

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Lower Hearing Room
Wednesday, January 5, 2011
7:30p.m.
Adopted March 2, 2011

Conservation Commission Members Present: Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Louis Taverna, Leo Martin, Maria Rose, Patrick Fairbairn, Stan Sadkowski, Charles Bering

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward, Daphne M. Collins

Members of the Public Present: See Sign-In Form

Pallotta-McDermott chaired.

- 1. Public Hearing – NOI 270 Pleasant Street at two sites to redevelop an 139 unit multi-story residential apartment building and a 35 unit multi-story mix-use retail and residential structure. Applicant: Heather Boujoulian, CDP Development Company, LLC; Property Owner: Chris Berardi, Pleasant Street LLC.**

Abutters Green Cards were submitted by the applicant.

William York, attorney and representative of the applicant, described the site as excellent but blighted and polluted. He informed that the applicant plans to restore the site and that a Site Plan Review meeting attended by various Town Departments representatives had been held regarding the proposal. In addition, York identified that a neighborhood meeting was scheduled on January 20 at the Watertown Library for an informal introduction to the neighbors. He said that the proposal was also scheduled to go before the Planning Board for zoning review. He remarked that the applicant had a Purchase and Sale with the owner, Chris Berardi.

Tim Williams, Allen and Major Associates and representative of the applicant, reported that the proposal was for two parcels – Parcel #1, the old Haartz Mason site and Parcel #2, the parking lot across the street and abutting Parcel #1. Parcel #1 is a degraded 122,000 sq. feet site on the riverfront. He informed that the combined area for both sites is 3.2 acres containing 2.5 acres of impervious surface. He noted that the site lacked storm water measures and that the planned development revitalizes the area. He claimed that the storm water presently discharges directly into the river from five discharge points, all unmitigated. According to Williams, the proposal plans to rectify that.

Williams informed that the parcel is 100% within the floodplain and falls within the one-to-one compensatory flood plain storage capacity requirement.

Williams described the proposal stating that it would decrease the impervious surface area by an half an acre. The goal, he stated, was to manage the storm water conditions to the best extent possible. He identified the measures to include – the installation of deep sump pumps, the development of pocket wetlands, the usage of pervious pavement and restrictions to pesticide usage.

Pallotta McDermott was concerned about access to the site by a Town fire truck and its effects on the river. She was concerned about protecting the river during a fire.

Concern was also raised about the height of the proposed riverfront structure and the shadow it may cast on the river. York responded that there was a team expert to address the wildlife issues. Pallotta McDermott requested that the issue be formally documented. The applicant responded that the relief to build in the 50' no-build zone was to improve the pedestrian access to the Charles River Walkway and for the parking to be of a pervious surface, a surface whose load capacity was of concern for the Fire Department.

The applicant also noted that a Shadow Study was being done by the architect. He informed that the shadow was cast toward Pleasant Street and not in the direction of the wildlife area, an area “with no redeeming wildlife value.”

Keith Johnson, LSP with Haley & Aldrich, reported that the site from 1925-2000 was a rubberizing cloth manufacturer. He informed that the manufacturing chemicals were stored in below and above surface storage wells. He pointed out that there had been a fair amount of clean up in five years and that a permanent solution status had been achieved for the site. He depicted that Ecological Risk Assessment conducted in 2003 as state-of-the-art. He claimed that the ground water contaminates had been substantially attenuated over time. He said he was “shocked how clean” it was for the development of residential use.

Pallotta McDermott requested that all reports be submitted to the CC documenting the improvement. York stated that the shadow study, fire equipment capacity/access and chemical containment documentation will be provided at the next meeting. He asserted that the four-story, flat-roof was accessible to the Fire Department’s equipment and that the access surface could be made of asphalt or pavers.

Rose considered the proposal to be very thorough in meeting state and local standards. She questioned the grade of the parking and asked if there were any profiles for clarification. The applicant responded that the building would be 5-story, and that the parking level would be one-foot above Pleasant Street to allow the flood plain waters.

Martin inquired if the material underneath would be gravel or stone. The applicant responded that the parking surface would be concrete and that all flooding would be outside the parking surface. He stated that the surface of the parking lot will be power washed two times a year to remove any accumulated grease and that it will drain into a

sanitary system. Presently, the applicant is doing sewer studies on the Town's utility line to determine capacity.

Rose requested an elevation from the river's perspective.

Pallotta McDermott inquired if the wall will remain. The applicant responded that it would.

Rose was concerned that the hay bales proposed contained weed seed and she suggested an alternative erosion control measures be specified. Williams proposed straw bales.

Pallotta McDermott pointed out that any changes to the plans made by other Town Boards through the review process would have to come back to the CC for review. The applicant affirmed understanding the process and would comply.

Taverna inquired if the parking will drain into the Town's sewer. The applicant asserted that it would.

Heather Boujoulian confirmed that the parking will be completely enclosed. She noted that the curb cuts on Pleasant Street will be modified and that the parking deck will be one foot above the Pleasant Street elevation. Pallotta McDermott requested clearer renderings.

Taverna inquired as to the building foundation. Boujoulian stated that the soil characterization was very good. She asserted that once the building is removed the soil density will be reevaluated.

Fairbairn noted that the proposal was an improvement to the existing conditions. He found *Elevation 12* hard to visualize the upper limit of the water and the property boundary. He suggested that the DCR and Pleasant Street flood zone areas be included. He wondered how habitat would be affected at a 100 year flood or greater, especially as global warming conditions become more evident. He noted that the river floodplain was very sensitive.

Sadkowski was concerned about losing pervious area for Fire Dept. response and that the calculations need to be recalibrated. He requested the materials be provided in CD format.

Sadkowski requested that the site construction chronology be described. Heather Boujoulian, applicant, described the process in sequence: erosion controls are installed; demolition undertaken; areas will be sampled in accordance with requirements; limited remediation will be undertaken based on what is found; utility and foundation work will be undertaken; work will be undertaken to protect and identify utility connection on site; plumbing; evaluation of geotechnical will be occur concurrently to determine soil compaction needs; foundations are poured; post-tension concrete structural deck for

parking is erected; then the a second post-tension concrete deck for the building is erected; followed by the wood frame structure.

Sadkowski inquired if the demolition materials will be reused. Boujoulian noted that they will all be removed. Sadkowski inquired about the Maintenance Plan's dust control measures during construction. Boujoulian noted the trucks will be watered to minimize dust.

Bering requested a copy of the 21E reports for the record. He inquired about the plan to respond to any problems found under the building.

Williams noted that the applicant wants to work with the DCR to improve the Charles River Walk. He explained that the proposal includes an outdoor portion consisting of improved pedestrian connections that are in the 50' no build resource area. He emphasized that the impervious area of the site will be decreased by 500 sq. feet. York indicated that an open pocket park will be accessible and open to the public. Bering was not agreeable for the 50' resource area to be paved.

Pallotta McDermott urged the applicant to work with Dan Driscoll of the DCR.

Bering noted that the CC cannot approve work in the no-build zone.

Dan Driscoll, DCR, was excited about the opportunity the proposal provides. He was concerned about the impact on the Charles River and the walkway from 3 new proposals- 270 units of rental units proposed in Waltham, the 45 units of rental on 118-120 Pleasant Street, and the 130 units proposed in this proposal. He observed that the size and scale of the proposed projects will affect negatively the nature and park. He was especially concerned about the characterization by the applicant that the area had "no redeeming wildlife." In fact, he explained the DCR deck located in front of the property is there for viewing access of the Black Crown Heron roosting areas where they feed on herring and it is an important fly way zone.

Driscoll thought it was a good and exciting project. However, he found the scale too big and thought it would ultimately canyonize the river. He was concerned about the inevitable collateral damage of birds hitting the new building. He believed that the proposal was a missed opportunity to attract more river users by locating retail on the river side. He thought the proposal connection to the proposed bike path was positive. He noted that the area was significant and that it is being considered for National Park status. He urged that the height be reconsidered. He was concerned about maintenance and mitigations efforts to accommodate the new numbers of users the projects will attract. He emphasized that the river park needs to be repaved and the path's lifetime is expiring soon. He noted that the decks need to be replaced in five years. He urged the developer to assist in the river park's maintenance to accommodate the increase use.

Driscoll requested renderings of the proposal from the park users' perspective. He considered the building to be a detraction for the users. He urged the developer to make the proposal as good as it can be.

Driscoll challenged the assertion by the applicant that the river had no redeeming wildlife value. He noted that a Boston University professor, who studies the wildlife value of this area, identified it as a successful eco-system restoration project.

Bering did not oppose the proposed path connection however he urged the applicant to select the best surface possible.

Martin inquired if there was a lighting plan for the walkway. What were the hours of illumination? He was concerned about the illumination's impact on wildlife.

Pallotta McDermott urged the applicant to work with Driscoll.

Martin noted that the proposal improved the current 50' no build zone area. He was not clear about the proposed parking garage as the renderings were confusing.

Hayward highlighted issues of concern: lighting impact on wildlife, status of site contamination, pervious pavement and the Fire Departments access requirements. In Hayward's opinion, this site was one of the top three most environmentally sensitive sites in Watertown.

Driscoll cautioned that when the park was built in 1999 there was an active gas line and water line that go under the DCR property not identified by Dig Safe. DCR found them during the construction phase.

Vote: Taverna moved to continue the Public Hearing until the February 2, 2011 CC meeting. Rose seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. November & December Minutes – adopted.

3. Old Business

Item	Update status
Whitney Hill Report	Hayward informed that Everett Brooks quoted \$190 per hour for the installation of permanent markers. CC suggested searching for a more cost effective alternative.
Recycling Center/Filippello Park	Magoon is in possession of letter from Mt. Auburn Cemetery offering usage of their property for 10 years as a recycling site. CC to meet with the DPW Subcommittee regarding this issue.

Storm Water Advisory Commission	Rose reported on the continued progress on draft ordinances. Ordinance on agenda of TC Subcommittee scheduled for Jan.
Rivers Protection Act	Hayward reported that there is a new Assessor. He will meet to discuss updating the RPA areas on the Town's GIS map.
GSA	Awaiting response to CC's comments. Corsi assigned as manager to site.
Stanley Ave.	Area has been cleaned up. Trucks have been moved. There is a prospective developer for site.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.