

**WATERTOWN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
CONTINUATION OF  
Public Hearing**

**FEBRUARY 6, 2008**

**Watertown High School Technology Center  
324 French Street, Watertown, CT 06795  
7:00 P.M.**

A public hearing was held by the Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission on Wednesday, February 6, 2008 in the Watertown High School Auditorium, 324 French Street, Watertown, CT at 7:00 P.M.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chairman David E. Minnich called the public hearing to order at 7:50 P.M.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Minnich asks Mrs. Allen to read the roll

**Present:** D. Minnich, M. Masayda, C. Mancini,  
D. George, G. Martin, K. Demirs, R. Rondeau

**Absent:** J. Blaise, G. Dupliese, R. Russ

Ray sits in for Mike and Ken sits in for Ron

**Others Present:** Ms. Ruth Mulcahy, Administrator of Land Use  
And Mr. Charles Berger, Town Engineer

**3. HEARING OF APPLICATIONS**

**b. Continuation of public hearing Special Permit #234 Judson School,  
Watertown, CT Site Plan Modifications for an educational use with  
additions and renovations located at the Judson School, 124 Hamilton  
Lane, Watertown, CT**

### **Joseph DeCarlo, Kaestle Boos Associates**

Application has been made to the zoning board of appeals and conservation commission for certain permits and waivers. The landscaping plan has been updated to include some buffers between residences and the school property and there was some discussion about making Hamilton Lane into a one way and that is where it stands. Meetings are scheduled for the 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> with these commissions for their input.

He adds that the Judson wetlands was approved as an amendment to the previous wetland. That came as a part of the Board of Education assisting the town with the municipal drainage system causing the need to go back and change the drainage system.

### **Todd LoFrese, Assistant Superintendent**

Mr. LoFrese adds that the issue of Hamilton Lane going to a one way was discussed for over an hour at tonight's Police Commission meeting. There is discussion and possible action at their regular meeting on February 13, 2008. Mr. Ditman performed a traffic study to look specifically at this issue and he has some additional information. The biggest piece of information to be considered is that the design of the parking lot and bus loop whether the street is a one way street or a two way street, functions nearly the same and there would not be a significant change to the design if the street is changed to a one-way.

Additionally, both Chief Black and Chief Gavallos had written memos read into the record and both memos made reference to the timing of emergency vehicles and response time and their perception is that it would be negatively affected if the street was one-way, but the commission would be acceptable to them.

### **Mr. Ditman**

Mr. Ditman states he made a presentation before the police commission this evening regarding the study to make a determination if Hamilton lane could be made one way, whether it be south or northbound. In order to make any street one way, you have limit the traffic going in one direction or the other. If you chose a direction, the traffic has to be re-routed and in order to re-route traffic, you have to have a street to reroute the traffic, a block. In this case, the closest configuration to a block would be a triangle. It is Hamilton Lane, Hamilton Avenue which comes down to the intersection of Woodbury Road and Hamilton Avenue so this forms a triangle. We have three points to the triangle, three intersections. The intersection of Hamilton Lane and Woodbury Road, Hamilton Lane and Hamilton Avenue and then Hamilton Avenue meeting Woodbury Road. We did take traffic counts at those three locations. We looked at the existing

traffic. One scenario is Hamilton Lane being one way toward Hamilton Avenue, rerouted the traffic and then we also looked at the reverse, Hamilton Lane being one way up toward Woodbury Road and rerouted the traffic and looked at how the traffic flow and patterns change on the streets and at those intersections.

We only studied the school time hours. The start of school 8-9:00 a.m. and dismissal time, which was 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. That is when the traffic is greatest on Hamilton Lane itself. We've analyzed the intersection, conducted capacity analyses and made a determination that the incremental change, the change in levels of service and vehicle delay at each of those intersections, regardless of the scenario northbound or southbound, didn't really change. There was less than a one second delay for the vehicles with the change in the patterns. From that perspective relative to the traffic flow, it doesn't really matter if it remains two way or changes to be one way, southbound or northbound.

The other considerations with the directional flow of the traffic on Hamilton Lane. That is not traffic volume but it is safety. Safety is the key issue and knowing the lane is narrow, there is a school there and where you are trying to make it better for the residents and for the travelers and from public testimony that was given two weeks ago and at the Police Commission today, the public did speak. There was a lot of concern and anguish of people who live on that street with some in favor of making in one way and some residents did not want to change it.

The letters from both the police and fire chiefs said they would abide by the commission vote to make it one way or left the same but they would recommend leaving it as a two way street. The disadvantages of making it a one way is that the readings would be changed, the length of travel would be much longer because they would have to go around the triangle. There are also sightline issues going out Hamilton Lane to Woodbury Road; looking to the left is very difficult. The sightline is quite short. Woodbury Road is not sufficiently wide to accommodate stopped vehicles and vehicle bypass. He asked if the road could be made wider for vehicle bypass, but they didn't think so because it is in an historic district.

Mr. Rondeau asks about making a driveway off of Hamilton Avenue specifically for the school versus using Hamilton Lane.

Mr. Ditman claims it goes deeper than that because you might have to change the entrance to the school and the location of the doorway closer to where the bus loop would be. If the bus loop came into the property off of Hamilton and came along the frontage of the school, doors need to be a certain way.

They would have to come in and somehow loop around because it has to be counter clockwise to let the kids off on the correct side. There may be land, room, fields that can be moved, but logistically it is a major issue.

Mr. Martin asked if it is a safety issue and his opinion is that he would like to see the police chief be there to look at the traffic during the high volume time and make a decision. He doesn't think leaving it two ways for convenience is the right way to look at it.

Mr. Russ adds that he thinks the safety issue is being taken care of and the cars were dropping off kids backing into resident's driveways making a general nuisance of themselves by parking on the street, parking in the driveways and doing U-turns. By the cars coming into the lot, dropping off and coming back out, you would hopefully eliminate the problem.

Mr. Ditman thinks the issue is parents not adhering to the rules of the road, the no parking on the street. One of his recommendations to the police commission is to install no parking signs, get the police out to enforce it.

Mr. Mancini asks about the tree on lower Hamilton Lane and if anyone has talked about getting rid of it. Mr. DeCarlo states the tree is on the town's right of way property so the Board of Education can't cut it down.

Mr. Berger states that he will make sure that Mr. Cavanaugh is aware of it. Mr. DeCarlo commented that during a public hearing he stated that he would be careful about the trees and the public responded telling him to take them all down.

Mr. Minnich asks if there are any comments from the public.

### **David D'Addona, Farm Circle**

Mr. D'Addona states that he drives his son to school and one of the problems he finds is that when he goes into the parking lot he gets stuck with the busses and then if everyone on the street would go into the parking lot, they would get stuck. He feels the problem on the street will be relieved if the plan has a place for parent drop off.

Also, he mentions that in Waterbury, they do a one-way on a time zone for the schools. During drop off and pick up hours, the street is one way and then it changes back. He wonders if it was considered.

Mr. Ditman adds that this plan is self sufficient, regardless if the street is one or two way. If it is made a one way, changes can be made. He feels this is a good plan and with periodic enforcement getting the parents used to a new travel pattern getting them off the street onto the school grounds, it would work well. He states that a sign stating "right turn only" and direct them to Hamilton Avenue and not toward Woodbury Road might make it a little less congested because no one would be sitting in the lot trying to take a left.

Mr. Minnich states that he wants to thank the applicant for their cooperation in providing the professional resources to assist the Commissions involved.

**MOTION:** Continue public hearing  
**Motion made by:** C. Mancini  
**Seconded by:** R. Russ

Motion passes unanimously

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Michael Masayda, Secretary  
Planning and Zoning Commission