

GROTON PLANNING BOARD
MAY 29, 2003
MINUTES

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – ACADEMY HILL MODIFICATION

At the request of the applicant, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on the Academy Hill definitive plan modification to June 5, 2003 at 9:00 PM.

SITE PLAN REVIEW – LOST LAKE FIRE STATION

The Board continued its review of the site plan for the Lost Lake Drive Fire Station. Selectman Thomas Hartnett, Fire Chief Joseph Bosselait, Building Committee Chairman Brooks Lyman, and design engineer Andrew Baum of David Ross Associates were present.

Mr. Baum submitted a letter dated May 29, 2003 outlining the changes to the site plan, including the installation of lights with motion detectors on the rear side of the building and an underground conduit to install lights for the basketball court in the future.

Member Lewis asked the Building Committee for a quote on installing lights for the basketball court as well as a video camera for the rear entrance of the fire station.

Mr. Baum responded that the Committee does not want to encourage night use of the basketball court until the station is manned full time. The revised plan shows the motion detectors on the building as requested by the Board.

Member Perkins said the lights will prevent people from congregating in the parking lot but will not light the basketball court. Mr. Baum said the range of the lights is about 16 to 20 ft.

Member Barringer said the lights with motion detectors should be installed on the basketball court rather than on the building. Chairman Degen agreed, adding that the basketball court could become an attractive nuisance. People can walk to the basketball court from other areas without tripping the motion detectors.

Member Lewis said he would like lights on the basketball court, a surveillance camera, and 10 ft high fencing around the court. He said he would like the Board to ask others to donate these items.

Selectman Hartnett said the Committee has had many meetings about the basketball court. The Committee made a commitment to the neighborhood to replace the court with an improved one. The budget for this project is very tight and it would be too costly to add these items to the plan at this stage. Member Perkins said the Board just wants to be sure the basketball court does not become a nuisance in the future.

Chairman Degen said the basketball court would place added burden on the Police Department who will have to patrol the area. The neighbors will have to alert the police whenever there are any problems.

Building Committee Chairman Brooks Lyman said the Committee and the Fire Department do not want the basketball court to be lit all night long. If the court is dark, it will not be used. Chairman Degen said the lights should remain on until 10 or 11 PM.

Selectman Hartnett said the Committee would work with the Fire Department and Park Department to address these concerns.

Fire Chief Joseph Bosselait said these are all issues that can be dealt with after the renovations to the fire station are completed. He said his department does not have the money in its budget to pay for the electricity to light the

basketball court all the time.

Member Eliot said the Town is building a fire station on this site and the details should be left up to the Fire Department and the Building Committee. She suggested that the Committee come back with a plan to address the safety concerns with the basketball court and that the issuance of an occupancy permit **not** be contingent upon the approval of such a plan.

The motion was made by Perkins to approve the Level II site plan entitled, "Lost Lake Fire Station, Site Plan of Land, Groton, Massachusetts, Prepared for the Town of Groton," prepared by David E. Ross Associates and Winter Street Architects, dated April 29, 2003, with revisions through May 22, 2003. The Board approved the site plan with the following conditions:

1. Parking for the disabled and access to the building shall comply with the requirements of the Architectural Access Board Regulations, 521 CMR, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
2. The door nearest the parking space for the handicapped shall be equipped with both a doorbell and a door motion enunciator that will enable people to use the rear entrance during day-time office hours.
3. The contractor will install an electrical conduit for lighting the basketball court as shown on the above reference plan. The bases, poles and other infrastructure for the lights will be installed at a later date by the Town Fire Department and/or Park Department working in conjunction with the Groton Electric Light Department.
4. The Municipal Space Needs Committee shall work with the Fire Chief, the Park Department, and the Mountain Lakes Club to develop a plan to address safety issues related to the basketball court. The plan must be submitted to the Planning Board no later than April 30, 2004. However, the granting of a building permit or occupancy permit shall not be contingent upon submission of this plan.
5. The lights on the rear of the building will be equipped with motion detectors as shown on the above-referenced plan (see Sheet E-4).
6. Lighting shall not intrude onto abutting properties as required in Section 218-25G(1)(h).
7. Signage shall be installed to indicate that the parking spaces in the front parking lot to the west of the fire station are for Fire Department personnel only.
8. All signs must conform to the Sign By-Law, Chapter 196 of the Code of the Town of Groton.
9. There shall be no net increase in the rate or volume of storm water runoff from the site as required in Section 218-25G(1)(c).
10. The removal of any excess earth material from the site requires a Certificate of Exemption from the Earth Removal By-law, Chapter 134 of the Code of the Town of Groton. Chapter 134, Section 10 Exemptions.
11. An erosion and sedimentation control plan must be submitted to the Earth Removal Advisory Committee for its review and approval as required in Chapter 198 Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control.
12. Three copies of the final site plan approved by the Planning Board shall be submitted to the Board for endorsement as required in Section 218-25G(3).

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PRE-SUBMISSION REVIEW – GIBBET HILL RESTAURANT

The Board met with Steven, Nancy and Joshua Webber and design engineer Lawrence Beals for pre-submission review of the Gibbet Hill Restaurant site plan.

Mr. Beals described a potential change in the location of the access road from what was shown on the concept plan. The new location will require lowering the grades and will have better sight distance on Route 40. The Board will appreciate this when it takes another site walk to look at the proposed access.

Joshua Webber submitted information comparing the parking requirements for restaurants in Groton's by-law with the requirements in surrounding communities. Groton has the highest number of required spaces in the area. According requirements of the by-law, 200 spaces are required for the 200-seat restaurant and 200-seat function hall. The plan shows 172 spaces but there is room for additional parking if needed. He requested that the Board consider granting a waiver to allow 180 parking spaces.

Chairman Degen asked about parking for the existing house. Mr. Webber said there would be parking spaces reserved for the house.

Member Lewis expressed concern about the amount of asphalt especially with the cul de sac between the restaurant and function hall.

Member Perkins said the grassy area could be used for overflow parking when there are events at the function hall. She asked if the grass is solid enough for parking. Mr. Beals said "grass-crete" could be used for overflow parking areas.

Member Wilson noted that the Attorney General must review and approve the zoning change and address the spot zoning issue first. He said he would like to see less asphalt but he has no problem with the cul de sac between the buildings. This will provide a convenient drop-off area with a very low traffic volume.

Chairman Degen said he would like to see less pavement, but grass-crete does not work well during the winter because it is difficult to plow. He agreed that the Board should look at parking requirements for restaurants in other towns during the process. He agreed that the applicant should wait until the Attorney General approves the rezoning before submitting the site plan.

Harlan Fitch asked when the concept plan was submitted. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said the plan was submitted on February 5, 2003.

Member Clements expressed concern about losing the stonewall and asked why the architect changed the access. Mr. Webber said the stonewall can be reconstructed and used at the entrance to the site. The architect changed the location of the road to minimize disturbance to the view of the hills. In addition, this road is now farther away from the wetlands. Mr. Beals said the new access road location provides a more logical traffic flow pattern.

Steve Webber said he would like to go ahead and submit the site plan for review with the understanding that they are doing so at their own risk. Josh Webber said he did not believe spot zoning is an issue especially since they own the adjoining land abutting B-1 land.

PUBLIC HEARING – HUNT CLUB MEADOWS 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 the Strachan Family Trusts for approval of the definitive plan entitled, "Definitive Plan for the Subdivision of Land for Hunt Club Meadows in the Town of Groton, Massachusetts" prepared by Beals Associates, Inc., dated April 23, 2003. The proposed subdivision is located on Assessors' Map 219, Parcel 8, on the northerly and westerly sides of Shirley Road.

Chairman Degen called the public hearing to order. Clerk Wilson read the notice published in the May 16 and 23, 2003 issues of the Groton Herald. Design engineer Lawrence Beals of Beals Associates was present.

Mr. Beals presented the plan to create two large parcels served by a cul de sac off Shirley Road. The plan meets all the definitive plan requirements, and the lot lines have not changed from the preliminary plan.

Member Clements asked if Shirley Road is paved or gravel in this location. Mr. Beals said a portion of the road is improved and a portion is gravel. Member Clements said the Board must determine the adequacy of Shirley Road. The Board agreed.

Mr. Beals said the 160-acre parcel already has two houses on it. The plan creates only one new lot containing 30 acres. Member Barringer asked if the two houses are occupied. Mr. Beals said, “yes.”

Member Barringer asked if the easement shown on the plan has been granted to the Groton Water Department to access its land on the Nashua River. Mr. Beals said, “yes.” Member Barringer asked if the course of Nashua River changes, will the Town still have an easement. Mr. Beals said, “yes.”

Member Eliot said she hopes the owners will explore all options before developing this prime agricultural land.

Member Perkins said the Board must receive the report from Judith Nitsch Engineering before acting on the plan.

Chairman Degen requested that the applicant provide information on the status of Joy Lane before the next hearing.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on July 10, 2003 at 7:00 PM.

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline to July 19, 2003 as requested by the applicant.

AL PRIME SITE PLAN REVIEW

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline to consider the AL Prime site plan to July 19, 2003 as requested by the applicant.

PLANNING BOARD REORGANIZATION

The Board voted unanimously to elect the following officers:

Chairman	George Barringer
Vice Chairman	Joshua Degen
Clerk	Carolyn Perkins

The Board also voted unanimously to appoint the following representatives:

Earth Removal Advisory Committee	Joshua Degen
Growth Management Advisory Committee	Scott Wilson
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission	George Barringer
Montachusett Joint Transportation	George Barringer

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator

MC/lg

