

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: July 18, 2016 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes; Chair, Jeff Brown; Janet Buck; Fergal Brennock; Gary Shaw
Steve Magoon, Director; Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

- **311 Arsenal Street/Arsenal on the Charles; Michael Crowley, Athena Health – Special Permit**

John Hawes, tonight is the continuation of the July 13, 2016 hearing that will focus on traffic. The staff will present the petition and the Board will vote on the Special Permit.

Steve Magoon, this presentation is part of the Master Plan. This is the first project going through the process, we will look at the concept of entire campus, the site plan approval after that – architecture, engineering, etc.

Marc Blair, Director of Athenahealth Environment, we would like to thank the Board and the public for their comments last week. We will provide access to the website showing construction hours according to the Town Ordinance. We will protect trees, traffic management, during the construction. Screening of the garage is part of the conditions, short term parking review, all review by the DCD&P, DPW, etc. Tonight we will be discussing the transportation management.

Jeffrey Dirk, Vanasse Associates, we will discuss how does this project fit into the existing infrastructure. The added traffic is proportionate. We have been working with the Planning staff and the DPW. Traffic study was prepared in February 2016. There is a high crush tendency at various intersections. 18,500 vehicles at Arsenal Street, 19,500 at North Beacon. We have collected data showing the impact of the project at highest peak hours of 7-9 am and 4-6 pm, Saturday 11 am – 2 pm. The existing campus population is 3,500, new population is 4,500. Monitoring program is in place, the infrastructure has to have little buffer, we are over estimating the numbers.

Jeff Brown, does all this take all the new projects on Arsenal Street into account?

Jeff Dirk, the report includes Greystar, Hanover and the Marriott hotel. Number of needed improvements has been identified. All traffic signals will be re-timed and new signals added. By entering on one end of the Arsenal Street corridor, the vehicle should be synchronized with all signals. Optimize the signals, upgrade the equipment, at Watertown Square intersection, \$250,000 donated to the Town. Greenough Boulevard and community path linkage (\$130,000) ill end at Irving Street. Over \$2 million used for reconstruction of Arsenal Street and sidewalks. It is a difficult area during winter, the roads get icy. School Street intersection will be upgraded with new devices, as will Greenough Boulevard intersection. Re-striping at School/Charles River intersections, radar speed signs provided. Water/sewer improvements next to the Commander's Mansion, drainage improvements on Talcott Avenue.

TDM (Transportation Demand Managements) program, the key is to reduce impact by reducing the demands and alternative uses of transportation.

The goals are: 15% reduction in SOV (single occupancy vehicle) at the campus; 20% reduction of Athenahealth employees; no off campus parking on neighborhood streets. Incentives are: monthly transportation benefit; monthly raffle for a gift card, free lunch, tickets for sporting/cultural events; free safety vests for bicycle commuters.

Infrastructure: we will provide shuttle service; MBTA Charlie card kiosk; hub way bike sharing station; 80 weather protected bicycle parking spaces; 60 exterior parking spaces; shower changing station & locker room; car sharing service; carpool/vanpool parking. We are proposing full time on site coordinator, TDM information will be provided, emergency ride program administered. Flexible work schedule on site. Off campus parking will be monitored. Annual survey and report will be submitted to

Community Development & Planning office. Corrected measures will be implemented. We are trying to achieve a balance, parking spaces provided are consistent with demand.

Gary Shaw, all projects that happen in the last decade are providing data. How does it all get coordinated, how do we know what is the right solution, how do you determine the cost? Is each developer contributing little to each intersection?

Gideon Schreiber, Mike Pompelli from Worldtech is coordinating the data which is the Towns coordination, specifically the financial component. If money goes to each intersection, eventually there will be improvement in the entire area. This large project focus is on complete critical components.

John Hawes, this is a bigger question than just this project.

Jerry Dirk, the proposed improvements fill in the gaps in different intersections - Greystar, Hanover, Crescent at Irving Street.

Mike Pompelli, there are number of ongoing developments in this corridor. Individual intersections will be improved, key locations impacted by individual projects.

John Hawes, each project comes in front of the Board. Money is being discussed but each project is saying the same. Can we put all the funds in one pool and hire a consultant to address the traffic?

Steve Magoon, we did not hear the staff report yet. The coordinating is being done by DCD&P and DPW. The problem with impact fee, contribution to the Town, is that you wait for a long time until there are enough funds. We can only hold funds for limited time. That is why we have independent review for each project, this time the entire Arsenal Street corridor, looking at broader impact.

Gideon Schreiber, the site was established in 1816. It is part of the 131 acre Watertown Arsenal, industrial in nature. The site was split into Arsenal Mall, Commander's Mansion and AMTL. O'Neil Properties purchased this site and it was redeveloped. Harvard purchased the site from O'Neil and then it was sold to Athenahealth. The site has many restrictions, LDA was created. WADC provided approval process before being dissolved. Changes have to be approved by the State and subject to review by MEPA. This is a very important substantial site. Signage guidelines were created by Sasaki. There are 4 special permit criteria and 10 site plan review criteria. Each Phase will look at the buildings and on site review improvements.

Special Permit Criteria Section 9.05(b) – the site is appropriate location for such use. There is 23% of open space now, the petitioner is proposing 32%. 1,200 parking spaces will be added. If the TDM is successful, parking may be scaled back. Public and retail uses are proposed, 80 short term parking spaces will be in the garage. Short term parking can be 15 minutes to 4 hours. The proposed uses will not affect the neighborhood. Neighborhood is included in the input, no short cuts through the residential streets. There is less shadow from this project than by having a 2 family homes being built next to you. Complete streets will be created within the development. Final engineering plans will be conditioned. All utilities will satisfy needs of the campus. Sewer line on Greenough Boulevard will be replaced.

Site Plan Review Criteria Section 9.03(c) - the petitioner is proposing passive and active open space with mixed landscape, all reviewed by the Tree Warden. More detail will be provided for building design. This will be inviting safe environment, substantial review of interior circulation. Bicycle share, electrical vehicle charging stations, are proposed. Surface water drainage is satisfactory, data will be collected and integrated into the campus. All utilities will be underground, electric system replaced. We are committed to use the LEED silver requirements. Screening for all storage, utilities, etc. Will be provided. Safety is important, two ways circulation will provide more flexibility.

Based on the finding that that the Campus Master Plan requested meets the criteria, staff recommends approval with conditions 1 to 33, including long term maintenance of landscape, historic preservation, short term parking and off site transportation improvements (TMA-Transportation Management Association).

Jeff Dirk, we will provide sticker system identifying employees. As each phase will take place, so will the monitoring.

Gary Shaw, if the entry/exit changes, it will impact North Beacon Street. There seems to be excess of handicapped spaces, many of them will be empty and could be used for regular cars instead of parking in the abutting neighborhoods.

Bob Corning, we are in process of looking at the idea.

Jeff Brown, do we get annual reports from other projects? Are you looking into off campus parking location? Is there a contract between the developer and DCR? We do not know how long will this go on.

Steve Magoon, several developments are near, the developers work with them.

Fergal Brennock, changes to the existing East garage will be discussed tonight. Short term parking is on the first floor. Split criteria for theater attendants or just drinks.

Gary Shaw, enforcement is necessary, what will happen if drivers do not follow the guidelines?

Steve Magoon, we have to make sure that Athenahealth is in compliance. If in non-compliance, further steps can be taken. TDM measures are on the table.

William York, we are very comfortable with staff recommendations.

Janet Buck, the shuttle bus is very important to success of the project. The locations that the bus is going to, are they based on employee's locations, targeting people from Cambridge & Boston, not 128, etc. ?

Elodia Thomas, Marion Road, I-Cubed money is for infrastructure, what will it consist of? Does it go to campus or the community?

Steve Magoon, I-CUBED is a program that uses developer's money for infrastructure improvements. Athenahealth is identifying I-CUBED project for this area. It cannot fund private projects.

Marcia Ciro, Bay Street, will the public get any reviews of intersections? The garage will be done in 2017, will the rest be done before?

Mark Sideris, Town Council President, we have been working with the developer since the beginning. The proposed improvements are significant, more discussion will follow. Mitigation will happen before I-Cubed. Very happy to see that Athenahealth wants to stay in Watertown, it will be asset to the Town. Different phases will follow, significant improvements in the Town made.

Jonathan Bockian, Irving Street, the list of TDM measures is exemplary, some language could be clearer, it is hard to understand.

John Hawes, there has to be a way to monitor the transportation. It will be a moving target, working process.

Aaron Dushku, Town Councilor, Chair of Town Council Committee on Transportation. TDM is not part of the Ordinance yet. TDM program is an agreement. This is consistent with traffic monitoring, why only 7 years?

Steve Magoon, the cap is on commuting not the program. If they do well and there are no problems, why to continue?

Gary Shaw, the TDM measures will continue.

Aaron Dushku, many will not be here to follow the program. Depending on time of the year, you can get different numbers.

Janet Buck, maybe it could be 7 years after final CO is issued.

Aaron Dushku, will the shuttle be every 15 or 30 minutes? Will there be penalties for non-compliance? Will there be TMA participation?

Bob Corning, the sidewalks in front of Building 311 and 43 are only 5' wide, we are proposing widening. Many improvements on Arsenal Street, we are working with DCD&P and DPW. Connecting through Arsenal Park to Arsenal Project.

Barbara Ruskin, Spring Street, the project has nice architecture, planning before zoning is important. It has to be for the benefit of citizens as well as developer. A meeting to address what is needed in traffic engineer is important. Goals can be updated. Staff report keeps going back to Tufts students recommending bike path. Speed needs to be posted more often. This is an opportunity for public art.

Mark Blair, off-site parking will be used only during construction.

Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor, I love all the improvements. The developer can use food incentives, parking cash out, etc.

Sara, Paul Street, I am concerned that 3500 employees will grow into 4500 and the total of trips will increase. Does TDM prohibit off-site parking? The more universal shuttle service, the better.

Tony Palomba, Town Councilor, are all the employees required to complete the Athenahealth survey? What will happen if the goals are not met every year? The monitoring should continue for the life of the project. Can the goals be increased as the technology increases? One page listing of mitigation for each project would be helpful.

Michele Cokonougher, Paul Street, if you notice that there are problems after 7 years, can the language be reinstated?

Vince Piccirilli, Town Councilor, the project has been going on for the last 2 years. Lots of changes have been made. Athenahealth had a vision for this property, we can help them to do that. Conditions will protect the public interest. I am asking the Board for favorable approval. There are changes to Wooley Avenue, trucks making deliveries?

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Steve Magoon, circulation has been approved as part of the Master Plan. Town Councilor Angie Kounelis has asked to pass comments regarding shuttle buses, cars parking, and storage of snow removal equipment.

Mark Blair, once the construction is complete, it will all be stored on site.

John Hawes, this is the Master Plan. The project will come back in individual phases. This company is cooperative, we want to move forward.

Gary Shaw, it is appropriate to monitor such a large project that has this many conditions with additional ones added tonight.

Steve Magoon, the additional conditions are the handicapped spaces in existing garage, 80 short term spaces on the first floor of existing garage, extending 7 year for TDM monitoring, 5 years after the final phase is complete.

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the petition for Special permit under Section 5.12(c)(4), 9.05(b), 9.03(c), based upon the finding that it meets the conditions set forth in the staff report and additional conditions that the number of handicapped spaces in existing and new garage be reviewed by the Town, 80 short term spaces on the first floor of existing garage, extending 7 year for TDM monitoring, 5 years after the final phase is complete.

Fergal Brennock seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Chairman John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 10:30 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:30 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 7/18/16 which is available in the DCDP office.