

## WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: March 11, 2015 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:15 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Linda Tuttle-Barletta; Jeff Brown; Fergal Brennock; Neal Corbett

Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Planning Board; Andrea Adams, Senior Planner

Michael Mena, Zoning Enforcement Officer

### **ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 2/11/15.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

### **CASE PENDING:**

- **14 Morse Street;** Margaret Cloherty - Amendment to Special Permit

Margaret Cloherty, 16 Morse Street, this is a request to modify conditionally approved hours of operation from Saturday only to Monday through Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to conduct a home occupation (electrolysis). The original approval was on 12/17/1970.

Michael Mena, Zoning Enforcement Officer, the proposed project involved an electrologist's office. The project is before the Board as the result of the removal of a sign at the subject property for the existing electrologist's business. An investigation noted the 1970 Special Permit had limited the hours to only Saturday, but the use had been occurring at the site outside of these hours. Owner is very responsive to a letter, and filed for a modification at staff's recommendation. The proposed expansion of hours is consistent with the limitations on Home Occupation. Property has sufficient parking for clients as well as residential tenants. Staff recommends approval of the amended Special Permit.

Margaret Cloherty, the sign was taken down because there had been a lot of break-ins in the neighborhood, and I believe that removing the sign would help protect her property and family. In 1970, I have been working full time for a Boston-based management company and only needed Saturdays.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit amendment under Section 5.02(d) of the Zoning Ordinance based on the finding that the project 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.

- **76 Westminster Avenue;** Michael F. Iodice, Agent, Thornbush Properties – Special Permit

Doug Agule, Thornbush Properties, we are proposing to construct a new, side-by-side two family where a single family with a detached garage currently exists. The current building does not comply with setbacks. The new building would comply with the Zoning Ordinance, with the exception of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in the zoning district. The Petitioner was requesting a FAR of 0.59 which is allowed by Special Permit. The retaining wall would conform to the zoning height requirements, with a fence on either side of the property, covered by a landscape vine. The staff report suggests a plant species different than the one in the Landscape Plan, Hardy Kiwi, but this plant should not be used, because it would be subject to ongoing maintenance. The proposed species is the most adequate in terms of covering a fence, it is aggressive, but not more than other species. The staff's requests permeable pavers, this would result in slightly more preparation cost and materials cost. The design includes a trench drain at the end of the property to capture runoff before it leaves the property. The system was designed consistent with the 100-year flood.

Andrea Adams, the screen provided a rendering of the proposed project, the lot is just over 6,000 square feet. The site photos show snow on the sidewalk, Mr. Agule had cleared the sidewalk at the request of staff. The FAR requested is over what is allowed by right in the T-zone. The staff suggests

the site is appropriate for such a structure and/or use. The Town tries to limit front yard parking, which the Petitioner's design does through side yard parking areas. The project would not have impacts to the neighborhood, given the preservation of the front yard, and the removal of the garage on the lot. The building coverage would actually decrease. Staff recommends use of permeable pavers to help with stormwater management. This is in keeping with the Town's draft Stormwater Guidelines, and it helps with overall recharge in Watertown. Hardy Kiwi is not listed on the Massachusetts list of designated invasive plant species, but it is being "watched" for possible listing in the future. Staff also recommends a shade tree if recommended by the Tree Warden. The proposed driveway widths were adequate, and the project provides sufficient off-street parking. The project will have to undergo review by the Town Engineer to ensure proper facilities for drainage, utility connections, curbing and sidewalk improvements - condition #8.

Jeff Brown, will these units be rentals?

Doug Agule, yes, these units will be rented.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 5.04 of the Zoning Ordinance 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.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In Favor.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

John Hawes, there are three significant cases before the Board in April: Elan/Greystar, 65 Grove Street, and the new hotel at 80 Elm Street. I am concerned about the various traffic analyses going on in and around the same general area. The proposed CVS project might impact the same area, as well as a pending new project at Bigelow and Nichols Avenue. The Town should conduct all of the required traffic studies using the Town's designated firm, and the Petitioner's use their own expertise to argue with the conclusions. Three projects have a piece of the same traffic signal. Does money go into an escrow account until it's drawn down on? I am concerned about pass-by traffic. Would this be a way to increase confidence in Traffic Studies?

Fergal Brennock, this is an excellent suggestion. The Town should do the initial study, and let the private Petitioner's traffic consultant challenge its conclusions. This may potentially increase the confidence in the study. If there is a peer review done, and the Town's and the Petitioner's study are in agreement, there should not be a challenge.

Jeff Brown, what Mr. Hawes was suggesting were a set of Design Guidelines for traffic. The issue is what was or is the limit on traffic.

John Hawes, I am concerned about how the actual structural changes would be coordinated. This issue is something the Board should talk more about. The Board would not be up to its full membership again until May 2015.

Fergal Brennock, is 80 Elm Street, the hotel, going to be on the April 2015 Planning Board Agenda?

Ingrid Marchesano, this is not yet clear. The Special Meeting on 3/31/15 and preliminary joint meeting date with the Town Council have not been totally settled yet.

John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM

MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:25 PM MINUTES APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 3/11/15 which is available in the DCDP office.