

## WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: May 13, 2009 PLACE: Town Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Monthly Meeting

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

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

### ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Jeff Brown motioned to approve Minutes of 4/15/09 meetings.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-0 In favor

### CASE PENDING

- **259-261 Lexington Street; Kevin M. Smith** – Special Permit Finding

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

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-0 In favor

- **165 Grove Street & 105 Coolidge Hill Road (a/k/a 151 Grove St); David Barnett, President;**  
The Proprietors of the Mount Auburn Cemetery – Special Permit

William York, Atty, during the Aggregate hearings before the Planning Board, Mt.Auburn Cemetery was opposed to the industrial use. The petition was withdrawn, and property became available for sale. The 105,193 s.f. property is located in I-3 zone. The Cemetery is proposing to use the property for storage of materials used in its operation, including granite and stone, stone markers, post and monuments, fencing and landscape materials, and tree materials related to storm damage and horticultural maintenance. This will benefit the cemeteries' future and also make the Grove Street area more attractive. The proposed use is allowed by Special Permit.

David Barnett, President, Mt.Auburn Cemetery, we are proposing to purchase the land formerly owned by Aggregate Industries. We will improve the land, we are proposing a nursery area near Grove Street and other uses away from the street making them less visible. All the proposed changes will improve the efficiency of operation.

William York, Atty, we have met with the neighbors in the Chapel on the cemetery grounds. A new 8' high rolling fence will be placed 10' from the street. A chain link fence will be placed around the site. The truck entrance will be closed and planting added the shield the area on the hill. Hours of operation are 7-4 with an occasional weekend during winter. The Mount Auburn cemetery has created a master plan for the next 10 years that will make Grove Street more attractive.

Danielle Fillis, staff reviewed the request and the 4 criteria for granting of special permit have been met. The new use will be screened from view by landscaping. Only one curb cut will remain on Grove Street, Coolidge Hill Road entrance will be closed. All other requirements have been met. The plant nursery will be located near the entrance. Landscaping materials and compost will be stored in bins. Staff recommends approval.

Jeff Brown, will the property that is now being used for storage, become burial grounds?

John Hawes, what type of fence will be used, if chain link, will they use black vinyl strips?

William York, the Cemetery is holding on to the entire property, but changes can happen in the future. The cemetery is open to suggestions regarding the fence. 8" chain link with a gate on Grove Street and typical chain link fence near the neighbors.

Alyson Karakouzian, 143 Grove Street, we are very pleased with the proposed use of the site. This is the best proposal for the site and opportunity for the cemetery to expand.

Angie Kounelis, 55 Keenan St, District A Councilor, I am delighted that a passive use is proposed for the site. There are issues that need to be addressed. One of the parcels owned by the cemetery will be used as a parking lot to be leased to Mount Auburn Hospital. It will house 375 vehicles and be open from 5:30 am to 10:30 pm. The Aggregate site is generating \$38,000 in taxes, the PILOT agreement with the cemetery has expired and needs to be renegotiated. 90% of the cemetery land is in Watertown but the mailing address is in Cambridge

William York, we have indicated that we will discuss PILOT with the Town. The parking lot lease to Mount Auburn hospital is separate matter, the Board is addressing this petition only. There will be public hearing regarding the MAH lease of parking spaces and the issues will be addressed. The neighbors were very supportive of the proposed use. The closing between the Aggregate Industries and the Mount Auburn cemetery is scheduled for June 3.

John Hawes, if the lot is rented/leased for parking, the Town will get taxes.

Marilyn Petitto Devaney, 98 Westminster, Councilor At Large, this is a refreshing proposal, I am in support of the petition.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Section 5.01.2(e) & 9.05(b) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set out in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

- Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-0 In favor

#### CONTINUED CASES

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

William York, Atty., we are here with an exciting revision to the initial proposal. We have included input from the neighbors, staff, and added elements to the site. The proposal is in full compliance with the Zoning Ordinance, keeping with intent of the I-3 zone. The By-law of this area promotes housing, this proposal will bring vitality to the street and is consistent with the vision for the area and close to the public transportation. The relief requested is Special Permit under Section 5.01(g) for multi-family 5+, 5.07(j)(3)(A) affordable housing requirement, 5 of the 48 rental units are affordable. The setback from the street has been changed from 10' to 15'.

Bill Curtis, Senior Vice President Cresset Development LLC, we had number of meetings with the staff, Town Councilors, etc. Number of concerns were stated by the neighbors – building being too large, stacked parking is questionable, architecture being little boxy, not enough visitor parking spaces.

Joel Bargmann, BHA, we are presenting new set of plans and a model of the new proposal is being shown. The building extends further west on Pleasant Street. 16 shadow spaces can be provided on the deck area. The 4<sup>th</sup> floor is set back, giving an appearance of 3 stories from Pleasant Street. Because of the enlarged setback of 15' in the front, larger trees can be planted. All parking is accessed via circulation system. There will be 1 elevator in the building. The existing wall will be lowered by 4', the broken sidewalk will be replaced and the entire area cleaned up.

William York, a petition signed by 75 Watertown residents in support of the proposal is being submitted tonight.

John Hawes, many of the signatures are from the immediate area.

Steve Magoon, the staff has provided supplement to the original staff report. It addresses changes that have been made. Applicant met with the staff and Planning Board members, as well as with the neighbors. Initially a variance was required for the 10' setback, which has been changed to 15', and no variance is needed. Building is slightly reduced, it will have the same number of units, but the length is now 175 feet – originally 197 feet. Total area of the building has been reduced from 47,001 s.f. to 45,693 s.f.. As requested by the Board, elevations have been provided, as well as scale model. Issues were addressed, several adjustments made, and all the requirements met. Staff recommends approval with the attached conditions.

Jeff Brown, concern with the parking layout, this is a much better scheme.

John Hawes, Jeff Brown and I have spent time with the developer to make the proposal more acceptable. We were unable to reduce the number of units.

Clyde Younger, 188 Acton Street, this proposal conforms to all the zoning requirements. It allows some flexibility by sloping towards the River. The developer listens to the Planning Board, staff and neighbor suggestions and concerns. I am in support of the proposal.

Dominic Zaccagnini, 23 Conant Road, the building is too high, 48 are too many units for this site.

Marilyn Petitto Devaney, 98 Westminster Ave, Councilor At Large, I grew up across the River and played in the area. We have been waiting for 20 years for Pleasant Street to be redone. I was unable to attend the neighborhood meeting. This is what is allowed by the By-law, the new plans are more in line with the neighborhood. The 46' height is the same as the condos on the other site of Pleasant Street. The developer offered help with the signal at Main/Waverley/Myrtle Streets intersection. This is an attractive building and I am asking the Board to approve this proposal.

David Cain, 99 Pleasant Street, I am very concerned with pedestrian safety. Driver behavior on this road is bad, there are some telephone poles that had to be replaced 4 times already because they were hit by cars. Sidewalks need to be created.

David Odette, 100 Pleasant Street, 5' of land was given to the Town by the owner of 101 Pleasant Street.

Jill Clay-Halloran, 154 Pleasant Street, this proposal has too many units for such a small lot. 8-10 townhouses would be more appropriate. 100 vehicle trips will be added to already traffic congested area. The back up on Pleasant Street toward the Watertown Square is very bad. What is being done to address environmental issues?

Steve Magoon, the proposal is also before the Conservation Commission and these issues will be addressed.

Vincent Piccirilli, 203 Orchard St, District C Councilor, this project satisfies all the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance but impact has to be taken into consideration. The developer will address concerns. The neighbors are concern with Pleasant Street traffic that is already there. The Pleasant Street reconstruction project will provide concrete sidewalks and curbs. The road will appear narrower and traffic will slow down. The developer will enforce parking on the site. Mitigation money for  
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Myrtle/Main/Waverly will be given. There will be extra police parking enforcement at the pool, Conant Road, etc.

Joan O'Brien, 111 Pleasant Street, I have lived at this address for 15 years. I don't believe that there is enough visitor parking. One elevator is insufficient for this many units. There will be only one entrance onto the site. Changes have been done but it is not enough.

Marilyn Petitto Devaney, No Parking signs need to be placed for daytime parking, but parking at night should be allowed on Conant Road.

Christopher Chapron, 22 Conant Road, the neighborhood consists of predominantly single, 2 family and some condominium units. The 4-story building is too tall, the structure should be placed lower away from Pleasant Street. No amount of landscaping will disguise this building.

Chuck Langenhagen, 111 Pleasant St #36, couple of major concerns were not addressed. The building is still 4 stories high. A neighbor has tried to imagine one of the completed Repton Place structures on this site. The shadow/sunlight study does not show the reality, it needs to start earlier and conclude later. Can the proposed single driveway handle the volume? Additional parking is needed now, shadow parking should not be allowed. The developer might not have the funds to convert the spaces in the future. This development will add to the traffic back up on Pleasant Street. Curbing will not stop people from parking on Pleasant Street.

Susan DeLong, 26 Conant Rd, I have lived at this address for 1 year. Changes have been made but there are still many concerns. How many guest parking spaces will be provided? How much time will the construction take? Where will the construction vehicles park? This is a tall wall of building that will be visible from all rooms in my house.

Linda Odette, 100 Pleasant Street, I have lived here for 37 years. A single family house was at the site of 111 Pleasant Street. This is a change and progress. The building will look better than the garage. I am in favor of this project, it will make the neighborhood look better.

Clyde Younger, I am very pleased with this proposal. We are all concerned with parking on Conant Road. Police can be called and if anyone parks for over 2 hours in the area, they can be tagged. The Board needs to vote on the merits of this project only.

Elaine Sokoloff, 111 Pleasant Street, we do not get much response from the police. The zoning change that we have supported for this parcel was for four 2-family homes. Now the proposal is for 48 units. This is a wall, it will not improve the neighborhood.

John Hawes, how is it that the cost of this project is exactly what is allowed by the Zoning Ordinance for this site?

Bill Curtis, all aspects of the project are taken into consideration trying to make the project work. The cost of construction is very high, there is only single digit return on the project.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta, we appreciate the neighborhood participation, we are very concerned with the relationship of the building to the neighborhood. This is a densely populated Town. This proposal is too big, too much of a mass surrounded by small properties.

John Hawes, I have walked around 111 Pleasant Street, it is much smaller than this with lots of green space. Even 3 story building will leave the project with issues. The entire length of the building is right on the street. This is an urban structure in suburban area. The shadow parking is supposed to help the Town not the developer. I am not convinced that 48 units are needed to make this project work. The Planning Board will make a recommendation to the Zoning Board.

Jeff Brown, the height is an issue. The site is so tight that you cannot make any changes.

Linda Tuttle-Barletta motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals approval of the Special Permit under Sections 5.01(g), 5.07(j)(3)(A) based upon the finding that it meets the criteria set out in the Zoning Ordinance subject to conditions set forth in the staff report.

Jeff Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: 0-3 Opposed

John Hawes, the developer followed our Ordinance which states the maximum. We look at the proposals individually, hoping, that it will not be build to the maximum.

William York, I appreciate the compliments and presence of people who came in support. I am concerned with the By-law. This project meets all the criteria for the Smart Growth area. Something needs to be done to change the Zoning Ordinance.

John Hawes, most of the area consists of 2 family homes but is zoned I-3. 15' setback is not enough for a structure that is 46' high and 200' long. The premier space is facing the River, this project does not have any useable open space. The reason for site plan review is for the staff to inject our thoughts and ideas into the project.

Chairman John Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:45 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:45 PM MINUTES APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

For more detailed Minutes see tapes dated 5/13/2009 available in the DCD&P office.