

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: February 11, 2015 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:10 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Linda Tuttle-Barletta; Jeff Brown; Fergal Brennock; Neal Corbett
Steve Magoon, Director; Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Planning Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner; Matthew Shuman, Town Engineer

ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 1/14/15.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

CASE PENDING:

- **25 Langdon Avenue;** Sara Sclaroff - Special Permit Finding

Sara Sclaroff, introduced her architect, John G. Strickler. The project is to construct two "pop-outs" on the house, on the first floor level. It will increase an existing non-conformity in terms of the setback on one side, and would also increase the non-conforming lot coverage.

Gideon Schreiber, the request is for a Special Permit Finding. The two small additions to the house would be within the existing side yard setback on one side, and would also increase the building coverage on the lot by a small percentage. Staff conducted a review of the proposed additions and they are in keeping with the design of the house. The neighbors on both sides provided letters stating that the proposed project would not be detrimental to them. The design of the "bump-outs" would create balance on the house while maintaining access around the structure. The proposed conditions are standard, requirement for As Built Drawings and a Foundation Plot Plan. The staff recommends conditional approval of the project.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit Finding under Section 4.05(a) 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 Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In Favor.

- **18 Hudson Street;** Ari Koufos – Special Permit

Ari Koufos, this is a request for Special Permit to allow parking in front of two newly build townhouses.

Gideon Schreiber, the staff has reviewed the project. We have been working with the applicant, more landscape within the front yard will be provided. Front yard parking is allowed in T zone by Special Permit. This is an appropriate use for the site. The staff recommends approval with conditions as stated in the staff report.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 6.02(j) of the Zoning Ordinance based upon the finding that the petition meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, subject to conditions set forth in the Staff Report.

Fergal Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In Favor.

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

William York, Attorney, this is a petition to raze a portion of existing structure and rebuild an attached 3-story/4 level parking garage with 290 parking spaces, maintaining front and site yard non-conforming setbacks.

7:15 Neal Corbett arrived at this time

Ed Nardi, Cresset Development, we are proposing to renovate the existing building and construct a parking structure. We are proposing the egress at the rear of the property, creating reverse lane. The site is abutted by industrial and institutional uses on 3 sides and by residential in the rear. The proposal is consistent with the Watertown Comprehensive Plan and its dimensional regulations. We do not have a tenant at this time. Parking can be increased to 350 spaces. The building was owned by Ionics for many years. It was purchased by GE in 2005 and left vacant in 2010.

Amy MacKrell, MDS Architects, the existing windows will be replaced and new door provided. All mechanical equipment will be replaced. The proposed garage will be lower than the existing building and abutting residential homes on Crawford Street. View will be screened by a fence. We will provide space to store bikes and showers for riders to accommodate the nearby bike path.

Brad Mackenzie, Mackenzie Engineering Group, the open space will be increased from 6.9% to 25%. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation has been redesigned. The design provides ample space for emergency vehicles. The Grove Street will remain one-way entrance only. 311 parking spaces are required, 252 will be provided. 1 bicycle space will be provided for every 15 parking spaces. Sustainable design elements are proposed with rain garden area in the middle of the site. This project will meet all DPW requirements and exceed DEP requirements.

DanielleKyle Zick Landscape Architecture, the site is now 93.1% covered with asphalt. We have created large terrace space, and drop-off in the rear. We will enhance landscape along Crawford Street, dense shrubbery and 6 foot high stockade fence. We will provide more attractive plants near the Crawford entrance. We will use native species as much as possible.

Rebecca Brown, TEC, this project will result in reduction of square footage. We will develop transportation management plan for the site and subsidize transit passes. The site is adjacent to the greenway and connection will be provided. We will create preferential parking for hybrid and electrical vehicles. Flexible hours will be implemented. The driveway on Grove Street is only 16 feet wide and it would not allow for 2 way traffic. Neighborhood meeting was in September, peer study was conducted on October 29, 2014 and we have met with staff in December. We are proposing to implement traffic calming measures.

Gideon Schreiber, this area was identified in the Comprehensive Planning as to maintain industrial & commercial development. This project is appropriate for such a use. It is important to maintain balanced tax base. The property is adjacent to the greenway, it is ideal for midsize company or for multiple small companies. The contamination of the site has been addressed, the petitioner is proposing substantial improvements to the storm water system. The criteria for granting of the special permit have been met. The proposed garage will accommodate the employees. The petitioner is providing \$250,000 for off-site improvements. Construction management plan will be provided. Pedestrian connection to the Watertown/Cambridge greenway will be build, open space along the way will be restored Exterior lighting that will minimize impact on residential neighbors will be installed. There are 3 entrances to the site, one on Grove and two on Crawford. The project meets requirements for safety and staff recommends conditional approval.

Jeff Brown, this will add traffic to the residential neighborhood. The Grove Street should be used for entry and exit. There will be substantial impact on all the homes on Crawford Street. 150 vehicles will pass through this exit daily. There will be 2 garages within half a mile if this project is approved.

Rebecca Brown, all entry will be from Grove Street and all exits on Crawford Street.

Ed Nardi, the initial proposal had entrance/exit onto Grove Street. WorldTech and the town engineer counted the number of vehicles and deemed it not feasible.

John Hawes, the focus is always on traffic studies, the traffic is detrimental to residential neighborhoods. This will not be 24 hour operation, we will focus on current impact. The entrance/exit to Atrium school is next to the Grove Street entryway, it needs to be taken into account.

Matt Shuman, Town Engineer, we have reviewed the traffic study and are very sympathetic to the neighborhood. Our preference would be Grove Street entrance/exit. 2/3 of vehicles will go through residential neighborhoods, 1/3 will go via Arlington Street. The greatest impact will be at the Arlington/Grove Street intersection.

Ed Nardi, we will prohibit left turn onto Crawford Street when exiting the site.

Steve Magoon, the traffic is the key issue. There are serious concerns about sharing entrances/exits. We need to put aside the traffic issue and revisit later.

Rita Colella, 42 Crawford Street, the property was owned by Ionics for many years, their employees never parked in the abutting residential neighborhood. The parking lot was never filled to capacity. The existing structure will be improved, but traffic will be added.

Ashley Nazemi, 39 Winsor Ave, it would be preferable to have both entrance and exit on Grove Street, away from the residential neighborhoods.

Joe Levendousky, 13 Templeton Pkwy, I support the neighbors, there has to be a solution. Where is the traffic going to disburse to? Buses are over capacity already. Large projects like this one will create more traffic. The applicant needs to get more involved in the Town's traffic issues. We do not have a problem with the project but with the traffic that it creates.

Resident, 40 Crawford Street, the upper gate on Crawford Street has not been used in years. The 2-way was changed to 1-way when GE closed. The neighbors are in support but traffic is a serious concern.

Resident, 32 Crawford Street, this is a residential area, at some point the entrance/exit on Crawford will change. It changed to one way about a year ago, we did not notice because the site was empty.

Deb Peterson, School Street, attention has not been paid to reducing the traffic. A shuttle bus serving the site is needed. Bicycle parking needs to be provided.

Angie Kounelis, District A Councilor, the development is agreeable, the traffic circulation is a problem. Nichols and Crawford intersection needs to be addressed. The property is landlocked, the circulation will require access through the neighborhood. This developer is willing to work with the staff, they both need to listen to the neighbors. The project should be continued to address all the concerns. The intersection can be changed. Crawford and Grove Streets were always 2-way.

Resident, 52 Crawford Street, the proposed exit is next to my house. I am very concerned, another solution is needed.

Tony Palomba, Councilor At Large, this is a wonderful project that will add to the community. Developer needs to address the parking. Could there be an officer directing the traffic at specific times and not allow traffic into the residential neighborhood?

Libby Shaw, 72 Templeton Pkwy, we need to encourage use of bicycles. This is a great opportunity to add green, the top of the proposed garage should be green.

Ed Nardi, we will provide showers and interior and exterior parking for bicycles.

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

OTHER

• **321 Arsenal Street** – Restaurant – Minor modification to Site Plan

Todd Morey, Beals Associates, this is a request for minor modification of the site plan. We are proposing to add a new restaurant with an outside patio. A Malt and Wine license will be transferred to the operators of this facility. This will be a 7 day per week with beer and wine served 6 days per week, Sunday will be excluded. The former bank indoor space will have 2,800 s.f. and the outdoor patio will be 4,500 s.f. .The restaurant will be open for lunch and dinner

Steve Magoon, this is a minor modification, going from a bank to restaurant use The restaurant peak business hours will be opposite of the other uses on site.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve a minor modification to the Site Plan to add a new restaurant with outdoor patio.
Jeff Brown seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In favor

John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:40 PM

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:40 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____
For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 2/11/15 which is available in the DCDP office.