on the Petitioner if the Arsenal/Elm Street intersection did not work properly or is too congested? The north elevation along Elm Street is a blank wall, could windows be created?

Vincent Piccirilli, Town Councilor, getting a quality Hotel in Watertown has been a long-term Economic Development goal. A Hotel provides spin-off development. Guests will want to go out to eat and may drive demand for other uses along Arsenal Street. Arsenal Mall/Arsenal Project wants to add more restaurants. It is a short walk to the Arsenal Center to the Arts. It will create economic value in Watertown.

Ernesta Kruskavitz, 77 Riverside Street, it is great to have a Hotel coming at this wonderful location. It is disappointing that it is not a full service facility. Attention is given to bicycles, there is a support for undergrounding utilities along the corridor. Why more surface parking than required?

John Hawes, could the two parking spots next to the pad for the proposed switch gear be made into green space? Tandem parking.

Fred Kramer, ADD Inc., we will remove two parking spaces near the switch gear.

Barbara Ruskin, Spring Street, I support the idea of undergrounding utilities and the shuttle idea. There is a need a modern entry into Watertown, this design does not seem modern enough. I appreciate Councilor Palomba's comments in relation to the Comprehensive Plan. Why do we have four parking spaces in excess of what is required? We need more public space. What about public art? Make the green space serve a function, such as storm water control. At the April Community Meeting, a member of the meeting suggested a sophisticated crosswalk to get people to the Arsenal Mall. What about a café or bakery that would allow people in and service guests? Community Room offered for public meetings without charge? Need to invite the public into the building to create a vibrant streetscape.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of a Special Permit with Site Plan Review under Sections 5.01.1(I), 5.03(12); 9.03; 9.05; and 9.06 based upon the finding that the project meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, subject to conditions set forth in the Staff report, and with the additional conditions that two (2) parking spaces will be eliminated.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0

In favor.

OTHER

Criterion Community Path

Steve Magoon, DCDP staff needs clarification from the Board on a condition connected to the Criterion project. The condition was that a Community Path will be constructed by the petitioner from Main Street to Howard Street as well as a parking area adjacent to Main Street. We had problems getting approval from the City of Cambridge on the language of the condition of approval, to be done by Building Permit. The petitioner is committed to construct the Community Path and is putting the monies, \$325,000, which is more than the estimate of \$215,000 received, in an escrow. The situation in this case with Cambridge ownership of land in Watertown is unique. We now have positive response from Cambridge.

Linda Tuttle-Batletta motioned that the condition to build the Community Path has been met by the petitioner establishing the escrow account.

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

Proposed Zoning Text Amendment for Affordable Housing

Steve Magoon, this is to preview proposed zoning text amendment dealing with Affordable Housing. There will be other recommendations brought forth from the Housing Production Plan, but we wanted to bring this change first.

Gideon Schreiber, the Planning Board had requested to have the text of amendments brought to the Board. Watertown Housing Partnership proposes a Text Amendment relative to the recently passed Housing Production Plan. Copies of proposed Text Amendment were included in the Board's packets for this meeting. The language was proposed for First Reading by the Town Council. Some text changes to the requirements from 10% to 12.50% were made the Gross Floor Area of Affordable Units to a size as specified by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development was made. Others are clerical house cleaning changes. We are asking the Board to pass any further changes to Andrea Adams, Senior Planner.

Tony Palomba, Town Councilor, I am in support for the proposed Text Amendment and a letter had also been submitted in support by the Executive Director of Metro West Collaborative Development.

Comprehensive Plan

Steve Magoon, Director, we have scheduled working sessions with Planning Board and the Economic and Planning Subcommittee of the Town Council. Sessions were scheduled for July 14, 2014, July 21, 2014 and August 18, 2014. All will be at 7:00 PM at Town Hall. We hope to have a fruitful discussion. This will be work sessions, not public hearings.

Barbara Ruskin, will they be open to the public comment, what sections of the Plan will be covered in each meeting?

Steve Magoon, all the meetings are open to the public. Comments from the public will be at the discretion of the meeting Chair. How to review the Comprehensive Plan will most likely be discussed at the first meeting.

John Hawes, this is an opportunity for the two Boards to be able to discuss the Comprehensive Plan.

Gideon Schreiber, people can also submit their comments to DCDP staff ahead of time by Email.

Tony Palomba, Town Councilor, I cannot attend all the meetings, the Agenda should be publicized. Comprehensive Plan is a critical issue for the Town. I hope that public comment would be allowed somewhere in the working session. Perhaps public comment can be limited by time or specific time can be designated during the meeting for comments.

John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 10:05 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:05 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____
For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 7/9/2014 available in the DCDP office.