



# Town of Watertown Connecticut

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Planning and Zoning, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission/Inland Wetland Agency

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Town of Watertown  
Planning and Zoning Commission  
Public Hearings  
Special Permit #289 of the Board of Education

Time: 7:13 P.M  
Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2009  
Place: Watertown High School  
Lecture Hall  
324 French Street  
Watertown, CT

## 1. Call meeting to order

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:13PM.

## 2. Roll call

The secretary executed the roll call.

**Present:** Chairman, Mr. David Minnich  
Vice Chairman, Mr. Gary Martin  
Secretary, Mr. Michael Masayda  
Mr. Ronald Russ  
Mr. Carl Mancini  
Mr. Jim Blais  
Mr. Glen Duplissie  
Alternate, Mr. Ray Rondeau  
Alternate, Mr. Ken Demirs  
Alternate, Mr. Duane George

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Land Use Administrator, Ms. Ruth Mulcahy  
Land Use Secretary, Ms. Carol Allen

## 3. Hearing of applications

**b. Site Plan Modification/Special Permit #289 of the Board of Education to remove a 3' wide opening in the new fence at the Watertown High School located at 324 French Street, Watertown, CT in an R-12.5 District.**

Mr. Masayda read the notice of public hearing:

The Planning and Zoning Commission for the Town of Watertown, Ct. will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, December 2, 2009 at 7 PM at the Watertown High School, Lecture Hall, 324 French Street, Watertown, Ct. on the following:

Site Plan Modification/Special Permit #289 of the Board of Education to remove a 3' wide opening in the new fence at the Watertown High School located at 324 French Street, Watertown, CT in an R-12.5 District.

**Karen Baldwin – Superintendent of Watertown Public Schools**

Ms. Baldwin said there are three primary areas of concern:

1. **Safety and security** concern for the community.
2. The **entrance** to the high school is in the front of the building, we want to limit access to the back of the building.
3. The back of the high school is less visible to us and is much harder to **monitor**.

Ms. Baldwin said we are often compelled to use the Watertown Police Department to help us with issues that arise on Tower Road. It is not the best use of resources for both the Police Department and our budgetary resources to monitor that area. We would like to continue our good community relations with the neighbors on Tower Road.

**Board Member Concerns**

Mr. Mancini asked since the drive through gate was closed what issues have you had with Police up there.

Ms. Baldwin replied our need to call the police is children on neighbor's property and they are not being responsive to them and events like Thanksgiving football game in terms of parking facilities.

Mr. Mancini asked we have eliminated the cars leaving the school yard it should not be a problem, is that a problem anymore.

Ms. Baldwin replied we now have a traffic light the issue you are raising is less of an issue. Now with the limited student parking we have children parked in a area that is not designated and come up Tower Road and pick up friends and exiting the three foot gap in the fencing and congregate and we would like to have them in a better setting where we can better monitor and supervise that.

Mr. Mancini asked about the kids who live in that area for walking are they going to have to walk all the way around.

Ms. Baldwin replied it is an unsafe situation at present because there is not sidewalk. We would have to see if the routes are within walking distance of the school.

Mr. Masayda said the reason why there is no sidewalk on Tower Road because residents did not want it and it is has low volume and did not require a sidewalk.

Mr. Masayda asked about the linear trail, the connection between Unico Field, and the sidewalk that goes towards French Street are those going to be closed as well.

Ms. Baldwin replied that is part of the ongoing project that is going on now and it is not closed off at this conjure.

Mr. Masayda asked the difference of security on one side and no security on the other side. He cited other schools for examples and their accesses. It is a public facility it should have public access.

Mr. Martin asked what the height was for the existing fence.

Ms. Baldwin replied the fencing is 6 feet high.

Mr. Martin asked if you had a swinging gate that can be locked. Is that something that might work?

Mr. Rondeau asked about the cost of bussing potential students outside of the walking area would that out weight the cost of a police officer.

Ms. Baldwin replied based on the number of students who live in that area they could be accommodated by existing transportation routes so there would not be additional cost to us vs. purchasing another bus which would be a significant cost to the board.

### **Public Concerns**

#### **Kathy Vargenlake – 313 French Street**

Ms. Vargenlake agreed if you closed that gate off in the back it would just add more traffic and to the front and could see it causing more problems.

#### **June Bouffard – 70 Tower Road**

Ms. Bouffard avoids coming to her house between 2 and 2:30 in regards to the students and traffic. Her mother's property borders the high school she has had students jump the fence and walk through her property. There is a safety issue and we want our residential neighborhood. Ms. Bouffard remarked the elementary school having public access but those students are not driving or cutting classes and I do not like seeing students loitering in my neighborhood.

**Gale Caesrello – 56 Tower Road**

Ms. Caesrello said she is in favor of the gate being closed for safety and security reasons. The students belong on school grounds and not outside school property. If the gate is closed during school hours these students won't have a way to leave the school unless they leave the front and then someone would see them.

**Betty Barnes - 95 Tower Road**

Ms. Barnes is against the gate being closed. There are children hanging outside but there are not that many of them. Adults and kids use that gate to walk up and use the track and we do have some rights to use our school. There will always be a traffic problem with the football game and you cannot get away from that.

**Russell Erickson – 39 Pleasant View Avenue**

Mr. Erickson is in favor of closing the gate. He showed photos on Thanksgiving Day of students loitering on private property. There is no security back there and the school does not have the people to do it. During the shift change police do not come out there or they come a half an hour later.

**Marie Womelsdorf – 28 Pleasant View Avenue**

Ms. Womelsdorf is in favor of leaving that gate wide open. They have easy access from their house to the parking lot but with the construction it is closed. She has walked for 40 years to the high school and the students do not bother us. Since the new construction the traffic has diminished and everything has calmed down and it is getting better every day.

Mr. Minnich said the distance from the Tower Road gate going down Tower Avenue to Riverside up to French Street and into the entrance all the way to the circle where the drop off is 8/10 tenths of a mile. The distance from the Tower Road gate to that same point at the entrance to the parent drop off is 1/10 of a mile.

Text of Motion: Close public hearing  
Motion made by: M. Masayda  
Second by: G. Dupliese  
All in favor

Michael Masayda \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary