

# **WATERTOWN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

## **CONTINUATION OF Public Hearing Special Permit #235 Polk School 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.

### **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**

- d. Continuation of public hearing Special Permit #235 Polk School, Watertown, CT Site Plan Modifications for an educational use with additions and renovations located at the Polk School, 435 Buckingham Street, Oakville, CT**

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

Mr. DeCarlo tells the board that it is pretty much the same with this project. At this point variances were applied for from the Zoning Board of Appeals and an application has been made to the Conservation Commission for work in an area. The meetings are scheduled in the next two weeks. The landscaping plan has been revised. The question of road widening was asked and the road can be widened by about 2 feet.

Mr. Mancini asks about water and the possibility of it being piped and brought out to Buckingham Street to drain off so it doesn't go into the neighbor's property. This is a major issue for the residents of the area.

Mr. DeCarlo responded that he didn't know about this issue and it was not looked into. He will have to get back to him. Mr. Martin Mr. Mancini adds that they are not comfortable dumping more water into that area.

Mr. Masayda adds that putting the water into Buckingham Street will not be a viable option. There is a state system there that is inadequate and it will not be an option. He doesn't think it would be worth an engineer's time or money to look into.

Mr. Minnich defers to Mr. Masayda's comment and adds that he doesn't want to waste resources.

Mr. Mancini objects to the motion because the school will be draining onto someone's property.

Mr. Berger wants to add that he concurs with Mr. Masayda's conclusion and adds that at the conclusion of the public hearing a couple weeks ago, the applicants civil consultant was in the room and he had a discussion with WMC Consultant's representative and he concurred at well. Mr. Berger recommended he put forth a discussion and wouldn't anticipate spending much funds, but anticipates a narrative response from WMC.

Mr. Martin asks if an impervious surface is being added and Mr. DeCarlo responds that they are. Mr. Martin then adds that this would make a bad situation worse. Mr. DeCarlo replies that the law require that there be zero increase in runoff so the water will be detained on site and it is being disposed of on-site. Mr. Martin asks if there is a way to make the detention larger to lessen the water. Mr. DeCarlo responds that they have several large infiltration chambers designed into the site as well as sediment traps so that the water runoff will not be any greater than it is.

Mr. Berger adds that based on his preliminary review that what is happening is that the expanded impervious area is being directed to

infiltrators so there is a net of no increase in runoff. It is not going to reduce the amount of runoff. There will be the same amount of runoff after development as there is today and adds that the gentlemen that was concerned about the water in his basement, he and Ruth Mulcahy went and met with him toured the basement and asked the Torrington Area Health District go out and sample the water, which they did and it came back extremely clean. There is no interconnection with any sanitary and there is groundwater in the sump pump pit, but no water on the floor at the time he visited.

Mr. Berger continues that it is an existing condition and anything that the school is going to do will not worsen the situation.

**MOTION** By unanimous consent the applicant is not required to perform any further studies except as directed by the Town Engineer, Chuck Berger.

**Aye:** D. Minnich, M. Masayda, G. Martin, G. Dupliese,  
J. Blaise

**Nay:** C. Mancini, R. Russ

On a vote of 5 in favor and 2 against, the motion is passed

Mr. Martin states that all of the schools have a one way drop off and this one has a two way. He doesn't think two way traffic is a good idea with kids. He doesn't know how to fix it and he doesn't know what the answer is, but maybe a one way going out coming from south to north and the curb on left where the cars are queuing and the right no passing. He thinks this is an issue.

Mr. LoFrese responds that this is something that was looked at and he believes that Public Works looked as well and if the commission so chooses and if everyone is in agreement from one point to another should be one-way. He is not extremely concerned about children exiting on the left of the vehicle. Handicapped provisions would have to be made because drop off is on the right for them. School administration took a look and making this area a one way would help with the stacking and queuing.

Mr. Rondeau asks if it would be possible to switch queuing for the busses and for the drop off. Mr. DeCarlo states that it was looked at. Mr. Martin adds that busses let out on the right and you'd be crossing the busses to get the children across and you don't have the space. Mr. DeCarlo adds that the other issue is that it is the front of the school where the kids go in and you want the busses as close to the front and that is they way it is now and

it works. One of the issues in the exit, which he does not know if it is dangerous, coming out taking a left and the bus wants to go right at the same time, who has the right of way?

Mr. Russ asked what considerations were made on French Street. Mr. DeCarlo responds that he wasn't aware it was a bus stop, but it is on the public street property and not the school's land and they understand there is a problem with the parents queuing and double parking there and so the intent was to offer them the opportunity to get off the street and onto the property for drop off. What happens in the street is a Department of Public Works issue. Mr. Russ adds that if it was made strictly for busses, it would eliminate the cars double parking. Mr. DeCarlo feels it would be too far away from the front door and he defers to the Department of Education on this issue. He continues that they have looked at many, many options that didn't work.

Mr. Rondeau offers that if the entrance and exit is on the southern part, have cars enter and go up and make the top part one big circle making it go the other way and eliminate the entrance and exit at the top. The whole parking area could be a queue. People can be dropped off at the right side of the vehicle and the exit would be out on the southern end of the street and the cars will not be going in and out where the busses are, eliminating that problem.

Mr. DeCarlo replies that this jams traffic up on French Street and that is why the busses were taken off of French Street. Mr. Russ adds that he looked at this issue at St. John's School and their issue was that busses would be dropping off coming toward the school and get the busses off the road and the lights flashing, no cars could go in where the busses are. Mr. DeCarlo responds that this was a new one for him because he understands that if the busses are off to the side of the road with lights flashing, you can't pass unless you are separated by an island at least six feet wide. He hasn't looked into it recently.

Of all the things that were looked at, that one of them but the problem is that the radius you need and delivery vehicles need to make the same swing. The changing grade is 12 feet so a turning circle can't fit. It can't work because of the steep grade.

Mr. Martin asks if he understands that they are looking at the very end piece being a one-way out and it is being considered. Mr. Rondeau adds that people are dropping kids off at other schools and they are not supposed to and finds it hard to believe that they will follow the traffic signs. Mr. Martin states that one way means one way.

Mr. LoFrese states that if this comes out of the Planning and Zoning commission as a recommendation and concurs with the architect and town officials and engineers as appropriate, the Board of Education will be fine with it.

**Motion:** To Continue public hearing  
**Motion made by:** C. Mancini  
**Seconded by:** G. Dupliese

Motion passes unanimously.

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Michael Masayda, Secretary  
Planning and Zoning Commission