

## **GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**JUNE 7, 2001**

### **MINUTES**

Chairman Curtis called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall

Members present: Curtis, Barringer, Clements, Degen, Eliot, Lewis and Perkins

#### **SITE PLAN REVIEW REGULATIONS**

The Board met with its consulting engineer, John Schmid of Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc. (JNEI), to discuss new Site Plan Review regulations. Mr. Schmid prepared a draft for the Board's consideration. The draft was based upon site plan review regulations in effect in the Town of Raynham.

The Board discussed requiring that the applicant show elevation contours and provide information on hours of operation and time exterior lighting will be used. Members agreed that more research on exterior light is needed. The proposed regulations may require the submission of a photometric diagram.

The Board discussed improving storm water management systems. Mr. Schmid suggested changing the method for calculating the 100-year storm.

The Board suggested that vertical granite curbing should be required instead of concrete curb stops. Granite is required in subdivisions as recommended by the Highway Surveyor.

The provisions in the regulations regarding the use of occupancy permits or performance bonds to ensure compliance were discussed at length. The Board will request the Building Inspector's opinion on the feasibility of withholding temporary or final occupancy permits until a site complies with the condition of site plan approval.

Mr. Schmid will revise the draft regulations and submit the information to the Board by the end of June. The Board will hold a public hearing on July 26, 2001 to consider adopting the regulations.

#### **REVIEW COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN DRAFT**

The Board reviewed the first draft of Chapters I – VI of the Comprehensive Master Plan. The Board received written comments from Virginia Wood, Robert Hanninen, and Susan Nordberg. Many of the citizen volunteers were present for the discussion.

Chairman Curtis asked people in attendance if they thought the Board should continue working with the consultant to finalize the plan for a Town Meeting in the fall or pursue other options such as finishing the project on its own or finding another consultant.

Edna White asked the Board to explain why it is so unhappy with this consultant. Chairman Curtis said the Board has had problems with the lead consultant Ken Kreutziger for some time now despite many efforts to resolve matters.

Charles McKinney asked if the Board intends on completing the project by this fall. Chairman Curtis said, "yes," if at all possible.

Member Clements said he read the first draft and it contains a lot of good material. He said he will mark up his copy with comments and suggestions. He said the text should be supplemented with diagrams and maps.

Member Degen said he is concerned about the Board thinking it has to finish the plan by a fall Town Meeting. He said he would prefer to do it right and not rush to complete the project. The action plan is too broad as written. It should be more concise. He suggested that the Board do the work on its own without the assistance of the consultant.

Member Clements disagreed and stated that a consultant can assist the Board by putting the final document in proper format for a more professional presentation.

Member Lewis said the problem is that the lead consultant, Ken Kreutziger, does not connect with the Board or the community. Chairman Curtis agreed that Mr. Kreutziger did not understand the Town or its by-laws. His presentation last August on locating high- density development in the Four Corners/Rocky Hill area was not realistic at all.

Landowner Carl Flowers said it scares him, as a landowner, when the Town talks about such things as hilltop zoning, wetlands protection, and endangered species. He asked how he would be able to deal with these issues when the time comes. He asked if his rights as a landowner have increased, decreased, or stayed the same since he purchased his land. The Board and Mr. Flowers debated the merits of zoning and impact on private property rights.

Mrs. White said the question of whether the Town would adopt zoning was answered fifty years ago.

Mr. McKinney said the consultant's involvement in completing the plan may be needed if the goals conflict with each other. For example, the economic development goals may be different than the open space goals. The Town may need the consultant's expertise to resolve such issues. Mr. McKinney said he thinks some good progress has been made with the plan, but there are no "metrics" to measure whether the goals and objectives have been met.

Emil Rechsteiner stated his concerns about the overhead power lines in the Town Center. He asked the Board to encourage the installation of utilities underground in the Town Center as a stated goal of the master plan. He said Peterborough, NH; Keene, NH; and Newburyport, MA all have underground utilities in their historic centers.

Harlan Fitch said the present burden on agricultural land would be shifted to the center if apartments were permitted in the center. He said the Board must determine if it is satisfied with the first six chapters. He asked if a new consultant would be able to use this information.

Chairman Curtis agreed that the Board has many factors to consider in making its decision. He stated that the Board has been very happy with McGregor Associates and Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc. (JNEI). The issue has been with Ken Kreutziger's role in the project.

Craig Auman said he believes it is important to proceed with a consultant. The Town needs someone who has the expertise in this area in order to proceed in the future.

Mr. Flowers stated his concerns about the Town buying land for open space because people will need somewhere to live in the future.

Mrs. White said the problems with the consultant were identified last October. The Board should be more decisive and finish this project in a business-like manner. It is up to the Planning Board to hold the consultant accountable. Many volunteers presented volumes of information. The public participation process should be continued.

Member Degen suggested that the Board hire another consultant to work with the Board and the volunteers to finish the project.

Virginia Wood offered her assistance in helping the Board finish the plan. She said part of the problem with the current draft is that much of the information is out of date. Much of the work done by the volunteers was completed late in 1999 and is no longer current. She suggested that the Board hold an all-day meeting on a Saturday to work on the project.

Member Lewis said the Board will need technical expertise to address issues such as Flexible Development, Transfer of Development Rights, and Development Rate Limitation. He added that the Board put a stop-work order on this consultant last fall and has been proceeding on a fee for services basis. He said the Board and volunteers must work together to finish the plan.

George Marsh asked if this is a new or revised master plan and how much is building on previous plans. He said

landowners concerns are very important issues that must be addressed.

Mr. McKinney encouraged the Board to complete the master plan by this fall so the Town will have a vision of where it is going. Member Degen said it is more important to do the job properly than to rush to complete it by this fall.

Chairman Curtis said the Board has three options: 1) finish the work with the present consultant; 2) finish the work on its own; or 3) hire a new consultant.

The motion was made by Degen to terminate the contract with Ken Kreutziger. The motion was seconded for discussion.

Member Clements said it is important for the Board to work with a consultant to complete the project. He suggested going over the document in detail, correcting it, and sending it to a consultant for completion. Member Degen said the Board could hire a new consultant to finish the work.

Chairman Curtis said there may be legal problems with terminating the present contract. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said Town Counsel advised the Board to work things out with the present consultant last fall because there is no termination clause in the contract.

The motion to terminate the contract was defeated with Degen in favor; Barringer, Clements, Curtis, Eliot, Lewis and Perkins opposed.

### **GROWTH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Charles McKinney of the Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC) requested that the Board establish a definite time for completing the master plan. He said the GMAC was formed to help address growth management issues. He said GMAC would like to sponsor a forum on specific growth management issues to determine what the tradeoffs are and how the Town can do a better job managing growth.

Mr. McKinney said the "State of the Town Report" was prepared by GMAC and the Board's comments would be appreciated. He said such a report will be prepared annually instead of every five years.

Member Clements asked if one of GMAC's purposes is to monitor implementation of the master plan and remind people what they should be doing. Mr. McKinney said there is no bad intent in Town government, but this could help break the log jam and increase communication among boards and departments. GMAC can evaluate problems and look for solutions.

Member Lewis asked if GMAC has any suggestions on how to control growth. Mr. McKinney said no, but many ideas have been kicked around.

Member Clements said the draft master plan includes many methods to achieve growth management. He said residential growth is the cause of all the Town's problems. Mr. McKinney said GMAC's goal is to look at all the tools and techniques.

Chairman Curtis said a forum sponsored by GMAC with all the town departments would be very helpful.

### **MASTER PLAN CONSULTANT**

The Board continued its discussion about the master planning process. Board members agreed to review the draft document and to meet on Saturday, June 23, 200, to go over all the information.

Member Barringer suggested reviewing the contract to determine what deliverables have been received and which ones are outstanding.

Virginia Wood said she thought the format was too wordy. She will try to prepare a more concise version for the Board to review on June 23, 2001.

## **PLANNING BOARD REORGANIZATION**

Member Perkins nominated Richard Curtis as chairman because he has done a good job overseeing the master plan process and it would make sense for him to continue as chairman.

Member Clements said although it is traditional for the Board to rotate the chairman, there would be advantages to having some continuity.

The motion passed with Barringer, Clements, Eliot and Perkins in favor; Degen and Lewis opposed; and Curtis abstaining.

Chairman Curtis said he did not want to be chairman if members of the Board did not agree. He asked if there were other nominations.

The motion was made by Lewis to nominate Joshua Degen as chairman. The motion was seconded.

Member Degen stated that he did not vote for Richard Curtis as chairman because he believes he cuts off debate when abutters have more to say.

The motion was defeated with Clements and Lewis in favor; Perkins opposed; Barringer, Curtis, Degen, and Eliot abstaining.

Member Lewis said he agreed with Degen that abutters have a right to be heard. He added that the Board should exercise more control over informal discussions.

The motion was made by Clements to nominate Robert Lewis as chairman. The motion was seconded. Member Lewis said he could not serve as chairman because of time constraints.

Member Curtis agreed to serve as chairman and said he would try to address the concerns expressed by other members.

The motion was made by Clements to nominate Joshua Degen as vice chairman. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The motion was made by Clements to nominate Barringer as clerk. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The motion was made to nominate Richard Curtis as representative to the MRPC and MART Transportation. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The motion was made by Perkins to nominate Bruce Clements as its representative on the Earth Removal Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The motion was made by Perkins to nominate Joshua Degen as its representative on the Growth Management Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette, Planning Administrator

