

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: March 11, 2009 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Jack Zollo; Linda Tuttle-Barletta; Jeff Brown;

Chairman John Hawes opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Jack Zollo motioned to approve Minutes of 2/11/09 meetings.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

CASE PENDING

- **23 Everett Avenue;** Ralph Pesaturo – Variance

John Cimino, representing the petitioner, the petitioner has lived in the single family home since 1996. The 12,344 s.f. lot is located in a S-6 zone. This is a request to allow construction of a 5'9"-6' by 16' connector from the new rear addition to the existing detached garage. Variance is required under Section 5.04 to allow 6.8' setback where 10' is required.

Danielle Fillis, staff reviewed the request for a variance for side yard setbacks. All the conditions for granting of a variance have been met, the lot has a unique shape with a preexisting nonconforming setback. The proposal is no more detrimental than the existing nonconforming use and the proposed connector will not be encroaching on neighbors. All the necessary criteria have been met and staff recommends approval.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Variance under Section 5.04 based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set out in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Jack Zollo seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

- **103 Morse Street;** Diane L. Polseno, President, Cortiva Institute – Amendment to Special Permit/ Special Permit Finding #06-59

Diane Polseno, President, Cortiva Institute, this is a request to amend Special Permit to allow Sunday operation. We propose Sunday educational classes from 9 AM to 6:30 PM. We anticipate maximum of 60 students over the course of the year.

Denis Duff, 32 Spruce Street, this building was in front of the Boards many times over the years, they are always asking for more. This business is in a middle of residential neighborhood and the amendment should not be approved.

Danielle Fillis, the proposed program will be replacing another program. The Sunday hours will accommodate students who have full time work and otherwise would not be able to attend. Staff recommends an approval of the Amendment as it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Amendment to Special Permit/Special Permit Finding # 06-59 based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set out in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Jack Zollo seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

- **118-120, 132, 140 Pleasant Street;** Coppola Pleasant Street LLC – Special Permits & Variance

William York, Atty, representing Coppola Pleasant Street LLC, the 39,177 s.f. property is comprised of 3 lots and is located in the I-3 zone. Presently the property houses a 3-family dwelling and a repair garage. All will be razed and replaced with a 48 unit structure that will revitalize the area. The reliefs required were Site Plan Review for a project of over 5 units and Variance for 10' front yard setback where 15' is required. The reduced setback will allow for more open space. The 10' setback is consistent with the setbacks required in the Pleasant Street Corridor District that begins at the Myrtle/Pleasant Street intersection. All other requirements of the Zoning Ordinance have been met. We will provide 32% open space where 20% is required, height will be 44' /4 stories where 50'/5 stories is allowed, 35% lot coverage where 50% is allowed. The curb cut will be reduced to 1 24" wide opening and sidewalk. We have met with the neighborhood in February, and the petitioner had extensive meetings with the staff.

Bill Curtis, Cresset Development, we have been introduced to the site by Curtis Whitney and now are in partnership with Claudio Coppola, we are proposing 48 apartments with parking accommodations. The project is estimated to add approximately 16 trips during morning peak hours and 30 trips during evening peak hours. The site is located near the public transportation on Watertown Square.

Joel Barton, Architect, the existing garage and the 2-family house will be razed. The property is located near the DCR bath house. Access will be provided from Pleasant Street, there is a 10 foot drop from the westerly property line, the site slopes along Pleasant Street, and the rest is relatively flat. Some cars will be parked underneath the building, 10 feet below the Pleasant Street sidewalk. We will install large infiltration system to collect the storm water, capture into the system and slowly filtrate. We are proposing dense landscaping. More specialized trees will be planted, also lilies and vegetation. 32% of the lot will be landscaped. As a result of community meeting, we have provided 5 visitor parking spaces, one will be handicapped. The plans are showing 77 parking spaces, 96 are provided for 48 units. The Zoning Ordinance allows shadow parking spaces. There are 3 more handicap spaces located near the entrance. Trash will be hidden under the building. All 4 floors are identical, 12 units on each floor. We will provide 5 affordable and 3 handicap accessible housing units. The darker façade colors will make the scale of the building smaller. Parking will be invisible from the bike path.

Steve Magoon, there have been number of meetings with the applicant, all town agencies participated in the Site Plan Review process. This presentation shows significant changes from the original plans. This project is in close proximity to the River, the 10 foot setback will allow the continuity of the Pleasant Street Corridor. All the requirements of the ZO have been met.

Jack Zollo, public safety is one of the issues, where is the fire and police reports? Was a traffic study done?

Steve Magoon, both were present at the Site Plan Review. The concerns with sprinklers and fire lane have been addressed. The project is on Pleasant Street that will undergo major reconstruction. The 140 Pleasant Street project will have limited impact on Watertown Square. Applicant will contribute to repairs of Myrtle/Main and Waverly intersections. Traffic analysis has been provided and is part of the petitioner's statement. Additional 19 vehicles during AM peak hours and 6 additional vehicles during PM peak hours.

Danielle Fillis, the entire site was contaminated, this project will not disturb any natural state. There are several condo units across the street. The requirement for open space is 20%, this project will provide

30%. Landscaping will be in front and back of the property. This proposal will improve circulation, only one curb cut is proposed. There will be no impact on pedestrians, and minimal impact on Watertown Square. Large rain garden is proposed for the rear. All utilities will be placed underground. The only sign will be the name of the building and signs along the driveway saying No parking. Lighting plan will be required, no lights onto the bike path. This is an appropriate location for such a use, the Ordinance encourages residential development. The staff recommended that the petitioner applies for a variance, the site is very steep, and the decreased setback is needed. The project is subject to Affordable Housing requirements, which is 10% of the units have to be affordable. Five units will be provided and distributed thru the building. All criteria of the Zoning Ordinance have been met and staff recommends approval.

John Hawes, grey parking spaces are in green space and could be paved if needed. Did the petitioner use that type of arrangement in other residential projects?

Bill Curtis, we have used stackers in Boston in commercial office projects but not in residential.

Joel Barton, this will allow to minimize paved parking area. We are providing 32% of open space, we could cover more with pavement.

John Hawes, Town Councilor Mark Sideris submitted a letter expressing his concerns. The project is too large. When the parcel came in front of the Town Council for rezoning, we were told by Mr.Coppola, that the project would consist of just a few units. Had I known that the proposal was going to be this large, I would not have supported the zoning change.

Other abutters from Pleasant Street, who are unable to attend tonight, submitted letters in opposition. They all expressed concerns with the size, parking, and zoning change under false pretenses.

William York, only small portion of the parcel was rezoned. This project falls well below the criteria of the Zoning Ordinance.

Chuck Langenhagen, 111 Pleasant St #36, the proposed driveway/ramp is placed exactly across from my driveway (this was later disputed by other abutter). Traffic in the morning peak hours is backed up on Pleasant Street. Cars exiting from 140 Pleasant will be adding to that traffic. Who paid for the Traffic study, would I get the same result? The study is not valid and is being used to justify the project. Proper study should be performed before the start of the project. There is no parking on Pleasant Street, will the stackers work in the winter? This building will be 4 stories high and will overshadow all the houses on the abutting properties. The design is out of sign and character of the neighborhood. This is not the Pleasant Street Corridor District where 4 stories is allowed, the neighborhood should decide what is appropriate for the property. The property value will decrease. Condo's that are owner occupied would be preferable to rental units. The zoning change of the property was done under false pretenses. Mr. Coppola asked the abutters to sign a petition in support the zoning change and stated that he is planning to build 4 townhouses. We are submitting a petition signed by 75 homeowners that includes the 12 signatures for the zoning change, which are in opposition of this proposal. Mr.Curtis Whitney was very careful with his words, stating that there was going to be a major improvement.

John Hawes, the petitioner has the right to sell and redevelop the property. Previous comments are not relevant. This project has to be discussed on its own merits.

Clyde Younger, 108 Acton Street, I have read the staff report and I support the Coppola proposal. It will ad a lot to the area, staff added conditions to the proposal, changes can be made. Repton Place is much larger. Town Council voted on Pleasant Street Corridor District, other areas have to be

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developed also. We need to think about solutions instead of denying all. I am in favor of the 48 unit project.

John Hawes, we have a great number of traffic reports and professional coming to the Board. The traffic study review can be done by Town consultant to be paid by the petitioner.

Dina Bastianelli, 18 Conant Rd, we have all signed the rezoning petition for Claudio. Conant Road is a nice neighborhood that will now have a 4 story building in front of us. It should be cut the 3 stories. We are tax payers and should be considered. The sun will be blocked, we now see the River, and nothing will be visible after this is build. Shadow parking will not happen.

Dominic Zaccagnini, 23 Conant Rd, this is a quiet neighborhood. This proposal will be another "elephant", the building is too close to the street, and the structure is too long and too high. I have known Claudio for 20 years, he knows the neighborhood.

David Odette, 100 Pleasant St, I am tired of seeing the garage. A 3-story building used to be on the lot that is now empty. The pictures shown by Chuck Langenhagen are wrong, 111 Pleasant is further down. Mr.Coppola has some major expenses cleaning up the site, he cannot afford to build only 4 units.

Charlene Fahey, I have known Claudio all life, but I am opposed to this proposal. This will not do anything for the Town and the neighborhood. The structure is too big for the area, visitors will park on Conant Road. School bus stop is right on the corner, this proposal is too big for this community.

Susan DeLong, 26 Conant Rd, I have moved to this area 1 year ago and met my neighbors. This is my first house, it took 5 years for me to find it. I was not aware what was coming up on Pleasant Street. I love this area, I can walk, I can drive, etc. It is already difficult to get out of the driveway. The Police stated that they get on average 1 call per month regarding parking. I have lived in 36 unit building in Framingham, all 5 visitor parking spaces were always full.

Linda Odette, 100 Pleasant St, I am in favor of this project. My family purchased the house 96 years ago. This area is commercially and residentially zoned. 111 Pleasant Street was built on a lot that housed farm, house and a laundry. We do not want to see the garage, residential is preferable.

Joan O'Brien, 111 Pleasant St #11, this proposal is too large for the neighborhood. The only entrance onto the property is located exactly across 111 Pleasant, maybe 2 entrances are needed,

Merryl Gross, 111 Pleasant St #26, the area is already congested, how will they deal with big piles of snow?

Marilyn Petitto Devaney, 98 Westminster Ave, Town Council At Large, the Coppola family has been in Watertown for a long time. I have received many phone calls from people on Pleasant & Conant regarding parking in the area. Many homeowners gave pieces of their land to the Pleasant Street reconstruction. This Town is only 4 square miles, 32,000 people, smaller structures would be preferable. The site will be developed, why not to compromise. It is too high, blocking the River that we should all be able to enjoy. The neighborhood structure needs to be preserved. I voted against the zoning change.

John Hawes, people are not objecting to residential project, just to the large size. This is very similar to the Grove Street project that was denied. The Board is not in favor of the project as presented tonight. The building could be cut in half, separated into 2 structures. Why does it have to be full build-out?

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Angie Kounelis, 55 Keenan St, Town Councilor District A, Grove Street project was massive and it was opposed by the residents. We need to preserve the neighborhoods, the area is very densely populated. This development is too large for the parcel and neighborhood. Had the Town Council not changed the zoning, this project would not be build. I listen to the neighbors, I voted based on the facts, I voted against it.

Eliza Fajen, 159 Pleasant Street, I walk to the express bus on Watertown Square. Dan's auto body garage is an eyesore but the new project is highly inappropriate. The building is too high, too large, it takes away from the sunlight. I used to live in an apartment complex with 20 visitor spaces and they were always filled. There is no parking on Pleasant Street.

Vincent Piccirilli, District C Councilor, as a Town Councilor, I support PSCD development, this project satisfy lot of its goals. This lot is not in the PSCD, the impact on the neighborhood must be taken into consideration. All neighbors want to see residential, but not of this size, height, lack of on street parking, and increased traffic. The expense of environmental cleanup makes the pass development impossible.

John Hawes, a drop-off area is very important and it needs to be addressed. Aesthetically, this project is not sensitive to the neighborhood. Neighbors on Grove Street asked for sun study. This project has been maximized. We do encourage development on a more modest level.

Jeff Brown, this site is embarrassment to Watertown, it needs to be developed. Drop-off area should be created, setback issue addressed. The structure has 1 elevator for 48 units, at least 2 are needed. While visiting the site, I have noticed that the retaining wall in the rear is in a bad shape.

William York, we have heard comments from the Board and the neighborhood. We would like to study the site and economic possibilities. Sun study will be provided, and traffic analysis reviewed thru Town consultant. We can revisit the project next month.

John Hawes, after many attempts, the Grove Street project was withdrawn. The new design needs to be different, more appropriate for this site and the slope toward the River. Projects should not take advantage of all the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. This building/design does not work on this site.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned that the above petition will be continued to the next meeting of the Planning Board.

Jack Zollo seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

- **15-17 Carlton Terrace;** Araxie Margosian & Haigaz Markasian – Special Permit Finding

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the above petition until April 15, 2009 meeting of the Planning Board.

Jack Zollo seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

OTHER

Chairman John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 10:00 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:00 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 3/11/2009 available in the DCD&P office.