

GROTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
JANUARY 28, 2003
MINUTES

7:00 PM The meeting was called to order by Chairman Corwin. Present were Kris Corwin, Craig Auman, Alix Chace, Bruce Clements, Peter Morrison, Kathleen O'Connor, and Evan Owen. Barbara Ganem, Conservation Assistant, was also present.

Public Hearing – Groton Dunstable Regional School District – Main St. High School – DEP File #169-852

P. Morrison read the public notice to consider the Notice of Intent filed by Ross Associates on behalf of the GDRSD Building Committee. Present in interest were Steven Prendergast of the GDRSD Building Committee and Mason Palmer and Richard Haywood of Ross Associates.

Mr. Haywood explained that the project is to include a re-design and improvement of the parking and drainage onsite. The access will be widened to allow a right-hand turn lane. Two detention basins are proposed to handle drainage from the addition of 11 new parking spaces and widening of the entryway from Main St. The existing sidewalk to the right of the entrance will be maintained as is, and widening will be done on the left (non-wetland) side of the entrance. In response to P. Morrison's question about storm drains, Mr. Haywood indicated that existing catch basins will be cleaned out and retrofitted with gas and oil traps, providing more than 80% sediment removal at the site.

K. Corwin pointed out that the proposed work is to take place in a previously disturbed lawn area. Vegetation to be cut in the area of the detention basin includes sumac, brambles (multiflora rose), and bittersweet. Responding to C. Auman's question about the distance between disturbances and the wetland, Mr. Haywood stated that it would be 22'-23'. He estimated that the area of disturbance in the buffer zone is 15,500 SF. Erosion control will be installed between the work and the resource area.

Resident Bonnie Asselin asked what the dotted line shows on the plan, and Mr. Haywood explained that this is the 100-foot wetlands buffer. Abutter Karen Johnson expressed concern about light pollution, and S. Prendergast suggested that she discuss this issue with the School Committee. Mr. Palmer explained that any new lighting would be focused down, and the landscaping plan provides for the addition of more trees than are presently onsite. Upon a motion by E. Owen, seconded by C. Auman, it was

VOTED: to close the hearing for the Groton Dunstable Regional High School/Main St.
Notice of Intent.

S. Prendergast explained that although the water and sewer lines have gone in through the wetlands crossing at the new High School, there remains some work to be done on the emergency access. The conditions of the Order of Conditions require that no work take place on the emergency access road near wetlands from March 15 through June 30 however.

Commissioners reviewed a second draft of the 2002 Annual Report and recommended the inclusion of a statement on the Self-Help grant for the Hurd property and the Gibbet Farms Conservation Restrictions before this submittal goes to the Selectmen's office.

B. Ganem noted that the Conservation Restriction for The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts (TABCOM) has been distributed to members, but comments from Joel Lerner have not yet come in. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by E. Owen, it was

VOTED: to sign the Conservation Restriction previously agreed to and signed
by representatives of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

Although full support from the Board of Selectmen appears somewhat elusive, Commissioners stressed the need to include the \$200,000 request for the Conservation Fund in the budget for FY 04. B. Ganem reported on a meeting with Winn Nordblom of the Finance Committee in which he stated that the Finance Committee is unlikely to support this article. Commissioners noted that the approval of the ACEC designation may make state funds more available to Groton, and the Commission needs to be ready to act when land becomes available. It was agreed that the only change to the draft budgets for the Conservation Commission and Water Safety should be the inclusion of a proposed dock for the Sargisson Beach within the next three years.

In response to an inquiry about a skating rink at the Walnut Run conservation parcel, B. Ganem reported that John Smigelski did not think it feasible without grading of the fields he currently farmed. P. Morrison suggested that, in the interest of maintaining good public relations with abutters, the Commission visit the site with the proponent during the next site walk.

C. Auman, B. Clements, and B. Ganem met on January 16th to discuss the distribution of tasks for outstanding items in the updating of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. C. Auman has prepared statements on the landfill and Devens. B. Clements is working on a narrative about the ACEC designation, and B. Ganem has several in-house action items to address.

7:30 p.m.- Public Hearing (cont'd) for Rizzitano/Longley Rd. – DEP File #169-851

Clerk O'Connor read the public hearing notice of continuation to consider the Notice of Intent submitted by Mr. and Mrs. Rizzitano for a driveway on Longley Rd. No applicant or representative was present. B. Ganem stated that Mrs. Rizzitano requested a continuation of the hearing to May 13, 2003. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by K. O'Connor, it was

VOTED: to continue the Notice of Intent hearing for DEP File #169-851 to
Tuesday, May 13, 2003.

After discussion, and upon a motion by K. O'Connor, seconded by P. Morrison, it was
VOTED: to approve the minutes of January 14, 2003, as amended.

Upon a motion by E. Owen, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to approve the minutes of July 9, 2002, as drafted.

Upon a motion by E. Owen, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to approve the minutes of July 23, 2002, as amended.

In discussing the draft regulations to accompany the Wetlands Bylaw, Commissioners expressed concern that the minimum fee of \$500 in Section 4.6.2 is high, but agreed that it could serve as a financial incentive to avoid work in the buffer zone. In the area of fees for consultants, B. Clements pointed out that the engineering review for the Planning Board may overlap somewhat with review under the Wetlands Protection Act. K. Corwin noted that the fees are designed to cover the actual costs of hiring a consultant, and any excess would be returned to the applicant so it is a maximum fee. Section 5 "Permits and Conditions" and "Notice and Hearings" will be left blank for the time being. K. Corwin will review the remaining sections before continuing the discussion on the regulations.

Other Business

P. Morrison reported that he had met with the Personnel Board with recommendations on steps and salary for conservation staff. Upon a motion by K. O'Connor, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to authorize C. Auman, as well as K. O'Connor and P. Morrison, to go before the
Personnel Board at their earliest convenience.

C. Auman noted that he had recently attended the Squannassit ACEC meeting in Townsend where there was a good turnout. Maps showing the final boundaries were distributed to each town conservation commission. He pointed out that the next step is to form a task force or action group of volunteers to implement the steps or projects outlined in the stewardship portion of the Nomination Report. It is expected that the NRWA will continue to play a key role in this undertaking. It will be an educational tool, promoting awareness of the critical resources in this region. P. Morrison commented the state funding for those communities in ACECs is viewed more favorably for land acquisition and protection. The \$200,000 in the Conservation Fund will allow the Town to match or get reimbursement and is vitally important. He suggested that it was not a good time to be promoting the Community Preservation Act both because of the economic climate and because a committee determines how that money is spent. A list of priority parcels to be considered for preservation has been prepared by the Planning Board.

B. Ganem estimates that there is \$139,000 currently in the Conservation Fund; Commissioners asked her to check on whether the Self Help reimbursement for the Hurd parcel had been deposited in the Conservation Fund account. In order to even be a

player in land protection, it is necessary to have the flexibility to take advantage of land offered for sale during these tough economic times.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara V. Ganem
Conservation Assistant

Approved 2/11/03