

## **WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD**

DATE: April 11, 2018 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Hearing & Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: John Hawes, Chairman; Payson Whitney; Janet Buck; Gary Shaw; Jeff Brown  
Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner

### **ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 3/19/2018 meeting.

Janet Buck seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Jeff Brown motioned to approve the withdrawal of the 575 Pleasant Street/Uncommon Grounds Inc. petition.

Janet Buck seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In favor

Jeff Brown motioned to continue the 580 Pleasant Street/Fluid Management Systems petition.

Janet Buck seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0 In favor

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

John Hawes, the proposed amendment would prohibit Self Storage as a land use.

Gideon Schreiber, this was a request by the Town Council to remove self-storage from Section 5.01.5(i) Districts I-1 and I-2 and striking Self Storage from Article VI in the Zoning Ordinance. This Board has to make recommendation to the Town Council. We have received several public comments and a letter from Town Councilor Angie Kounelis. Staff review identified several components where such facilities could be installed. We need to provide storage for people with small apartments, people who are downsizing, additional space for contractors, restaurants and businesses. Such use has a very low trip generation and parking need. The potential negative that it does not provide active use, positive economic impact. It should be paired with additional use, buildings should be more architecturally interesting, etc. Staff suggests that appropriate landscape would improve such use. Stand alone is not consistent, it should continue to be allowed but only if incorporated with other use such a retail, community uses, etc. To create reasonable amount of mix.

John Hawes, this is the first that it came up. It is not about traffic or particular site. This will be a complete prohibition or mixing with other uses.

Gary Shaw, I am comfortable with staff's suggestions.

Janet Buck, I am speaking as a Planning Board member and as a resident. The site has been an eyesore for many years. The use for entire site is not acceptable, this would be a SP/SPR, and it would come back to the Planning Board for review. It is up to the Planning Board and the staff to work with the developer. The proposal for Elm Street is very attractive, it will improve the area.

Jeff Brown, it is well written, if it's done properly, it should be allowed.

Payson Whitney, Special Permit is there for review, staff's recommendation is positive.

John Hawes, it is premature to speak about specific site.

Angie Kounelis, Town Councilor, we are talking about specific parcel, 80 Elm Street. I have met with the Planning Director and the owner in 2016. There are many issues in the area, another parcel is on Coolidge Hill Road. I have submitted a memo dated 4/9/18 expressing my concerns. Watertown is only 4.17 square miles. Owners of 80 Elm Street brought forward a proposal for self-storage. Another possibility for same use is at 19 Coolidge Hill Road, and other in the surrounding areas of I-1 and I-2 districts.

John Hawes, I don't think that many of the mentioned properties are going anywhere. We are talking about sensitive sites, I tend to rely on Planning Board.

Curtis Whitney, 43 Grandview, people run out of space and start renting storage space. This is a very benign space that will provide significant income for the Town. Special Permit will take care of the sensitive issues. Elimination of such use is not productive, don't start taking away people property rights.

Bill Dylan, one in every 11 households uses self storage. Watertown Mall located next to Elm Street is supportive of such use. The Mall's tenants are looking for storage. People work from home, some need materials to be stored. People living in small apartments need storage.

Mark Sideris, Town Council President, I agree with these statements, how do you prohibit use. I am confident with the Special Permit process.

John Hawes, the public hearing has been closed. I love living in this Town where I can find different uses. I am tempted not to change the Zoning Ordinance and depend on the Special Permit.

Gary Shaw, The Zoning Ordinance needs to be adjusted, the use needs consideration because of its impact. I strongly support staff's suggestions. 50 feet might not be enough between tall buildings and single family homes. We need to have clearer more reasonable guidelines.

Gideon Schreiber, the Board can vote on the changes tonight and send it back to the Town Council. We need to be very cautious about blanket boundaries. We can continue and do more research, whether such a use is appropriate for such location.

Jeff Brown, it should be allowable use.

Payson Whitney, we can come back with more recommendations.

William York, Atty, if it's continued it would put projects in a limbo. I represent 80 Elm Street, we have had several meetings and cooperated with Town Consultant David Gamble.

Janet Buck, I would be in favor of voting NO on the proposed amendment.

Jeff Brown motioned that based on the analysis and facts provided and the written and verbal testimony received, the Planning Board recommends that the Zoning Ordinance's current language concerning *Self-Storage* remain as it is and that the Town Council does not adopt a Zoning Text Amendment to prohibit *Self Storage* as a land use and that there are no changes to the Ordinance relative to how *Self Storage* facilities are currently permitted in Watertown.

Janet Buck seconded the motion

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

## **CASES PENDING**

- **28 Robbins Road; Thalia Meehan & Gretchen Grimshaw – Special Permit Finding**

Thalia Meehan, we are proposing to reconfigure the existing kitchen by replacing the mud room with a new addition.

Gideon Schreiber, the original design had issues. The 2-story house is placed in the wrong place on the 7,275 s.f. located in S-6 zone. The petitioner is proposing to replace a 30 s.f. mud room by a new

252 s.f., 12'x21' one story kitchen addition. The new addition will be within the northerly side yard setback of 6.4' where 10' is required. The proposal is not substantially more detrimental than the existing nonconformity, staff recommends approval.

Jeff Brown motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the petition for 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.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0 In Favor.

- **187 Chapman Street; Tigran Yassayan – Special Permit Finding**

Tigran Yassayan, I have lived in Watertown for 13 years, this is a very small house.

Gideon Schreiber, this single-family bungalow style house is located on 5,401 s.f. lot in an S-6 zone. The petitioner is proposing to construct a second floor addition above an existing first floor within the existing 6.5 to 6.4' setback where 10' is required and within the existing front yard setback. The staff was not in support of the original proposal, too much of impact on the neighborhood. The new proposal is now full 2 story with no attic, in keeping with the neighborhood, and the height is reduced by 2 feet. The basement will be excavated to deep enough as per building code. Staff recommends conditional approval.

Jeff Brown motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the petition for 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.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0 In Favor.

- **490 Arsenal Way** (formerly 480 Arsenal Street); 480 Arsenal Group LLC – Amendment to Special Permit/Site Plan Review #ZBA-2015-17

Mark Deschenes, Boylston Properties, the property was purchased in 2014, we have just signed the last lease with a company that is relocating from Cambridge, it will be their new headquarters. This is a tremendous capital investment by our company, there have been some challenges.

Alejandro Miranda, project manager for Boylston Properties, updated plans have been submitted showing access from the East and West. New electric gate is proposed, detail of loading dock and diagram of truck entry is shown. The additional changes are as a result of further discussion with DPW and Planning office staff.

Gideon Schreiber, a substantial detail has been provided by the petitioner. This is an amendment to the 2015 approval by modifying existing emergency only access to allow limited delivery from northeast area of the site. The delivery would provide access to the east side of the building. At our request, the access would move to the west to allow for 6-10 deliveries per week. No deliveries at peak and school hours. Concerns have been addressed by the conditions, monitoring program will be implemented. Seven public parking spaces will be removed and provided by the petitioner on the site. Gate access will be reviewed by the Fire department, landscape plan submitted to the staff for review, new island will be created. Staff recommends an approval with conditions. A program for employee long term parking will be created.

Mark Sideris, the original plan did not come to fruition, this will be a less dense use. It will be very good for businesses in the area. I am asking the Board to approve this request.

Len Holt, resident, this is a very good quality company, great use for the site, very good tenant.

Curtis Whitney, this is a dynamic change in direction that will increase tax base and provide great prosperity for Watertown. I encourage the Board to approve this request.

Angie Kounelis, District A Councilor, I support growth and development. That entrance was closed for years. Where are these large vehicles coming from? The intersection of Arlington Street and Nichols Ave has not been tested. It is unknown how many employees and how many cars will be on the site. The 65 Grove Street project is not full yet.

John Hawes, these projects were approved with traffic reports, etc. Was the gate on Nichols Ave to remain closed?

Gideon Schreiber, truck deliveries will come from Arlington Street or Arsenal Street and thru the site.

Jeff Brown motioned to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the requested amendment to Special Permit/Site Plan Review #ZBA-2015-17 SP/SR based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report. Janet Buck seconded the motion. Vote: 5-0 In Favor.

Bill McQuillan, Boylston Properties, the first tenant will be moving on the site in 10 days. There will be 30% less in the lab space as oppose to office space.

- **490 Arsenal Way** (formerly 480 Arsenal Street); 480 Arsenal Group LLC – Special Permit

Alejandro Miranda, this is a request for a Sign Special Permit for all signage at LINX that will replace the zoning code for conformance of permissible signage. It will provide detail for each of the various sign types, such as size, materials and locations. It will not be higher than 20 feet. We are trying to avoid building directory.

Gideon Schreiber, this is the first sign permit that would allow flexibility in placement of tenant signage on the south side of the building up to 30', in keeping with the adopted Design Guidelines where the zoning only allows 20' by building permit. Staff will review the submitted application. The Planning Board is the SPGA under Section 7.07, the review is only required to consider if the requested signage adheres to adopted Design Guidelines. The six criteria for the Special Permit have been met, staff recommends that the Board approves the request.

Jeff Brown, the site is relatively unknown on the north side and could possibly use more signage.

Gary Shaw, there is no signage for deliveries to the dock. Some signage to direct drivers to the dock might help.

Alejandro Miranda, additional direction would be provided to the drivers when they first arrive on the site. There is a free-standing sign and the driveway will be opened which will help with that. The West side has a dock that serves the entire second floor.

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Jeff Brown motioned to approve the petition for LINX Sign Special Permit under Section 7.07 for the project approved as ZBA-2015-17 based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Payson Whitney seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0 In Favor.

John Hawes, after many years as a chair and member of the Planning Board, I will resign as of today. I am forwarding the Chair gavel to the new chair Jeff Brown

Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:00 PM MINUTES APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 4/11/2018 which is available in the DCDP office.