

Town of Watertown  
Planning and Zoning Commission  
Special Meeting  
Public Hearing  
Watertown High School  
February 20, 2008

Minnich: I would like to call this public hearing Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission on February 20, 2008 to order. Carol would you please call the roll.

Carol: D. Minnich, M. Masayda, R. Russ, G. Martin, C. Mancini, G. Dupliese, J. Blais, D. George, K. Demirs, R. Rondeau

Members absent: M. Masayda, R. Russ, R. Ronadeu

Other Present: Ruth Mulcahy, Land Use Administrator, Chuck Berger, Town Engineer

Minnich: Ken would you please sit in for M. Masayda and D. George would you please sit in for Ron. Thank you very much.

**Next item on the Agenda is the continuation for a public hearing for Special Permit #233 at Watertown High School are there any comments?**

**Todd LoFrese Assistant Superintendent for Watertown Board of Education**

On behalf on the Board of Ed I would like to thank you again for your time on our three school projects initiative. We have several consultants as well as our architect with us this evening. To answer questions you may have. We have moved forward through various boards and commissions including the Police Commission, Inland and Wetlands, Zoning Board of Appeals with all the necessary approvals for this project this evening. So with that unless there are

any specific questions for me I would like to turn it over at this time to Mr. Joe DiCarlo. Thank you.

**Joseph DiCarlo – Landscape Architect – Kaestle Boos Associates**

It's not my intention to go through the whole presentation that we did at the last public hearing or the start of it. This plan is simply a refresher for you to remind of the scope of the project as was mentioned by Mr. LoFrese. We have been to the Inland and Wetland Commission and received their approval for our work. We have been to the Zoning Board of Appeals who granted the variances we requested. There has also been a meeting with the Police Commission concerning the exit out to the French Street. And I am not sure if there is anything more you would like to hear from us at this time.

Minnich: Ready to answer questions, if that is what you are ready for?

On this application for the high school do any members of the Commission have any comments or questions?

Regarding this project let me get into the record this motion sheet that was done. This is from the Police Commission meeting of February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008. A motion was made by Patricia Kropp. The text of the motion was to approve the traffic lane at the exit from Watertown High School to French Street pending approvals by DOT. The vote was approved by vote of 4 in favor and 1 against. So the Police Commission has endorsed the traffic light at French Street for us to consider as the project. I don't know I don't have any other communications on the high school from anyone. Does any staff have any communications regarding the high school project?

Berger: On February 15<sup>th</sup> I again received a fax response from Kaestle Boos Associates dated February 20<sup>th</sup> in regards to the summations there

are a number of remaining issues by other consultants including drainage engineers and there is a couple of responses that I am still waiting for. Maybe I will get right into it. Relative to the slope on the back side of the school in my February 15<sup>th</sup> memo my concerns relative to that Commission members may recall there is proposed to be a 75 foot tall slope 2 to 1 followed by a 11 inch every 15 feet for a height of 75 feet. And concerns over the sequence of construction for that which I have additional information from O & G for the proposed site manager.

But Mr. DiCarlo can give a little bit more information relative to the quick overview that sequence of construction. The visibility of that area I think the Commission members ought to be aware that extent of that clearing, cutting and grading that will go on in that area. And my question at the end of all this was I was looking for a some type of analysis or the number of issues that I have raised semi erosion control, safety for the kids, aesthetics, and sequence of construction type issues what is really to be gained by those activities. Maybe Mr. DiCarlo can address some of those.

DiCarlo: Just to refresh the Commission members, I will point to the area we are talking about. This area is presently a 75 foot high slope and as part of our program you may recall in the initial phases of studies for the school part of the mandate from the owners and from the town was to try to increase the athletic recreational capabilities here. We are looking at a slope further down which it turns out is heavily covered with wetlands and the cost of developing that area and time delay the size would be such we end of having to apply to the Army Core of Engineers which will drag out for as long as a year, they don't have a big rush in their activities. So it was decided that we would instead concentrate on the athletic fields south of the high school and try to expand them to create more athletic and recreational activity. What that does is take the 75 foot slope and slide it toward the bottom of the sheet or recreate it a little further out to give us more level area on top to create the athletic fields that we would like to do. What this means of course is it is presently a heavily wooded slope obviously the vegetation has to be

removed there are astringent sediment erosion control measures we have put in place to protect Steel Brook at the bottom of these slopes, after that construction would start from the bottom and work up in lifts. The normal way we are bringing in clean fill which will be compacted and tested by an independent compaction testing agency for stabilization. It will also in all likelihood be overseen by the Town's Geotechnical Engineer the construction which at this point under contract is with Dr. Welty's office and as mentioned the slopes will be brought up to a fifteen foot height and level and a 8 foot wide level area will be created before the next slope starts. And again the slopes will be stabilized before we moved up the slope. They would be tracked which would be to take a track vehicle run them up and down the slopes to create indentations. Top soil would be spread, environmental mat or blanket would be put down to deter erosion. They would be hydro seeded and start the establishment process as the next slope begins up and we would work up to the top of the slope that way. Visibility obviously is going to be a demitted slope for awhile during the construction process as fast as possible as fast as we can get germination, and grass is growing this will come back to being a green slope it is not envisioned to plant trees on this slope. We are getting DOT approved slope seed mix which has mixture of different types of seeds some fast germinating and some slower which is normally used along highway developments for steep slopes.. At some point the clock is looking for a determined more sequence and the response is really depends on the site contractor we really don't know what he has if he is renting or buying or he if owns it or he does not have other jobs. So we really need the exact timing in sequence to the contractor who gets the contract to site work under the guidance of the Town's Construction Manager who oversee the work.

George: How much more area would that gain you by doing this?

DiCarlo: At the present time the softball field and in the out fielders there some sort of rectangular multipurpose field what this would do is create essentially two rectangular fields one big enough for soccer,

and the other one big enough for field hockey and replicate the Women's Varsity Softball diamond. So we would have 2 large rectangular areas and another athletic field. So we would have multipurpose sports availability.

George: Sounds like it would be worth the trouble.

DiCarlo: We feel so.

Martin: The tiring you are doing are you putting in a drainage system in each tier?

DiCarlo: Yes. At the bottom of each tier on inside of the bench is a stone wedge it is wedge shaped into the embankment with crushed stone and perforated pipe this absorbs any sub surface water that keeps the soil from sloughing off. Then those benches we call them level but technically pitch back towards the slope above them and actually ribbons in a certain amount. With drainage structures on the low points, so we've got perforated piping in the slope every fifteen feet with crushed stone and then we got basins along these benches to collect water and then they are piped down into the outfall which will fall into Steel Brook.

Minnich: Chuck do you have any further questions?

Berger: I'll just ask one more question? The multipurpose field in that area was eliminated what affect would that have on the construction of that slope?

DiCarlo: It becomes problematic because and an issue for the Board of Education and that is if you are not going to add another field out here then why do anything out here. And then you get into programs now we have less recreation that was promised and voted in the referendum. Obviously it saves money we would not be doing any work back there. The slope is being done to increase the athletic fields at the top.

Berger: Primarily the multipurpose field as part of that field development. There would be some grading required for the two larger fields. But the multipurpose one is really the one that is resulting in that substantial fill slope.

DiCarlo: At the present as I said there are two athletic fields out there now, that increasing it to three if we are going to eliminate one of them we would stay with two there is not much sense of doing anything out there then.

Dupliese: Do we have any idea what the cost is to pick up that multiuse field if just a multi use field which is causing us to do the whole embankment and then so if we have a multiuse field that's 10,000 square feet how much is it costing to do the embankment?

DiCarlo: I can't answer that I am not sure if someone here can.

Minnich: The size of the field we are talking about is 60' by 200' I understand. My understanding is the size of the field we are talking about which identified as field #4 is approximately 60 feet by 200 feet is that approximately....

DiCarlo: The field at the top is 180' by 360' the next one down is field hockey which is 200' by 300' and below that is softball diamond so it has 50 foot base cap but it got about 285 foot outfield.

Minnich: But part of that is in field #2 and #3.

DiCarlo: They both overlap. Yes.

Minnich: As I did the Math identifying the fields as you have identified them is fields 2, 3, and 4 just take the outline of 2, 3 and 4 not counting what they are going to be used for. My math says that that field #4 in terms of area is approximately 60' by 200'.

DiCarlo: We are pushing the embankment out 60 feet. We go back to the monetary thing there are cost estimators that working on the

project both the construction manager has a team and there is an independent cost estimator. I am not being coy here as designer, I don't want to know what things cost. I want to be able to design and not be influenced by what dollars are until they come back to me and say "no we can not do this." I can tell in approximate terms the slope is running about 1 million to about 1.2 million dollars.

Blais: Do we know if there is any ledge under it?

DiCarlo: Not in the slope itself we have had tests borings taken throughout the site. We did not go down on ledge because at the initial time when borings were being taken we were thinking of going up into that area. Now it turns out to be wetlands.

Blais: But are you going to do ledge testing?

DiCarlo: At this point we would not. At this point it is what we call unclassified excavation and the contractor will own whatever he hits and has to take care of it. We have a clause and a specification for removing materials he finds providing he can make it meet the specifications for fill or general fill and so he will reuse this material he has on site. The reason that I mention the fill would be clean fill for the slope because Dr. Welty has indicated further in the athletic field where we take some test borings the fill tends to be kind of silty and it would not be good slope materials. So this material would be stripped off and clean material be brought in.

Minnich: Chuck do you have anything else on the slope?

Berger: I think the other item that I would like to bring up just for discussion purposes is that area of wetlands that Mr. DiCarlo is speaking about there is a drainage pipe that will tie into that system that outlets above ground in the areas that you were just showing your plan there. That is an identified wetland and that area currently is experienced significant erosion problem there now. The banks are eight to ten feet deep, vertical slopes exposed and that needs to be repaired as well. That is I believe a condition to the Conservation

Commission and Wetland Agencies actions last night that will be repaired as part of the project here, but there is significant erosion problems here.

Martin: Is there anything being discussed as far as alternatives to what fixing the erosion is one thing, but something that is causing the erosion are they talking about rebuilding a cauldrons or putting in pipe what are they talking about doing?

Berger: There are several outstanding issues on the drainage report and certainly we will make sure there is no additional water is brought to that point to worsen the condition. In the interim or in the short term the school needs to go in there and stabilize the brook on this property. I would imagine although it may mean significant impacts we are probably looking at putting a rock rip rap in there stabilizing. It is a significant erosion problem.

DiCarlo: It is a problem probably that pipe and head wall there was nothing put in there for the outfall of the pipes so essentially when it rains the water comes out and washes everything away and we would like to correct that before we can continue an option discussed. Lets divert the waterway not just do that if you can do that do it's because it is going to establish wetland. So we can't stop water from coming into it, it would dry up.

Dupliese: But that is coming back under a separate permit correct?

DiCarlo: The condition of approval from the Wetlands because this came up at the last minute I mean we were not doing any work over there. We were thinking let's avoid it and Mr. Berger said no we got to fix this it is eroding and it is only going to get worse so it got added at the last minute. So the condition of approval look for our other request from Wetlands was contingent on us coming back to them with a plan on how to fix that.

Minnich: Do you have anything else?

Dupliese: The hillside is bothering me now that Chuck brought it up. Doing the math here is that your picking up a quarter of an acre of land of ball field for a million and half dollars, which comes 4 ½ million dollars an acre for adding ball field. You are only picking up 12,000 square feet for 1.2 million dollars that gets expensive.

Mancini: If I may to that, is that the area we are talking about earlier about the wetlands. The man made wetlands right. That was supposed to be a ball field down there only because the upper part parking lot is to the left of those ball fields right now. Those are being eliminated so they need the additional space per field. Otherwise they are going to end up having a school with less play space than we have now, as far as less field space and we are always fighting for more fields. So the money that we are saving by not putting in the ball field down here. You put it towards here and it offsets some of your cost that way.

Dupliese: I understand but wouldn't but couldn't we spend 1.1 million on something...

Audience: This Commission decides the project for the scope of the job pertaining to the use of fields.

Minnich: I hear you and certainly we cannot make our decision based on that, but if the Commissioner has some questions relating to this I don't see why he can't answer the questions. Certainly I will explain that I think he already knows that when he makes a final decision that we have no jurisdiction on what is suggested here over dollars. But we do have jurisdiction over other matters that I share your concerns about other matters. Please proceed.

Dupliese: As finding a better spot on the property I am assuming you have looked into it. After you guys have looked into this for a long time but it hits me as quite extensive then.

LoFrese: And understandable so going back to what Mr. DiCarlo said and what has already been presented this evening. We did look at

putting the fields down lower and that's what we had actually had proposed on the original bonding referendum and went out in the explanatory text was to add two ball fields down below the nose complex. Earlier in the design process actually in the summer and early fall we did learn the significant impact of the wetlands and in discussion with town officials and learning that the significance of this impact would require us to go to the Army Core of Engineers who then require us to consider reasonable alternatives we realized that we needed to look elsewhere on school property to accommodate the additional field space, and while yes we are adding an actual field space maybe a small amount. What it is enabling us to do is to have a ball field without an overlapped outfield. So if you look on the drawing by standing in the field in this direction we are gaining a field that can be used simultaneous while the softball field is being used and that's the reason for our design.

Minnich: Chuck do you have any further questions?

Berger: We have one other item we need to talk about that is the surface treatment of the athletic fields and details of that were not in the package of information.

DiCarlo: I might add the drawings that were submitted with the application originally have had twiks based on different commissions, based on input the public and from this Commission and have been gradually revised as we went along it is the point where this afternoon we have submitted an updated set of drawings into the land use office. I do have half sized copies here I don't want to bore everybody because there are a lot of drawings here. If you like I can leave them here for people to look at. I really don't want to pull them apart now. The surface of the athletic fields is natural grass it is going to be a foot of sand with under drains, six inches of top soil, and then the athletic seeding and in hopes the bids come in and which they did there were additional funds then the field #2 we would have a alternate it, it could be an additional synthetic turf field.

Minnich: Any other questions for now Chuck?

Martin: The fields who owns that property? Is that town property? Below the wood line? The two soccer fields down there I don't know what the distances between that. But that seems to be larger fields to build fields. What it would take to take those fields over?

DiCarlo: We have not looked at that. I can tell you that the state would look, they are very concerned about direct handicap access to everywhere and you would have some sort of shuttle service to get somebody with a mobility challenges down to those areas.

Masayda: Not that I see any details site plans of the proposed school but I notice in Chuck's minutes that they proposing the separators. My question is these are expensive units to install and expensive units to maintain and just wondering if they are warranted because a lot of time I see plans that come in and the units are too big for what is necessary. My question are they warranted for this site?

DiCarlo: I would not be able to answer that my engineering consultant worked on the details of drainage and he is not here this evening.

Minnich: I have some questions that no one else at the moment does?

Dupliese: Chuck have you looked into that one at all?

Berger: Yes and what they have done is in general, each school is a little bit different because your roof drainage on this school is combined with your parking lot drainage in a least one of the other school they do keep the clean roof water separate from the storm drainage. This does collect storm drainage from more than ten catch basins to go through there is parking lot drainage. That really the extend of my review at this point. They have side or techno units in each of those areas.

Minnich: I would like to ask a few questions if I may. Is it the intent of applicant that would like this Commission to give approval of this application tonight?

LoFrese: Yes it is we are under a timeframe which this Commission would need to approve of our applications for all three of the schools and then we are meeting tomorrow evening a Special Board of Education and a Special Public Building Committee to do the final sign off on the design drawings to submit to the State Department of Education which will ultimately enable them to do their review and allow us to go out to bid and commence construction this summer.

Minnich: You encourage us to...

LoFrese: Absolutely.

Minnich: Okay several specific questions whomever. This Commission has not provided any direction and I don't hear us providing any direction nor do I anticipate us providing any direction with regards to a topic that has been in prior applications relating to the school which has caused significant controversy that being the area of sidewalks. What you have proposed for the area of sidewalks there has not been any discussion. And I don't certainly do not have any suggestions for doing sidewalks differently at different locations to what you applied to. I asked the applicant for the sidewalks that you have in your application which is not been altered at all by this Commission why is it that the sidewalks that you proposed is not in conformance with this Planning and Zoning Commission standard for sidewalks specifically? All sidewalks in our standards are concrete sidewalks we require that throughout the town wherever there is sidewalks. The difference in this application as I see it from other applications is that concept has been I referenced expanded to have additional sidewalks different from what the applicant of Board of Applications wanted to do. But on the sidewalks to which you are proposing why is it on this particular application for the high

school that using bituminous concrete for which is asphalt for sidewalks vs. complying with regulations of this Commission that require concrete?

LoFrese: I think I can answer that question and then if Joe DiCarlo if I missed any points please fill in. I think it is strictly financial reasons similar to Swift Middle School. The approval that was granted to Swift Middle School heavily used areas, areas along the bus drop off areas were all concrete which is what is being proposed here, extra walkways due to the extent of walkways on school grounds were presented as asphalt and it is strictly financial reasons. This is a significant construction project, significant undertaking there is significant enhancements to the school and educational programs and at some point although 56 million dollars sounds like a lot of money it has to cover a lot of different areas. And it is strictly cost savings.

Minnich: I appreciate the straight forwardness of that response. But I do reference for the purpose of the rest of the Commission here making a decision. The regulations are clear it is concrete that's what the regulations call for our function here and I know a lot of people find this to be that there is a lot of talk we can do whatever we want on these projects. Our job is real simple does this application conform to our regulations and in this area I just mentioned its application in some areas where you have, not all the sidewalks are a problem are asphalt. But areas where you have asphalt they clearly do not conform to our regulations. But that is an issue, but I respect your response.

Continuing you told us before regarding the fields 2, 3 and 4 which are to the rear of the southwest portion of the school, there is no lighting that your proposing in this project is that still the case.

LoFrese: That is the case correct.

Minnich: I don't know where the Commission is on the rest of this? I expressed my comments about this earlier on and I would like to give you an opportunity if you wish to comment and I know you have in the past

but I take position of this project that you about a residential neighborhood I think you have done a very kind job of helping to screen that area and mediate those issues. My intent is to see what the rest of the Commission wants to do. But to limit to our authority under zoning access to the school district and the town to access for Tower Avenue excepting for emergency purposes and other purposes that we may define here tonight. But in lieu of that you have done a very fine job of having the egress and getting on the property from French Street that widened we talked before about traffic signal, the Police Commission supports it. Your comments last time Todd that it was for safety. My question having given all that background what would be if there is any comments about those two things occurring and that is which is different than what you have applied for there is to be a traffic signal at French Street and heard the Police Commission said and also that there be a limitation to egress by non emergency vehicles onto Tower Avenue or do you accept that as fine.

LoFrese: To clarify I believe you are asking is the intent of this project to add a traffic light at the end of French Street or would we accept that as condition of approval.

Minnich: The latter part of the question.

LoFrese: If it is a safety issue if that is what is needed and it's my understanding that yes the Police Commission has requested that and that the actual granting of a traffic light is a decision of the state DOT. So we will be applying to the state DOT through our traffic engineer. He is here and maybe he can answer a specific question if I am off with my comments there. And the 2nd question as far as limiting vehicular access to the Tower Road that it is my personal belief is that decision rests with the Board of Education.

Masayda: At the last meeting we had the traffic engineer indicated that the stop signs would meet the warrants of that intersection why are we proposing a traffic signal?

LoFrese: What I would say to that is the Police Commission had that information presented to them they voted on a traffic signal.

Masayda: They had the stop sign and traffic signal vote presented to them?

Dittman: We did submit a letter to the Board of Police Commission in that letter did outline the conditions for and the requirements for the installation of a traffic signal and it also did make a recommendation that a 3 way stop could also take the place of traffic control at that location in lieu of a traffic signal. But as you heard the Board of Police Commission did vote in favor of the installation of traffic signal not the installation of the 3 way stop.

Masayda: My concern would be one why go through the expense of a traffic signal which is very expensive vs. stop signs and plus that signal would affect those residential people that live along that intersection area which they would have a light on 24 hours a day.

Minnich: The Department of Public Works in the town, specifically the Public Works Director sent us a communication some time ago support and endorsing and recommending a traffic signal. The applicant was requested to provide this traffic study information relating to this. The Police Commission last evening with some discussion and conversation thought this was in best interest of public safety to have a traffic signal. The chief of Police in this town publically supports a traffic signal. So whether a traffic signal is finally put there is obviously in part a decision of us and part decision of the DOT, but the issue is all of the agencies in town who are responsible for having an influence or discussion about this. That being the Public Works Director is for the Highway Department as well as the Police support the traffic signal.

Masayda: I don't feel that the stop sign may not have been adequately presented?

Martin: Could I ask a question on that? Had they gotten to the level of deciding I support the traffic light but also support the fact that it

should go into a yellow blinking during non school hours. Did they talk about that at all?

Minnich: Well I don't know if they did about that. But we can certainly pass our comments along. That is not in our jurisdiction.

Dittman: At the last session I think I explained the operation of the traffic signal.

Minnich: For the record did you give that to us or to the Police Commission?

Dittman: I believe here and not to the Police Commission. The traffic signal would be operating during most of the hours of the day in the middle of the night certainly let's say 10:00 at night till 6 am in the morning the signal can go on flashes. Many signals in the state do it on flash. But during the other hours of the day the traffic signal should be on colors because people continuously coming out of the school driveway and the signal operating efficiently and properly will stay green for French Street 100% of the time until a car or vehicle comes out of the driveway when it is detected that traffic light will then turn to green over to the side street and it will allow that vehicle to get out from the driveway onto French Street. The signal will not be changing back and forth from French Street to the driveway without a vehicle actually coming out onto the driveway it would be on vehicle demand and that is an efficient way of doing that.

Minnich: A few more questions I have, Chuck of the artificial turf at the rear of the school itself in your review you had an opportunity to consider the drainage and other issues relating to that. Do you have the adequate information to provide us with some guidance on that?

Berger: I may now have the adequate information in this afternoons plan that were developed but I had not had the opportunity to review it.

Minnich: The same question for the artificial turf that is where the football field is now do you have the calculations and all of that for the high school?

Berger: I don't believe in the plans that there are any calculations but there may with the new plans I have not reviewed them.

Minnich: In the area of proposed island in the bus turn around the landscape detail are they sufficient to satisfy our regulations?

Berger: I keep giving you the answer but they may be in the plans just submitted. They were not in the previous plans.

Minnich: Have you submitted for review and recommendation to us a traffic sighting plan for the school? The storm water and sanitary sewer pipes under some extensive renovations here at the school what is in the plans regards to the current sanitary and storm sewer drains which will be abandoned what is being proposed in this project for those?

Berger: The original set of plans proposed to abandon pipes in place for the storm water as well as the sanitary my initial review comments indicated that it is our recommendation that storm water pipes that are abandoned should be removed I did not comment initially yet on the sanitary sewer pipes with regards to the plan showed the fast majority of storm water pipes to be removed instead of to be abandoned in place, however there are still a few that our proposed to be abandoned that our still in the ground and the sanitary sewer pipes are proposed to be abandoned in the ground.

Minnich: Two last questions I have this go around, is there any designing modifications to the entrance sign as part of this project?

Berger: The Watertown High School sign?

Minnich: Yes, The Watertown High School sign.

Berger: I have not seen any details on that.

Minnich: And lastly the drainage the underline drains for the natural turf in fields 2 & 3 the southwest portion of the school you had an opportunity to review those calculations and provide a judgment to us and a recommendation to us on those.

Berger: My recommendation was to have the Geotechnical Engineer review there is a storm water infiltration system proposed in that area that should be reviewed to insure that there is not in fact under drainage system?

Blais: You indicated it is a costly effective thing to put in asphalt as opposed to concrete for curbing?

DiCarlo: It is less expensive certainly.

Blais: How about when they plow they are not durable.

DiCarlo: I am not sure if I can answer that. They are and they aren't.

Blais: You would have to probably replace the asphalt. Don't you agree? It's not in the initial cost. I just don't think it is going to last long.

DiCarlo: We are talking about sidewalks. I don't know if they plow them, I know they snow blow them.

Blais: You probably plow up against them. Don't they?

DiCarlo: Certainly.

Blais: My asphalt curbing in front of my house gets torn up all the time.

Martin: In the school system I belong to we are constantly replacing asphalt curbing. Constantly replacing it, but it is used everywhere.

Dupliese: I don't think they are talking about curbing here. They are talking about natural sidewalks. There is a difference between having a curb that is sitting there by itself where the plow hits it and there is nothing beyond it, but when you are talking about a sidewalk that is built up, it's not just a curb it is a asphalt curbed to a sidewalk. So there is something behind it so it can't get knocked off. But when it is a curb standing alone with maybe just a little bit of dirt behind or a little bit of grass it does get run over.

Blais: I just don't think it is a durable surface for a school for plowing purposes.

DiCarlo: There is no doubt that it is less durable than concrete. Installation is significantly less expensive.

Minnich: I think we will all come to our own judgment on this but as I mentioned before the regulations are what they are there for purpose we have already decided in previous boards that concrete sidewalks is what you have those are our regulations and from my stand point you are no different than any other applicant in this town. I do belief where you have indicated you want sidewalks I am not suggesting any other sidewalks but that you will be required and we are required to conform to our regulations as well. Is that you put the sidewalks to the specifications that were in effect that have been in effect for a number of years, but that is my opinion. Let me ask if I may for the members of the public do you have any comments on the high school?

**Heather Erickson 39 Pleasantview Avenue (speaking for father Russell Erickson)**

I will just read the letter he wrote:

Members of the Zoning Board I regret that I am unable to be here tonight but I have some comments as to the Watertown High School construction project that I feel should be taken into consideration before you approve the plan for reconstruction. The back gate area is a nuisance and hazard to the public and to the

students. The Board of Appeals recommends this and though a variance was granted it was on the condition that they be required to construct a chain link privacy fence to be six feet high on the property that borders Tower Road and also on Pleasantview Avenue to restrict access from the back of the school and to provide relief from constant problems we face daily. I can say that it was good to hear a voice of reason and I sincerely thank them for their wise decision. You should be aware that this will also have a gate at the area of the driveway of Pleasantview Avenue and Tower Road. As I am sure you are aware of the question was asked by several board members in the regular zoning meeting at the new lot configuration would eliminate the need to open the gate for what they perceive as traffic problem at the end of the school day for students to exit on to Tower Road. I believe that their traffic expert stated that he was not sure. I did hear Mr. LoFrese state but it was a decision to leave the gate open at the end of the school day. I also heard a board member state but that it would indeed be a board decision as well. Hearing this I went to the next BOE meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February and asked them if they intended to keep the gate open after the completion of construction. And they did not have an answer for me. To me their silence says it all. I also ask that this will not solve the perceived traffic issue than why are you spending tax payer dollars to do this project to which they were silent. I believe that they have no intention to keep the gate closed at the end of the day. And this is only a matter of time before it will open in the morning as well. This would defeat the purpose of the funds and the cars parking on Pleasantview Avenue and Tower Road. Because the people coming from the Oakville side of Town will have to use the shortest and that drive to the front of the school if they don't have to. The typical response to me is when I bring up these issues is that it is a police problem. But we all know shift change coincides with end of the school day in response time is normally around 2:30 when the issue is gone. The Board of Appeals saw the issues we have in terms of the traffic and the constant parking violations and made the wise decision to protect the property owners from these issues. You have seen the photos of what occurs daily. I don't believe that the back gate area meets

any type of sight line requirements. If you are driving up Tower Road you can't see the vehicle exiting the driveway until you are almost at the gate at south and the speed limit is rarely obeyed. This plus the students being picked up is a recipe for disaster and is a lawsuit waiting to happen not to mention the human toll if someone were to be entered or worse. When they first reopen the gate I personally was involved in an accident and the morning while taking a walk I have come close to being struck by people dropping off students in the morning as well. You should be aware that a previous BOE made the wise decision to erecter gate and keep it closed at all times. But the current BOE made an opinion an irresponsible and reckless decision to open it. You should also know that the student council wanted the gate to be opened. I went to all the meetings and many property owners voice their concerns but they did not hear us. I did not hear one taxpaying citizen in favor of reopening the gate only students. They said it was only a trial basis after it was opened and the increased traffic was brought up at the BOE meeting again they did not listen to us and it remains opened. What I am asking of the Board is to add the condition that the gate be used only in true emergency only and not to empty the parking lot onto a street that was never intended to handle that much traffic. As this will assure that what the Board of Appeals original intention will achieved which I believe was to protect the integrity of the neighborhood and safety to the public and to finally put an end to this multi decade old problem.

Sincerely Russell Erickson

Minnich: Is there anyone else from the public?

**Kevin Killeen 430 Northfield Road Member of the Board of Education**

I am a little miffed at the discussion on the Tower Road situation for a couple of reasons. One its use was restricted to fifteen no more than twenty minutes for dismissal. The traffic that has been discussed is traffic that had occurred long before we used the exit for egress. In fact that is all always been a public through fare. As

you stated Mr. Chairman we should be regarded as any other person who comes before the Commission. We have the right to use that public through fare and in a matter of which we have done so and done so safely. I have for one stood against that so the idea of not being heard is not acceptable. To me because I have already answered it but I also stand as a member of the Board of Education to say that it is the prerogative of the Board to use that public through fare in way that is consistent and safe for the buildings use. And the issue of sidewalks I have to question. The concrete requirement in your regulations the concrete requirement is that for sidewalks that are adjoining the public access or street sidewalks?

Minnich: Both.

Killeen: So any sidewalks that occur on our property fall under the prevue of your jurisdiction for Planning and Zoning?

Minnich: That is correct.

Killeen: Okay is it my understanding that your question earlier about Tower Road was to limit the Board of Education use of the public through fare?

Minnich: I don't necessarily know that, let me put it this way I have done enough research on the jurisdiction of Zoning Commissions to limit use and access to residential streets. And throughout the cases that have come before the courts that is the right of the Zoning Board to make those restrictions. When the access is from a non residential property or non use of a residential property, the high school is one of them or it could be commercial or retail or the same thing. The option of the local Zoning Board to make regulations regarding that. And the whole purpose of it quite simple those people that border the properties which are not residential have a right like everyone else to the use of the land that they are on which is residential property. They do not need and should not then have vehicles coming from entity's which are not residential. I reviewed

that and it is a matter for us to decide what we want to do. I fully recognize that the authority to do that is indeed ours. But it is also in part and no doubt part of what the Board of Education should be involved in as well. I think as was stated earlier several months ago when this issue came before the Board and so forth. Was that this project was going to solve the problem and was going to mitigate the need that was a stated goal of this project and part of the reasoning and part of what was told and said. And that was your reasoning and no doubt I can't imagine that the members of the Board of Education really want to be involved in this neighborhood issue of Tower Avenue. So the real issue in the end is the solution that has been presented which is widening of the road or driveway at French Street. Tow lane of egress from French Street a traffic signal which obviously assists in getting folks off the property quicker. With those improvements is indeed the rear entrance access road to Tower Avenue necessary. And that's a judgment we will have to make.

Killeen: I would like to comment on that when the board heard the issue the board did entertain and consider what was presented in terms of French Street and Tower Road which is why the use was limited to, there was good discretion there. The reason as why we did present as you stated the widening of the access in egress at French Street was for the purpose of clearing the traffic on the property expediently more so than had been done in the past. My only issue is that there should be less government, less rules not more and I think the board used good discretion in limiting the use and we did state that in the future we would consider diminishing that use again if that came to a point where it needed to be considered. Thank you very much.

Minnich: Just to give you further definition to what I have said regarding the courts have ruled the jurisdiction that can be under local zoning boards that they give themselves the authority to do that under section 32.9 .3 it says the impact of proposed use on traffic safety and circulation on neighborhood streets the ability of such streets to adequately accommodate the traffic to be generated by the

proposed purpose is one of the standards for approval. So if we have given ourselves the authority to make that determination and we will all do that. And if this is the jurisdictional issue I really don't like think confrontational because I really do think the Board of Education and the goal here is the very same way. I am sure you all respect the neighborhood that is there and if there is a better way to give me the end goal of getting cars off the property quicker and faster and more efficiently than what is presently done which is not the best way to do it now. In the end and that the judgment that we have given ourselves the authority to and the courts have ruled that is appropriate.

Killeen: One additional bit of information in regards to Tower Road the Zoning Board of Appeals made a conditional improvement of our application for a waiver. And what that was to install fence six foot high all along Pleasantview Avenue and down to corner of our property on Tower Road including six foot high access gates. Unfortunately that action has created a situation moving forward with this project that for a student who lives on Tower Road who would be in a walker area for the High School unless we opened the gate. The student would have to walk down to Riverside Street and around to Tower Road to get to the high school. So the large portion of the traffic issue on Tower Road is due to parents picking up their children to drive them home yet there is also students who leave the high school and walks towards Tower Road and walk down Riverside Street into other areas in that area of town. So by eliminating access to the school property not only would traffic be disrupted but student walking to the high school would be prohibited and would cause a ripple effect. And I just think that the Commission needs to be aware of that. Thank you.

Minnich: Is there any other member of the public who wishes to make a comment on the high school?

**Donna Masi - 33 Pleasantview Street Watertown**

It is a very simple solution you put a gate within a gate you put a small door way in the gate so it lets the students the walkers walk through and it alleviates the car traffic easy.

Martin: The problem is it does not alleviate the car traffic, the cars are pointed on Tower Road and dropping their kids off and then pulling back down that the issue we are talking about here right?

Minnich: I think what Donna is saying was addressing the issue what Todd was mentioning which is the pedestrian traffic and by the fact that the ZBA as their approval process they require a six foot fence basically to put around where parking areas are particularly the new parking area where the fields are and that then is going to limit...

Martin: Listen you can put a forty fence in and you are having an access way through for the kids you're going to let the traffic and no one is going to fix this.

Minnich: Is there anyone else on public comment?

Mancini: If I may I spent the better part of a week up at Tower Road there also was a Police Commissioner has spent another 3 or 4 days in addition to my time up there. And that's a disaster up there and I kind of threatened this towards the Board of Education. I do not think you guys spent enough time up there some of you did and a lot of you did not. I spent time up there and there is days when your Principal Gary was supposed to open up the gate and he did not even show up. You know what the kids did you know how they got out the gate they lifted the chain and they let the cars go under the chain at least when the Principal was there he was kind of directing traffic he was out in the middle of the road. This poor guy if I was the Principal of the school I would not be out there directing traffic he is out there directing traffic in the rain and everything else holding cars back, and making cars go, come on, okay you kids go, that is ridiculous. And what I am trying to say I finally got out my car and I was parked in neighbors drive right at the top of Tower Road there

they gave me permission to park my car there for a week. And there was a kid parked right on 45 between Pleasant and Tower I can't hold back I have to say something please move your car and he said "who are you" and I said please move your car people can't go around you there is cars coming up and cars trying to go around you somebody is going to get hurt here or I will call the police. They don't care. It's not the kids that go to the school there. It's the people that are picking these kids up mothers, fathers, boyfriends, girlfriends okay that's who the problem is not the kids in the school. I am just trying to saying what Donna Masi is saying a gate within a gate having that allows the students walk through that gate in the morning but that gate in my mind is a major condition not to allow traffic out because we are having two lanes out with traffic lights is more is more than doubling the speed of exiting the cars from the school. You don't need that gate any more. Because we give you here card blanche and you are going to do whatever you want again and we are going to have again and we are going to have the whole problem here with the neighbors all over again.

Martin: The problem there exists though. The true problem that exists here fine we shut the gate and nobody drives out the back they come out the front. That is not a big deal. There is going to be a problem on Tower Road until and I hate to put it on them. Police have got to control...

Dupliese: I know it is a shift change problem. And there are private security companies they do this at a lot of schools, they hire private security they come up for the hour and a half. Any they pay them 2 hours minimum and there is a private security guard that is out there at the gate he controls the traffic if there are people that are parked illegally he moves them off. Maybe we can get private security to come out.

Minnich: Let's move on. Are there any other members of the public who would like to make a comment? Hearing none. Is there any members of the Commission who would like to make any further

comments? In accordance with the rules, does the applicant have any further comments on the high school?

DiCarlo: Only simply I would like to leave these half sized drawings with the staff for distribution to the Commission.

Minnich: There being no further comments from the applicant on this project? Is there a motion from the member of the Commission to adjourn this public hearing?

Masayda: It would have been nice though to have those part of our discussion. The plans should have been provided as part of the discussion. Motion to adjourn this public hearing.

Mancini: Second

Minnich: Is there any further discussion? All those in favor of adjourning the public hearing please say I all opposed please say no. That essentially ends all the comments that anyone other than members of the Commission and staff to make on the High School. I say that only because there are two more projects for the school.

Text of motion is to close public hearing. Motion made by M. Masayda and seconded by C. Mancini. All in favor and none opposed.

Micheal Masayda \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary