

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD
AUGUST 8, 2002
MINUTES**

Chairman Degen called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall

Members present: Degen, Clements, Eliot, Perkins and Wilson

Members absent: Barringer and Lewis

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Board discussed master plan implementation. Member Wilson suggested that the Board consider hiring Randall Arendt as a consultant to work with Attorney Mark Bobrowski during the implementation phase. Mr. Bobrowski is a good legal resource, and Mr. Arendt brings conceptual vision. Mr. Arendt said his fee would be approximately \$2500.00.

Chairman Degen said he agreed that Mr. Arendt would have valuable perspective. However, the Board must be aware of its budget constraints. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said the Board signed a contract with Mr. Bobrowski for \$20,000.00. There is \$19,000.00 remaining in the master plan budget and \$5000.00 in the planning consultant budget. Some of the planning consultant funds have been committed to GMAC for Ralph Willmer to continue working on the proposed growth cap by-law.

Member Clements asked about working with Harry Dodson. Member Wilson said Harry Dodson is a different type of consultant. Chairman Degen agreed that the South Kingston design manual is a very valuable tool. He said he was not sure who would be the best co-consultant: Harry Dodson or Randall Arendt.

Member Wilson said he was reviewing material including model by-laws from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). He urged the Board to consider working with high-quality consultants to develop the conceptual ideas.

Member Eliot said the Board should discuss the matter with Mark Bobrowski first and ask his opinion on who would be the best consultant in this area. Other members of the Board agreed.

PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL PERMIT, SPRINT TOWER/TABCOM PROPERTY

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the special permit application submitted by Sprint to construct a 120 monopole on land owned by the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. The Board received a letter dated September 8, 2002 from Sprint's Attorney, Scott Lacey, requesting a continuation of the public hearing.

The motion was made by Wilson to continue the public hearing on September 5, 2002 at 9:00 PM. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

TOWN HALL KEYS

Chairman Degen requested that the Board write a letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding keys to the Town Hall. The Growth Management Advisory Committee has been locked out several times in the past few years. This week, GMAC held its meeting outside in the Town Hall park because no one had a key. Chairman Degen said only the Selectmen and Town employees have keys. All chairmen should be assigned a key to the Town Hall.

Member Clements said a member of the Trails Committee picks up a key to Legion Hall. Members of the Board said this is not a Planning Board issue. If entry to the Town Hall has been a problem for GMAC, then GMAC should send the letter to the Board of Selectmen.

HANNAFORD'S CONCEPT PLAN

The Board considered its recommendation to Town Meeting on the Hannaford Grocery Store concept plan. Chairman Degen prepared a draft for the Board's consideration.

The motion was made by Perkins to recommend that Town Meeting approve the Hannaford Grocery Store Concept Plan. The Planning Board's recommendation is based upon information provided by the applicant through the close of the public hearing. The reasons for the Board's recommendations are as follows:

1. The secondary access point for the development places the traffic directly on to Route 119 and not into a residential area. State numbered roadways have a better ability to absorb this much-increased traffic with less impact on the surrounding area.
2. The internal traffic flow allows for separation of truck traffic and customer/employee parking, creating a safe condition for all on site users.
3. The Planning Board's traffic engineer evaluated the traffic study provided by the applicant. The engineer's conclusions showed the applicant's representations to be appropriate.
4. The size and scale of the project and the ratio of impervious surface to green space is appropriate for the site.
5. The proposed use of the site is consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Master Plan.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE SELECTMEN – EARTH REMOVAL EXEMPTION

The Board discussed the application submitted to the Board of Selectmen by the Groton Dunstable Regional Schools for an exemption from the Earth Removal by-law for the construction of the emergency vehicle access road at the new high school.

The Board will recommend that the Selectmen grant the exemption and that the contractor find a location in Town of Groton where the material can be utilized. Perhaps the Conservation Commission knows of a site where the material could be used for a wetland replication area.

SITE PLAN REVIEW – SHAW'S SUPERMARKET

The Board reviewed the site plan submitted by Shaw's Supermarket to construct 110,000 sq ft of retail space at the Four Corners intersection (Route 119 and Sandy Pond Road). Landowner Robert Lacombe, Bernard Rogan and Rick Olsen of Shaw's Supermarket, Attorney Margaret Bowles representing Shaw's, design engineer George Dimakarakos of Stamski and McNary, traffic engineer Robert Woodland of McMahon Associates, architect Dan Ellingston of Harriman Associates, and many abutters were present.

Attorney Bowles said the Town Meeting approved the concept plan in September, 2001. The site plan meets the following goals:

1. It is consistent with the concept plan approved by Town meeting without any variances;
2. The plan complies with all Site Plan Review requirements;
3. The site is aesthetically pleasing and well landscaped;
4. The site is engineered to be safe and functional.

Attorney Bowles said other required permits include Conservation Commission Order of Conditions, MEPA review and approval, state highway access permit from Massachusetts Highway Department, Erosion Control Permit, sewage disposal system permit, Promotion of Harmonious Development review by the Board of Selectmen.

Bernard Rogan of Shaw's presented a history of Shaw's Supermarkets founded in 1860 in Portland, Maine. He said Shaw's will make a commitment to the community and will be a good neighbor.

George Dimakarakos of Stamski and McNary described the proposed development of the 22.5 acre site. Shaw's Supermarket will contain 68,000 sq ft floor area, and there will be three smaller retail buildings. A common, open area will be in the front of the site for a town center effect. Existing trees will be preserved and new trees will be planted.

The parking area will contain 440 parking spaces with pedestrian friendly walkways. The development is located in a former gravel pit area.

Architect Dan Ellingston presented elevations and described the clapboard buildings. Traditional building materials will be used. Gables and cupolas will be added for variety.

Traffic engineer Robert Woodland described the proposed access to the site which will be coordinated with Mass Highway's plan to install a traffic light at the Four Corners intersection. The primary access will be off Boston Road in an area that will be widened to five lanes. A signal will be installed to function in conjunction with the signal at the Four Corners. The curb cut, signalization, and changes to Route 119 must be submitted to Mass Highway and MEPA for review and approval.

Attorney Bowles said the project will contain a total of 110,00 sq ft retail space. The concept plan approved by Town Meeting showed 130,000 sq ft. She said Shaw's looks forward to working with the Planning Board on this project.

Members of the Board responded that it was a good presentation and well thought out plan.

Member Eliot said she would like to see more trees in the parking area and expressed concern about the rear of the long building that will be very visible from Sandy Pond Road. She said she would like to see a rendering of the view of the project from Route 119. She asked if the top of the Shaw's building will be visible because it will be 16 ft below grade. Mr. Dimakarakos said the parking area will be 12-14 ft below Route 119. Mr. Ellingston said the roof of the building is 24 ft above the floor so it will be above Route 119. He said he would study this issue further.

Member Eliot suggested looking at Market Basket on Broad Street in Lowell as an example of good design.

Member Wilson expressed concern about the long expanse of Retail Building C. He asked about pedestrian circulation, pedestrian access from the affordable housing, and proposed loading areas. He added his concern about the visibility of HVAC units on rooftops with building 16 ft below street grade.

Member Perkins expressed concern about access on Route 119 so close to the Route 119/225 intersection. She said she would like to walk the site again to review this proposal.

Member Clements said the overall plan is very well thought out. However, he asked if the Town could support two substantial supermarkets.

Chairman Degen said he agreed with other members' comments. He said the construction of the versa-lok wall requires design and certification by a structural engineer. He asked how the proposed traffic circulation plan would work with the traffic light designed by Mass Highway.

Traffic engineer Robert Woodward said they have been working closely with Mass Highway and the design engineer to be sure the traffic lights are coordinated.

Chairman Degen asked the distance between the Four Corners and the proposed entrance to the site. Mr. Woodward said it will be 460 ft. He said they studied the area carefully. The operations are excellent, and the Level of Service will be "A".

Chairman Degen asked if the retail buildings will have multiple users. Mr. Woodward said there will be four to five tenants in Retail Building C.

Chairman Degen said his concerns include visibility of dumpsters, loading areas, etc. from the public ways.

Member Wilson asked if mature trees will be cut in order to widen Route 119. Mr. Woodward said the right of way of Route 119 will be substantially wider from Shelters Road to the Four Corners, so clearing trees will be required to widen the road. Chairman Degen asked the engineer to mark the existing trees to be removed.

Chairman Degen asked for comments from the public.

Alice Smith of Laurel Lane said the grocery store and other retail stores will generate trash and refuse. Mr. Rogan said all waste will be taken out of town. All cardboard and plastic will be recycled.

Ms. Smith expressed concern about the impact of road salt on groundwater and lighting impact. Mr. Rogan said they do not use salt, but will use other “earth-friendly” deicing chemicals.

Chairman Degen said the Board will require a photometric diagram on the proposed lighting plan. Mr. Rogan said the lighting will be reduced to half when the stores are not open. The Board said hours of operation are under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen.

Colin Campbell asked about traffic at the intersection of Route 119 and Shelters Road. Mr. Woodward said they studied the impact on the Shelters Road intersection and the installation of traffic lights will improve the existing situation.

Chairman Degen added that the Board will have its own traffic engineer review the plans and make recommendations to the Board. The Board will ask its engineer to look at the Shelters Road intersection.

Chairman Degen asked about projected traffic volume. Mr. Woodward said, at the present time, there are 19,000 trips per day on Route 119 and 4000 trips per day on Sandy Pond Road. The retail development will add about 4000 to 5000 trips per day. Chairman Degen asked if that means 5000 in and 5000 out. Mr. Woodward said, “yes.”

Abutter Garret Shanklin summarized his letter to the Board. His concerns include the timing of the traffic light with construction of the proposed development, the entrance of Sandy Pond Road, and the view from the road of Retail Building C. Mr. Shanklin said the long expanse of the rear of the building should be broken up.

Robert Cadle said the Board of Selectmen went through a long public process with Mass Highway in the design of the traffic light at the Four Corners. He asked whether the public would have an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to Route 119 and additional traffic light. Mr. Woodward said the installation of the second traffic light requires a permit from Mass Highway and filing with MEPA.

Chairman Degen suggested that the Board request a meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Mass Highway to look at traffic issues and the proposed signalization. Mr. Woodward said Mass Highway must approve whatever changes are made to Route 119.

Sarah Campbell asked who will lease the other retail space. Mr. Rogan said Shaw’s will work to find acceptable tenants for the community. Shaw’s will control the terms and conditions of the lease.

The Board scheduled a site walk for Saturday, September 14, 2002 at 8:00 AM.

Chairman Degen read the comments from the Board of Health, the Police Chief, the Water Department, the Sewer Department, and the letter from Garrett Shanklin.

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline to December 31, 2002 as requested by the applicant.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the review of the site plan on September 19, 2002 at 7:30 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING – CRANSTON CONSTRUCTION AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40A, Sections 9 and 11, the Groton Planning Board held a public hearing to consider the application submitted by Cranston Construction for a special permit to utilize the provisions of Groton Zoning By-law Section 218-27C Planned Multifamily Residential Development to construct two (2) structures with a total of eight (8) dwelling units as shown on the plan entitled, “Site Plan – Lot 3 Affordables, Sandy Pond Road in

Groton, Massachusetts”; prepared by R. Wilson & Associates, dated July, 2002. The proposed development is located on Groton Assessors Map & Parcel 120-2, located on the northerly side of Sandy Pond Road.

Chairman Degen called the hearing to order. Clerk Wilson read the notice published in the July 26 and August 2, 2002 issues of *The Groton Herald*. Attorney Robert Collins and design engineer Robert Pine presented the plan.

Mr. Collins said applicant David Moulton would like to construct the eight-unit affordable units on Sandy Pond Road as shown on the Rocky Hill concept plan approved by Town Meeting in September, 2001. Mr. Moulton will own and operate the rental units. He is meeting with the Groton Housing Authority to discuss its assistance in finding qualified tenants.

Member Perkins said she appreciates the affordable units being built first. She asked for more detail on the parking area and landscaping plan. Other members agreed.

Member Eliot asked that a sidewalk be constructed from the affordable units to the proposed Shaw’s supermarket.

Member Wilson asked the size of the units. Mr. Collins said each unit will be 2100 sq ft.

Chairman Degen expressed concern about the grading plan. Mr. Pine said the buildings may be relocated.

Chairman Degen asked what defines “affordable”. Member Perkins said the units must comply with DHCD guidelines.

Abutter Garrett Thompkins asked if there will be a park or recreation area. Mr. Collins said the adjoining 400 acres will be a wildlife sanctuary as shown on the concept plan. Mr. Pine said all housing units will have direct access to the conservation area.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on August 22, 2002 at 7:40 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING – WHIP-O-WILL DEFINITIVE PLAN

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 41, Sections 81-U and 81-T, the Groton Planning Board held a public hearing to consider the application submitted by Fox Meadow Realty Corporation and Long Pond Realty, LLC, for approval of the definitive plan entitled, “Definitive Subdivision for Whip-O-Will Lane, Groton, Mass.” prepared by R. Wilson & Associates, Inc., dated June 13, 2002. The proposed subdivision is located on Assessors’ Lots 120-2, 120-3, and 133-55, located on the southwesterly side of Boston Road and northerly side of Sandy Pond Road.

Chairman Degen called the hearing to order. Clerk Wilson read the notice published in the July 26 and August 2, 2002 issues of *The Groton Herald*. Attorney Robert Collins and design engineer Robert Pine presented the plan.

Mr. Collins said the definitive plan only shows the proposed road system that will serve the Rocky Hill residential development as shown on the concept plan approved by Town Meeting in September, 2001. Drainage issues will be addressed as each phase of the development proceeds.

Chairman Degen expressed concern about designing the road without knowing the lay-out of the development. He said the Board needs more information on traffic, drainage, etc.

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline to December 31, 2002 as requested by the applicant.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on September 26, 2002 at 7:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator