

## WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: September 14, 2011 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: Jeff Brown, Acting Chairman; Fergal Brennock; Linda Tuttle-Barletta; Neal Corbett  
Steve Magoon, Director; Ingrid Marchesano, PB Clerk, Danielle Evans, Senior Planner, Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

Acting Chairman Jeff Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and welcomed a new Planning Board member Neal Corbett.

### ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve Minutes of 8/10/2011.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion. Voted 4-0 In favor

### CONTINUED CASES

- **26 Forest Street;** HYE Realty LLC – Variances

Ken Leitner, Atty, this case was presented to the Board in August. After meeting with the staff, the plans have been revised. The variance request for the rear yard has been eliminated. The side yard setback on the path side has been increased. The property is located in a 2 family zone and all the abutting properties are 2 family.

Gideon Schreiber, after meeting with the petitioner, several changes to the building were made, front façade was updated and staff is now in favor of the new proposal.

Jeff Brown, the driveway as proposed is only 8.5' wide, most cars are 6'8" wide. It will be difficult to park the vehicles in the winter.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Variance under Section 5.04(f) 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

- **190-192 Arlington Street;** Alison Bengal & Janet Schmiede-Ferguson – Reconsideration

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the above petition to the October meeting of the Planning Board.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion. Vote: 4-0 In favor

- **22 Perry Street;** Ada H. Wong – Special Permit

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to continue the above petition to the October meeting of the Planning Board.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion. Vote: 4-0 In favor

*CASE PENDING*

- **69 Lowell Avenue;** Jean M. & Paul A. Humez – Special Permit Finding

Jean Humez, we have recently retired and we are proposing to upgrade and extend the existing rear deck. We will enlarge the 5'x10' deck to 10'x10'. The new deck is well designed and will not be detrimental to the neighborhood.

Gideon Schreiber, the staff visited the site. The existing deck was built without a permit. The criteria for special permit finding have been met. Staff recommends an approval of the request.

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

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

- **455-465 Arsenal Street;** Arsenal Association – Amend Special Permit & Variance

Steve Winnick, Atty, the property consists of 4 buildings and is located in I-2 zone. It consists of 156 residential units with 51 on site parking spaces. Under the current Zoning Ordinance, 241 parking spaces would be required. 100 residents signed a petition in support of the proposal. The parking capacity is inadequate; residents in need of parking spaces are on the waiting list. We have tried to secure spaces off-site. This is a request to amend existing Special Permit and Variance to allow reconfiguration of the existing courtyard to provide 25 additional parking spaces. The only option is to move the gazebo to the south east corner and create 25 additional parking spaces. MHFA is in support of the proposal, they recognize the need for additional parking. We will try to preserve as much as green space as possible.

Paul Finger, Architect, we have been involved in the design for 2 years. This scheme will satisfy number of components. The image of the courtyard will be improved but some trees will have to be removed. We are proposing to plant mature trees, 5-6" caliber, benches will be added and bushes planted along the perimeter. If we keep 2 out of the 3 oak trees, 2 parking spaces will be lost. Storm water drainage system will be installed.

Laurie Jefferson, property manager, the occupancy has declined due to unavailability of parking. People are 62 and older and they have cars. The additional parking is also needed for caretakers and visiting families. A petition has been signed by residents who are in support of the proposal. 25% of the residents are present here tonight.

Bob Gagliardi, Gilbane Properties, I have worked for the company for 32 years. The additional parking will not increase the rent, the residents will not be impacted financially, and there is no financial profit to Gilbane. This issue is much longer then 2 years. We have a parking lease with some abutters but it can be terminated anytime. We have approached other abutters regarding leasing additional parking to no avail.

Steve Winnick, the site was approved in 1980 as an elderly and handicapped subsidized housing complex. There were total of 156 units and the parking required by the Zoning Ordinance at that time would have been 227 spaces. A variance was granted requiring only 42 parking spaces. The Urban Renewal plan presented by the Planning staff expired in 2008. The Mass Housing Finance Agency agrees that parking is a necessity. The project satisfies all the requirements and the request should be granted.

Danielle Evans, the original requirement was for 1 parking space for every 4 units. Replacing courtyard with parking is not appropriate location for such use. The property was sold to the developer as an elderly and handicapped housing. The courtyard is important element of the property. The 3 historic structures were developed for elderly housing and are now fully occupied. Rents are fixed and subsidized by the Mass Housing. As submitted, the relief requested would nullify the intent of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff recommends denial.

A discussion by the Board members followed. Resident services are provided mostly during the day. Are parking spaces assigned? How many guest parking spaces are available?

Fergal Brennock, there is a big difference between parking needs in 1980 and now. The developer was allowed more units because of lesser parking.

Sgt. Deignan, Watertown Police, how many of the units have more than one car. We are very concerned with this proposal. The courtyard is dedicated open space. If the gazebo is relocated, you are asking elderly and handicapped to navigate a parking lot. The developer agreed to 1 in 4 ratios. Permission was given from the traffic commission for overnight parking in the Arsenal Park, but cars that stay for a long time are towed. The Police department would prefer for the parking situation to stay as is and try to lease more spaces from abutters.

Jim Laughlin, resident of Arsenal Apartments since 2002, we have submitted a resident petition to preserve the courtyard. The historical buildings for a U. We have learned about the Gilbane proposal to replace the courtyard with parking in November 2010. The Trees for Watertown suggested for us to contact the Planning Department. It is frustrating to be on parking waiting list but trees are vital to the community.

Angie Kounelis, District A Councilor, I represent both sides. This should be a wake up call to the Boards regarding allowing less parking for this type of housing, the requirements should remain the same. Gilbane Properties need to secure additional parking off site. I agree with Sgt Deignan that the courtyard is used by the elderly and handicapped and should remain the same.

Robert Berlutti, Atty, representing the Arsenal Park Condo Association located behind this complex. The need for parking is evident but it will affect the abutters. Gilbane representative stated that they do have a lease for additional parking. This is an urban area, public transportation is nearby, caregivers come only for short period of time. How long will this facility remain as elderly and handicapped subsidized housing?

Payson Whitney, 475B Arsenal Street, this will change the character of the Arsenal. There is no consideration for abutters, the proposed parking scheme should be significantly reduced.

Samuel Maserejian, 465 Arsenal St #108, I have been on the waiting list for 2 years, I have to park in the Arsenal Park, it is dangerous at night.

Susan Bedoyan, 465 Arsenal Street #502, I live in the apartment with my mother, I do not have a parking space nearby. I worry for my safety, the areas are not lit properly.

Susan Falkoff, Town Councilor/Oliver Street, this is a case of too many apartments for too few parking spaces. The courtyard is a gathering space as well as providing emergency access.

Larry Duran, this is a historic property, it should not be covered with asphalt. There is no guarantee that the elderly housing use will continue

Bob Gagliardi, we have owned this property for over 30 years. The only purpose of this petition is to provide parking for the residents, this will always be kept as subsidized housing.

Dennis Duff, 33 Spruce Street, I am one of the people who voted to sell the property to developers. Gilbane worked on the plan with the Watertown Redevelopment Authority. When the mall area was sold to Simon, Gilbane could have kept more land for parking. It was never intended to have parking space for each unit.

None of the elderly housing complexes in Watertown have enough parking. 100 Warren Street was build with Federal and State funds.

Steve Winnick, there is no other way to increase the parking.

Jeff Brown, there are many parking areas nearby, if they all have private cars, could they share? We have received many letters in opposition of the proposal.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals denial of the Amendment to the existing Special Permit and Variance #80-81-5 and #81-82-2 based upon the finding that it does not meet the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

- **452, 480, 525, 541 Pleasant St/5 Bridge St/76 Stanley Ave;** Farley White Aetna Mills LLC – Special Permit with Site Plan Review

Sam Altreuter, Farley White Interests, we have purchased the historic mill building in December 2010. Previously the entire structure was used by one company, Boston Scientific. Handicapped access is needed on both the Pleasant and River sides.

Jim Devellis, Engineer, the 4.92 s.f. main property is on the corner of Pleasant and Bridge Streets. The historic structure is known as Aetna Mills with a corner pocket park in the front. As the building fills up, additional parking across the street will be used. Pedestrian access will be provided and more trees will be added. Bicycle racks will be added. A presentation was made in front of Conservation Commission.

Mathew Michelle, Architect, the majority of parking will be located across the street. The entry point on Pleasant Street will be handicap accessible. The 500 foot length of the building is facing Pleasant Street, brick contract will be provided, part of the tower will have panels and new lighting fixtures will be added at the entry. The courtyard will be accessible to multi-tenants.

Fergal Brennock, we want to make sure that the Aetna Mills sign at the pocket park will remain.

Gideon Schreiber, the project consists of 6 parcels located in the Pleasant Street Corridor district. The zoning relief is Special Permit, and the petitioner volunteered Site Plan Review, a Variance is also needed to allow construction of a vestibule. The petitioner will provide 44 bicycle parking spaces in the front near the main street and some on the inside. The corner pocket park will be restored. An agreement was reached to create bicycle trail on Stanley to create connector to Gore Estate. Staff recommends approval of the special permit and the variance, some of the key feature of the complex will be preserved.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 6.01(g) to allow parking on a separate lot based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report with additional conditions #9 to provide access for a bike path on Stanley Avenue between Waltham and Pleasant Streets and #10 that the Aetna Mills 1919 sign and pocket park on the corner of Bridge and Pleasant Streets be retained and maintained as originally designed.

.Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Variance under Section 5.04 and Special Finding under Section 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 with additional conditions #9 to provide access for a bike path on Stanley Avenue between Waltham and Pleasant Streets and #10 that the Aetna Mills 1919 sign and pocket park on the corner of Bridge and Pleasant Streets be retained and maintained as originally designed.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

Steve Magoon, this is a significant project for the Town. Along with the development of the former Haartz Mason site it will transform the Pleasant Street Corridor

#### *OTHER*

Steve Magoon, Criterion has encountered more scrutiny during the lending process to develop the former Haartz Mason site. A letter was requested by the lender, all is in keeping with the approval by the Planning Board

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to approve the contents of the September 14, 2011 letter signed by the acting chairman of the Planning Board and the Planning Director.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0 In favor

Acting Chairman Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:55 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:55 PM

MINUTES APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 9/14/2011 available in the DCD&P office.