

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: April 8, 2015 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:20 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Special Meeting/Public Hearing

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chair, Neal Corbett, Linda Tuttle-Barletta, Fergal Brennock
Steve Magoon, Director; Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Planning Board;
Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner, Andrea Adams, Senior Planner

John Hawes, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:05 PM. Continued Case Irving Street/Arsenal Street/Greystar will be heard tonight but will be continued to May due to unresolved Department of Public Works issues. The Petitioner will give their presentation tonight. 65 Grove Street project will be heard first. A special meeting has been scheduled for April 30, 7:00 PM, TC Chamber, to discuss the Design Standards & Guidelines.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve Minutes of 3/11/15.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

CASES PENDING

- **31 Grandview Avenue;** Carol Spickler – Special Permit Finding

Carol Spickler, Petitioner, this is a request for a Special Permit Finding to build a rear shed dormer.

Andrea Adams, the lot is non-conforming and undersized for T-zone and has non-conforming East and West side yard setbacks. The Petitioner is requesting a Special Permit Finding (SPF) to add a second story full shed dormer on the rear of the building. The staff recommended conditional approval of the SPF.

John Hawes, the original eave line was being maintained on the East end of the structure. The dormer is slightly set back from the first floor. It does not have to be set back, but the molding should be kept. Original eave line will be kept on the rear façade as well. This would maintain the outline of the original house all the way around the structure. I recommend larger windows in the media room to match the bathroom. These are suggestions, not requirements.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the requested rear shed dormer as a Special Permit Finding under §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: 4-0 In favor

- **195 Mount Auburn Street;** Clyde Younger – Amendment to Special Permit Finding

Clyde Younger, this is a request to amend Special Permit Finding to allow existing uses to continue with 8 parking spaces. The Board has received an updated Plot Plan, the newest plan demonstrates that there are 8 parking spaces on the site. I am concerned that in terms of zoning, municipalities' control of zoning is the greatest Police power they have. Zoning affects property values and peoples' use of their property. I request that two conditions in the staff report be removed: Perpetual line marking of the parking spaces. My friend that is an attorney thought this was holding his property to a higher standard than lane or street marking on municipal streets. Many Watertown streets don't have a line separating the travel lanes. This would cause a maintenance problem and it would be an unfair burden on the owner or landlord. I have lived in Watertown since 1967, the rapid development in Watertown is causing impacts. The increased congestion on Pleasant Street is an example. The Comprehensive Plan should be carefully implemented, so as not to place an unfair burden on property owners.

Andrea Adams, the site has non-conforming mixed use, with commercial and residential uses. The site is in the SC District and in the Mount Auburn Historic District. The request is to allow 8 parking spaces were prior approvals had required more. The permit/enforcement history, dating back to the Funeral Home, shows that it did not have adequate parking. Prior plans were incorrect, as part of the parking for the site was shown on an abutting lot. The Code Enforcement issue and Order to Show Cause that is still open and pending before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to prove compliance with the 1996 and 1998 permits. The Order to Show Cause in November 2014 directed the Petitioner to seek an amendment and potential approval of a revised parking scheme to 8 spaces, where the prior approvals had allowed between 10 and 12 spaces. The public comments were extensive, and these were provided to the Board. Department of Community Development & Planning (DCDP) staff and the Zoning Enforcement Officer also coordinated with the Town Police Department to obtain and supply the Board with Police Department records of violations and complaints. The staff research shows that only one complaint was associated with the subject property. The DCDP staff analysis shows that the then Zoning Ordinance and the current Zoning Ordinance (WZO) would require between 10 and 13 parking spaces. The standard in this case is that the change, extension or alteration has to not be substantially more detrimental than the existing non-conforming use, structure or building to the neighborhood. The Funeral Home would have required 27 spaces per the WZO, and the prior and current uses would require 10 and 13 spaces, respectively. The site always had non-conforming parking. Current site plans indicate the site can only accommodate 8 parking spaces. DCDP staff acknowledges that the site is tight, and lacks adequate maneuverability for the requested 8 spaces. Given these facts, DCDP staff recommends the request be conditioned to clearly demarcate the onsite parking, and that physical barriers and signage may be required to admonish those parking on the site to use the designated spaces, and to not encroach onto abutting property.

Steve Magoon, the Board has received correspondence from the Abutter, and we want to make sure that these concerns were on the record in terms of the width of Franklin Street, and the adequacy of parking at 195 Mount Auburn Street.

John Hawes, is the original Special Permit reasonable? It seemed reasonable in 1996. There is a problem with the site, how far should the Board involve itself in a legal issue. The Board needs to focus on the Planning aspects of the case. There are facts on the ground: 8 spaces are shown. Going from 10 spaces on site to 8 parking spaces on site is detrimental to the neighborhood, as the issue was not necessarily just with the site, but part of a large issue in the neighborhood.

Clyde Younger, I have visited the site last Saturday, and read the comments made in the Police reports. There were cars parked incorrectly on Franklin Street, but they were not directly attributable to 195 Mount Auburn Street. Only one person was present on Saturday at the site, in the real estate office, and no one was present on site from the residential apartment. I question if the cars parked incorrectly on Franklin Street are from the site. A neighbor could shed more light on the situation.

George Mariandis, part owner of the real estate office at 195 Mount Auburn Street. The many years that the real estate office has been in the building, there has rarely been a parking problem. In the few cases where there was a problem, it's been people parking on the street, including people taking the bus into Boston. Franklin Street is narrow, and sometimes contractors park on the street. The 8 spaces on site are rarely fully used.

Council Member Lenk, District B Councilor, the area around Franklin Street is an on-going problem. There are other businesses in the area, people also park in the area to take the bus lines. The location of the on street parking blocks the view out to Mount Auburn Street. This should be taken into account, although we acknowledge the problem is not directly or only attributable to Mr. Younger's property. The situation is sometimes extremely unsafe, I have been working on this issue for some time.

John Hawes, the situation is not ideal, and stacked parking is now restricted to one and two family residences only. The last two conditions should be removed. Is there any asphalt from this property on the neighbor's property?

Steve Younger, my neighbor has installed large stone blocks or rocks along his property line adjacent to the site driveway. This would prevent anyone from deliberately backing their vehicles onto the property.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the requested Amendment to the Special Permit Finding under §4.06(e)(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.

John Hawes, Chair, asked for discussion and a possible motion on the matter of conditions #3 and #4.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the requested Amendment, striking proposed conditions #3 and #4 from the Board report.

Neal Corbett seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-1 In Favor

Linda Tuttle-Barletta opposed

- **23-25 Green Street;** Mark McCarthy – Special Permit Finding

Kamer Minassian, Architect for the Petitioner, the proposal is to increase the height of the left rear to increase the headroom in the two floors. The left wing of the house would be remodeled, the right wing would not be modified. The modification will occur within a non-conforming setback. The request also included adding a deck on the second floor on top of a first floor deck. The second floor deck would slightly increase the Floor Area Ratio (FAR), the new area on the first floor would include a new room. The accessory apartment will be removed.

Gideon Schreiber, both the infill inside the house and the second story deck cause a change in FAR.

Andrea Adams, Mr. Minassian stated in the documents that the side yard setback to the west was 7.5 feet, but this can't be verified from the Mortgage Plan submitted. The request is for a SPF to increase ceiling height, and to construct a second floor deck. The proposed project would effectively remove the existing accessory apartment. The FAR would change because of the interior reconfiguration and the second floor deck. Basements do not count towards FAR in the T-zone. Staff recommends conditional approval of the SPF.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the requested Special Permit Finding under §4.06 based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Neal Corbett seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0 In Favor.

CASES CONTINUED

- **65 Grove Street;** Edward Nardi, Cresset Grove LLC – Special Permit with Site Plan Review

John Hawes, this case has been continued from a prior Planning Board meeting to allow the Petitioner to work on some remaining issues.

Attorney William York, on behalf of the Petitioner, Cresset Grove, LLC, the project has been before the Board in February 11, 2015 but the suggestion was to work with abutting properties to try to find an access/egress onto Grove Street. The original site plan only had an entrance from Grove Street to the site. By working in partnership with the DCDP staff, the Town's Design Consultant, Councilor Kounelis, the Atrium School, and the development team, we have created a workable site plan. The draft design provides access/egress to and from Grove Street, and benefits an already strong project.

Edward Nardi, Cresset Grove, LLC, we would like to thank the Board, and all members involved in finding the solution to site access. Also to Mr. Magoon, Director, for meeting with Mr. Gamble, the Town's design consultant. The draft proposed design is a variant of a design suggested by DCDP staff and Mr. Gamble. Sylvia Narsissan and Linda Echt from the Atrium School were integral to putting the solution together. We do not have hard copies for the Board to review because of the review process by the Atrium School, including the full School Board. The Special Board meeting to approve the design was last night. The proposed new access/egress is shown tonight. The February site plan includes the construction of a 295 car parking garage, and only an entry on Grove Street, and other access on Crawford Street. The first key component is the entry/egress onto Grove Street. The Atrium School owns more of the abutting land, so there had to be a discussion with the School to achieve this solution. The site design addressed activity on Crawford Street. The road behind the garage was removed. The School would also gain a parking area by permanent easement. There would be a lot less traffic onto Crawford Street. The revised design will result in more green space.

John Hawes, did Cresset Grove and the Atrium School have any agreement in terms of what occurs during the day relative to traffic circulation? The draft plan seems to be a win-win for the School, the proposed project and the houses on Crawford Street. How will the traffic coming into the site be controlled, particularly in the morning? It would not be a good thing for more traffic on to the abutting roads relative to school operations in the morning. There wouldn't be a significant problem with cars leaving the site during the day. There are new parking spaces adjacent to the proposed bike path.

Edward Nardi, the traffic pattern Mr. Hawes was suggesting in the AM from Kondazian to Crawford and resulting in a U-turn would be prohibited. The Town could also potentially further restrict the end of Crawford to prevent undesirable traffic movements. There is cross-connectivity on the site through the garage. There would be egress allowed for truck delivery and access to the loading dock at the upper corner of the site, near the now proposed shadow parking.

Steve Magoon, the entrance is in the top left corner of the site. Cars could not directly exit out that way from the 65 Grove Street site, and could not come down Crawford Street, and make a right into the site. The new proposed parking along the bike path would be shadow parking.

Neal Corbett, the proposed redesign is an improvement.

Maria Saiz, 83 Hovey Street, there is a bike rack at the rear. There is exit/entrance to the bicycle parking along the proposed bicycle path. What is the circulation pattern? Fair number of people would be coming down the bike path.

Bill York, yes there is also bicycle parking in the new garage. There is proposed circulation path for bicycles. Cyclists could gain access to the front courtyard through the garage.

Gabrielle Geirmicheal, brother of owner of 52 Crawford Street, 52 Crawford Street is becoming an "island" in terms of the new parking area for the Atrium School. The house would be surrounded by traffic, I am concerned with that. Will the 15 foot buffer to the residential properties be maintained?

Steve Magoon, the buffer will be maintained.

John Hawes, this was in effect always the case. The proposed new parking area will be for the Atrium School, and as such, should be less used when school is not in session.

Rita Callella, 42 Crawford Street, I am concerned with the proposed new parking lot for the Atrium School. Will it now be used as a cut-through and generate more traffic on the street, how will it be controlled?

Ed Nardi, the School could speak to this issue. My understanding is that people coming to the school park on Crawford, go to the school building, and then return. I suggest that this traffic pattern might change with the new parking lot. This would potentially allow a better drop off situation. The egress to Grove Street wouldn't really change.

Barbara Ruskin, Spring Street, a new exit onto Grove Street was great. I am concerned with the amount of asphalt in the courtyard area. I encourage the Petitioner to further reduce the onsite parking. The spaces in the courtyard should be shadow parked. The disabled-accessible spaces are in the courtyard. I am concerned about future conversion of the new garage to office space?

Ed Nardi, any future construction or conversion would be difficult, as the internal garage floors pitch. As to the suggestion on shadow parking in the courtyard, the site is about 6.5% open space today. With the revised access/egress design, and the removal of the ring road around the garage, the project would result in 30+ percent as open space. Access in the front for drop off, short term and visitor parking is critical.

John Hawes, there are 19 spaces in the front island, the same amount west of the garage. If parking is created just beyond the garage, perhaps it would allow enough space in the courtyard area for a vegetated island.

Councilor Kounelis, District A, I thank the Board for their attention to detail, this is a case of everyone working collaboratively. I thank the Atrium School and Mr. Nardi for their diligence in reaching a solution. This project is an asset to the community. The circulation pattern, particularly at Crawford, is difficult. . Regarding the bamboo screening for the garage, an alternate planting would work better. The property is close to the residences, will there be overnight security. Will there be cameras and lighting, for the remote parking lot, the one for the Atrium School.

Fergal Brennock, the latest plan is distributed to the neighbors. It would allow the most interested and impacted properties to see what is proposed.

Sylvia Narsissan, a Town resident and Board Member at the Atrium School, we were happy to collaborate with 65 Grove. The primary issue for the Board was the safety of children. The Planning Board had addressed several issues in its prior meeting, and suggested the proposed solution put forth by Mr. Nardi addresses these and the remaining issues. The Atrium School backs the redevelopment of the property.

Linda Echt, resident, and Atrium School Board Member, we support the proposed circulation pattern. The School is thrilled that the project would hopefully move forward. I am glad that there could be collaboration to create a viable solution.

Steve Magoon, this is a unique situation. Redevelopment of the property made sense from an economic development perspective, but the proposal did have a significant neighborhood impact. We

have a developer willing to work with the neighbors, and a property that isn't theirs. This is another example of engaging Mr. Gamble in the process, to help with design solutions. We would like to thank the Atrium School for their participation in the process. They stepped up and helped work out a solution, and establish a relationship with the Town.

John Hawes, as a former Atrium School Board member I want to thank the School and Petitioner for working together to accommodate the neighborhood concerns. Thanks also to Planning staff and Council for working collaboratively. Fine tuning and potential loose ends could be worked out in the interim between now and the ZBA meeting.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §5.01(3)(a)(2): *New construction greater than 4,000 square feet*, and §5.04 and 5.05(d): *Side Yard Setbacks* 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.

- **56-60 & 57 Irving Street and 122, 150, 160, 162 & 204 rear Arsenal Street; B.Henry/Greystar GPII,LLC**

Steve Magoon, the staff report was not complete, because the third party transportation review had not been completed. The presentation and review would start but not conclude at tonight's meeting.

Attorney Chris Regnier, Goulston & Storrs, we have been working on the project since approximately April 2014. Development team includes Brian Henry and Daniel Lee (Greystar), Tom Shultz (tat, Architects), Patrick Cleary (Oaktree FX), Steve Chinoard (Allen & Major), Katya Plasadio, Landscape Architect (Blair Hynes), and Jeff Dirk, and transportation Engineer (Vanasse & Associates). The site was the Pirolli site and a parcel of land across Irving Street, which would become an open space use. We thank the efforts of the Town staff, particularly Mr. Magoon, and the Town's Design Consultant, David Gamble, the process was very positive.

Brandon Henry, Greystar, we will use PowerPoint presentation to describe the proposed project. I run development for the company in the Northeast area, from Washington, DC to Boston. This is a special project that needs a special process. This is the town's test case for the proposed Design Guidelines and Standards. We thank Mr. Magoon for holding the project to a very high standard, the DCDP staff has been very helpful. Gideon Schreiber helped to guide the development through the review process. I thanked Mr. Gamble for collaborative spirit, and to help us to see the industry in a new light. Greystar company was founded in 1993. We are headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina but have an office in Boston. This is privately-owned, full-service, fully-integrated, multi-family property management, investment, and development company. It is the largest property management company in the United States with over 400,000 units under management. Investment team is active in Massachusetts. Greystar owns or operates approximately 3,500 apartments in New England. Since 1993, Greystar has developed 77 multi-family communities totaling over \$3.9 billion in total project costs. The company has 49 multi-family communities (totaling 13,600 units) and are currently under development with total project costs of \$3.4 billion. We are now showing Greystar developments in the United States, including Woodbridge and McLean, Virginia, and Danbury, Connecticut.

Oaktree FX is headquartered in Cambridge, MA and has over 40 years of development experience in Boston area. The firm specializes in the development of high-quality multi-family and mixed-use properties with a focus on transportation nodes in Town Village environments. Oaktree FX has developed over 3,000 apartments in New England. Various Oaktree FX project are shown tonight.

The Architectural Team of tat Architects is headquartered in Chelsea, MA, and the staff has 43 years of award-winning design experience. The firm has built more than 1,000 residential and mixed-use developments numbering over 100,000 units. The firm has project experience building residential properties throughout the Northeast, in particular New England/Greater Boston area. Slides of tat projects around Boston are shown.

Under Watertown zoning, the proposed project would have 330,000 Gross Square Feet, with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.43. The project would have 282 units and 10,600 square feet of retail. The project proposes to provide 35 affordable units and 14 accessible units. It would provide 465 total vehicle parking spaces, with 44 bike spaces within garage and 28 exterior bike spaces.

The proposed project is consistent with Watertown's Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Framework for Economic Development. The project promotes redevelopment and investment in an underutilized site on Arsenal Street. The Comprehensive Plan calls out an area called Union Market for special attention. A slide of the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map, which also has a focus on major commercial corridors, such as Arsenal Street, was shown. The site is zoned as Residential Mixed Use Redevelopment.

The main site is just over 5 acres, and the auxiliary parcel across Irving Street is approximately half an acre. The site is between the athenahealth area and Watertown Square. The project is the missing link to better connect the Arsenal Overlay Development District with the Square. There is connectivity to the Charles River, and the Perkins School across Arsenal Street.

The land swap between this site and the abutting property was explained. There are challenges called out in Watertown's Comprehensive Plan. It took almost a year to solve access/frontage issues for both properties. The rail corridor has impacted both properties. A resolution of these issues allowed both parcels to redevelop.

The proposed project was also the Town's demonstration project for the Design Guidelines and Standards. The various ways in which we believed the project met the Guidelines and Standards. It is very important to listen to public feedback.

Tom Shultz, tat Architects, showed various PowerPoint slides of the site as it appears now. Several site constraints and zoning that drove parts of the design. Grade change on Irving, moving North, towards the residential neighborhood. Also a more significant grade change moving East on Arsenal Street. Topo creates a 12-foot rise over 800 linear feet of frontage. Driven the decision to think about the site in an East part and a West part. Various surrounding existing and proposed uses. The electrical substation, Domino's and Super 8 Motel, are nearby. The existing relationship of the buildings to the property line, there are no setbacks, no pedestrian scale at the sidewalk. Showed a slide with the proposed Eastern and Western buildings. Setbacks and step-backs are shown using renderings. The building is positioned to be orthogonal, or oblique to the property line along the residential districts. Various courtyards and breaks in the façade are shown, there are several ways to activate the streetscape. We do not want the buildings to turn their backs to Arsenal Street. A special architectural treatment is proposed at the corner of Irving and Arsenal Streets. The Strategic Framework for Economic Development stresses the need for a presence at this intersection. The proposed buildings step down towards the residential neighborhoods on Phillips Street. Frontage along Arsenal Street provides an area for the Community Path. An improved sidewalk on Irving Street is proposed, with seating areas and trees.

A series of PowerPoint slides describing the existing conditions on the Eastern part of the site was shown including graphics of the East building. The above-ground parking garage has been wrapped

with residential units. This layout is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Next is the interconnection and private way between the site and the abutting project, WS Cresset/Hannover. Multi-use path is proposed behind the project, with limited vehicle access, access for emergency vehicles and pedestrians. Connections to Irving Street and Phillips Street are to the rear of the project along the path. Retail in the project has been designed to complement the abutting project. We will use the grade change to provide retail frontage, and with the uses across Arsenal Street, including Beacon Park. The longest ground plane façade is 190 feet which will create a continuous retail façade. Green roof is proposed above the retail space. Cross sections of the pedestrian area in front of the East building, showing the Community Path and sidewalk amenities, are shown. There are changes in the building façade, with balconies for residential units. A connectivity through the building, and access to the courtyards, and other green space on the overall property, were shown next. Perspective views from public ways into the site with simulations of the proposed project shown and preliminary layout of proposed affordable and accessible units are shown.

Katya Pasadlo, Blaire Hynes, described the proposed landscaping in detail. The desire is to improve the streetscape experience and provide a focus on the landscaped courtyards. We propose the use of new seating structures, bike racks, and plantings to soften facades. The central drive, providing access to an entry court and the podium parking under the West building. The proposed open space parcel across Irving Street, with an outdoor seating area, and an oval walking path.

John Hawes, this is a very large and important project. Project team has done a very good job of presenting the project in detail.

| Anne Asnes....., resident, the presentation was great, and we love the additional landscaping. This is a very thoughtful design. Will there be an awning over the proposed retail? Concern about damage during the winter.

Tom Shultz, there will be integral canopies provided over the retail entrances, and a covered arcade area on the corner. We understand the concern over snow loading.

Barbara Ruskin, Spring Street, will there be entrances to the retail spaces from Arsenal Street? I recommend to decrease the number of parking spaces, based on the area being served by transit. I am concerned about the convertibility of the garage to other uses should the demand for parking further decrease. Will there be a small area to show public art? We need interaction between the tenants and the community. A bus shelter should be considered. I am concerned about “bunker” impact of the urban street wall. Can the façade be adjusted? We need a more significant gathering space for public, in addition to the seating wall at the corner of Arsenal Street and Irving Street. Perhaps provide an opportunity for a food cart or food truck? Appreciate Mr. Henry’s remarks about listening to the public input. This is better than the Hannover project. This was a very useful process with a better outcome.

Bob Menton, Beacon Park, traffic is his main concern. Two competing traffic studies: one by Hannover and one by Greystar. The shared access road is a particular concern. It’s a narrow section of Arsenal Street. Will be overused even before the Peak Hour. Noted the Pirolli site will be land-locked if it does not also use the access drive. Estimates are projecting over 1,000 cars an hour using the shared access drive.

John Hawes, Chair, suggested this would be addressed at a later meeting, noting the traffic peer review had not been completed.

Watertown Planning Board

April 8, 2015

Page Nine

Elodia Thomas, Marion Road, we should compliment the developer's project team. We have set a high bar for private development in Watertown. Problems can be resolved collaboratively. Everyone has been working so hard on these issues. I am very proud of the process and the outcome.

Linda-Tuttle Barletta motioned to continue the case to the Planning Board's next meeting.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0 In Favor.

Neal Corbett motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:28 PM.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0 In Favor.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:28 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 4/8/15 which is available in the DCDP office.