

MINUTES
WORCESTER PLANNING BOARD
January 25, 2006

Planning Board Members Present: John Shea
Anne O'Connor
Scott Cashman
Margaret Guzman

Staff Present: Michael Traynor, Law Department
Joel Fontane, Planning Division
Judith Stolberg, Planning Division
Jody Valade, Code Enforcement
K. Russell Adams, DPW

Regular Meeting (5:30 PM) – Room 310, City Hall

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman John Shea called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.
2. **Zoning Map Amendment – 166 & 172 Stafford Street (RL-7 to BL-1.0):** Notice of the hearing was read by the Clerk. Attorney Samuel DeSimone explained to the Board that the optionee of the property was no longer purchasing the two parcels in question. However, the owner wishes to proceed with the zone change but not at this meeting. Upon a motion by Anne O'Connor and seconded by Scott Cashman, the Board voted 4-0 to continue the hearing to April 5, 2006 at the request of the petitioner.
3. **Zoning Map Amendment – Millbrook Street/I-190 (Adaptive Re-use Overlay District):** Notice of the hearing was read by the Clerk. Attorney Samuel DeSimone explained to the Board that the owners would like to develop the Thom McAnn Building into a mixed-use development with a residential component. Nicholas Boynton, one of the owners of the property, explained the uses presently located in the three connected structures and said that 50% of them were short terms leases set to expire within two years. Attorney DeSimone stated that the site is isolated by I-190 and the topography is such that other properties wouldn't be adversely impacted by an Adaptive Re-use Overlay District for this property. Joel Fontane said the AROD would preclude further business development in the area. He further stated that small businesses, such as are located at this site, are vital to the City. He recommended denial because the building is not functionally obsolete and it is in the long-term strategic interest of the City to maintain this area for business and manufacturing uses. Attorney DeSimone responded that while he supports the long-term policy, from a practical point, his clients need an additional use to overcome the underutilization of the site. He stated there are too many owners seeking out the same tenant pool leading to the underutilization of this and other sites in the City. John Shea questioned whether manufacturing would ever return to New England. Mr. Fontane responded that while manufacturing continues to decline due to automation and globalization, the City must take a long-term view of zoning. He was

concerned that since residential re-use is more profitable for property owners, the site could end up as all residential in the future. Upon a motion by Margaret Guzman and seconded by Scott Cashman, the Board voted 4-0 to close the hearing. Upon a motion by Margaret Guzman and seconded by Anne O'Connor, the Board voted 4-0 to recommend approval because the residential use allowed by the AROD would bring people to the site, thus encouraging small business uses at the site without jeopardizing the City's desire to encourage manufacturing uses.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.