

GROTON PLANNING BOARD**JULY 10, 2003****MINUTES**

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

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

Member absent: Degen and Perkins

PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – HUNT CLUB MEADOW

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline on the Hunt Club Meadows definitive plan to August 30, 2003 as requested by the applicant.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on August 7, 2003 at 8:00 PM.

MRPC Meeting

Chairman Barringer noted that the minutes of the June 18, 2003 MRPC meeting showed the Four Corners traffic signalization as fourth on the 2004 TIP list. However, when he and other public officials from Groton were at the MRPC meeting, the Four Corners project was first on the list. Vice Chairman Degen will attend the MRPC's meeting on July 16, 2003 to represent the Town and request clarification since Chairman Barringer is traveling.

ANR PLAN - MEREDITH BISSELL, KEMP STREET

The Board considered the Approval Not Required plan submitted by Meredith Bissell to change a lot line between two non-conforming lots on Kemp Street. The motion was made by Lewis to endorse the plan entitled, "Lot Redivision, ANR Plan in Groton, Mass., Owners of Record: Meredith Bissell and the Estate of Richard Bissell," prepared by Ludwig Surveying Associates, dated June 11, 2003. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

STILL MEADOW STREET NAME

The Planning Board received a request for developer Hans Antonssen to name the shared driveway serving the Still Meadow cluster development. Mr. Antonssen would like the driveway to be named, "Still Meadow Road."

The motion was made by Clements that the Board not approve the name because this is a driveway, not a public road. After some discussion, Member Clements withdrew his motion.

The motion was made by Lewis to ask the public safety officials for their opinion on the naming the private driveway. *The motion was seconded and passed with Barringer, Clements, Eliot, and Lewis in favor; Wilson abstaining.*

PUBLIC HEARING – SURRENDEN FARMS DEFINITIVE PLAN (con't)

The Board continued the public hearing on the Surrenden Farm definitive plan. Applicant Joseph Falzone, Cynthia O'Connell of Beals Associates, Attorney Mark Johnson, Attorney Ray Lyons, traffic engineer Ken Cram, William Conley, agent for the landowner, Attorney Robert Orsi, representing the landowner, and the Board's engineer William Maher of JNEI were present.

Ms. O'Connell went over the items in the report dated July 10, 2003 from JNEI. She noted that the surveyor's certification would be added to every lot layout sheet of the definitive plan. Ms. O'Connell agreed that the plans for the bridge must be stamped by a structural engineer as recommended by JNEI.

Beals Associates submitted a copy of their letter dated June 25, 2003 to the Ayer Planning Board regarding the proposed retention basin in Ayer.

Ms. O'Connell said they would complete all the soil testing in the roadway as recommended by JNEI. Mr. Maher agreed that this could be a condition of approval. He noted that the testing is needed to be sure the road does not have groundwater problems.

Ms. O'Connell stated that the Groton Conservation Commission closed its public hearing and will be issuing an Order of Conditions for the project at its meeting on July 22, 2003.

The Board discussed the width of the easements along the right-of-way. Mr. Maher noted that the Subdivision Regulations, § 346-14A, require a minimum width of 20 ft so a waiver is needed. Ms. O'Connell said Beals Associates believes 346-14B applies, not 346-14A, because this is an open swale system so a waiver may not be necessary.

Mr. Maher said the Board must be sure the width of the easement is adequate to maintain the drainage system. He said utility poles might impede flow if they are installed in the swales. Ms. O'Connell said all the light poles will be installed outside the right-of-way.

Member Eliot asked why the swales are not within the right-of-way and why the Board is being asked to grant a waiver. She said all the drainage should be installed within the right-of-way of the roads.

Ms. O'Connell said the subdivision regulations require that all drainage structures be within the right-way-way for closed systems rather than open swales. Mr. Maher noted that the easements shown on the plan run parallel with the subdivision roads.

Attorney Lyons said the easement would ensure that the swales stay where they belong in order to protect the homeowners in the future.

Member Wilson asked about curtain drains. Mr. Maher explained how they function. Member Lewis said the Board must be careful that the drains do not clog up as they have in other subdivisions. Member Wilson said better detail is needed on the plan to ensure proper installation of the curtain drains. Ms. O'Connell said erosion control matting could be used to prevent the drains from becoming clogged.

The Board confirmed that the names of the subdivision roads are Surrenden Farm Road, Marion Way, September Drive, and Bridle Chase Path. The 9-1-1 liaison approved all road names. Member Eliot suggested that Surrenden Farm Road be the main through-road to Shirley Road. The Board agreed.

Chairman Barringer read comments from the Highway Surveyor in support of the open drainage system.

Member Wilson expressed concern about the removal of the mature pine trees in the southwest quadrant area. He asked if the clubhouse could be moved to avoid unnecessary removal of screening. Ms. O'Connell said the clubhouse is in the open area. Member Wilson stressed that loss of this natural buffer is a very serious concern.

Member Eliot said she wants to review the applicant's requested waivers to be sure there are benefits for the Town. Attorney Lyons said the benefits were negotiated during the special permit process. Nothing has changed.

Member Eliot said the proposed farmhouse in the open field is a major change. Attorney Lyons said the location of the house was discussed with the Board on the site walk and at the public hearings.

Member Eliot reiterated her request that the sidewalks meander rather than run parallel to the roads. Ms. O'Connell said they moved the pavement to one side of the road to increase the grass area between the road and the sidewalk. There will be a trail system through the open space. Member Lewis agreed that a trail network is needed in addition to the sidewalks. Ms. O'Connell said the Board could make this a condition of approval.

Member Lewis said the Board must carefully review all requested waivers before it votes on the definitive plan.

Member Clements asked if the Board of Health had approved the soil remediation plan yet. Chairman Barringer read the Board of Health's recommendation dated June 25, 2003. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said the Board of Health will discuss the soil remediation plan at its meeting on July 21, 2003. Toxicologist Susan Sundstrom and the Board's LSP will be making a recommendation to the Board of Health prior to that meeting.

Traffic engineer Ken Cram of Vanesse Associates presented his findings on traffic impact. He received a copy of the report dated July 8, 2003 from JNEI's traffic engineer, Douglas Prentiss. Mr. Prentiss said 60% of the traffic will go to the south, 35% will go to the north, and 5% will go toward Ayer. He recommended that stop signs be installed at all intersections.

Member Eliot expressed concerns about the new bridge in Ayer and traffic using Shirley Road to get to Ayer and Shirley. She asked if Surrenden Farm Road would become a through road from Groton to Shirley. She asked about the width of the reconstructed bridge in Ayer. Attorney Lyons said the bridge would be 20 ft wide as required by the Ayer Conservation Commission. Ms. O'Connell said the road pavement in Ayer will be 20 ft wide and will connect with a road with a 20 ft pavement width in Groton. Ms. O'Connell said Surrenden Farm Road is 24 ft wide at its intersection with Farmers Row. The width is reduced to 20 ft in the open field and through the age-restricted area.

Mr. Cram said the projected Level of Service (LOS) would be "B" with or without traffic using Shirley Road. LOS B is a very good rating. Member Eliot said she could guarantee that cars will use Shirley Road to go to Ayer. Member Clements asked why this is a problem. Member Lewis said cars traveled over Shirley Road to go to Ayer until the bridge was closed.

Member Eliot asked if there would be trails in the open space area. Attorney Lyons said only on the public land, not on the land to be farmed, which will be held in private ownership.

The motion was made by Lewis to close the public hearing. *The motion was seconded and passed with Barringer, Clements, Lewis, and Wilson in favor; Eliot opposed.*

The Board will hold a special meeting on Tuesday, July 15, 2003, to act on the definitive plan decision. Chairman Barringer and Planning Administrator Michelle Collette will prepare a draft for the Board's consideration.

SITE PLAN REVIEW – SURRENDEN FARM LOT 8 & 9

The Board began its review of the site plans for the 71 age-restricted units on Lot 8 and the 25 singlefamily condominiums on Lot 9 in the Surrenden Farm subdivision. Applicant Joseph Falzone, Cynthia O'Connell of Beals Associates, Attorney Mark Johnson, Attorney Ray Lyons, William Conley, agent for the landowner, and Attorney Robert Orsi, representing the landowner, were present.

Attorney Lyons said §218-26 Open Space Residential Development has a limit of ten units served by a shared driveway and a required 200 ft separation between driveways. He said the applicant would like to apply to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for a variance from these two provisions. He asked the Planning Board if it would support the application to the ZBA.

Ms. O'Connell said the design can be improved with better access and more design flexibility if the variance is granted.

Member Wilson asked what the configuration would be without the constraint of the current regulations. He said the applicant may be able to take advantage of the natural, wooded buffer if the units are consolidated to save the tree line.

Member Lewis said he would support such a variance.

Member Eliot asked if the new design would be more in keeping with the newly adopted by-law. Attorney Lyons said, "yes." Member Eliot asked the applicant to provide the Board with a comparison of two designs under the with and without the variance.

The motion was made by Lewis to encourage the applicant to apply to the ZBA for a variance for the age-restricted cluster on Lot 8 in the Surrenden Farm subdivision. The variance for more than 10 units on a driveway and driveway cuts with less than 200 ft separation will result in better design, fewer curb cuts, better circulation, increased safety, and more visual screening. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

Attorney Lyons described the Lot 9 site plan with details on the 25 single-family units, a community sewage disposal system, lighting, and landscaping.

Ms. O'Connell described the planting plan that includes trees and shrubs. A list of species is shown on the plan for the Board's review.

Chairman Barringer read the comments from the Conservation Commission, the Board of Health, and the Police Chief.

Member Wilson requested that the applicant keep lighting to a minimum.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the site plan review on July 24, 2003 at 8:00 PM.

COMMENTS TO SELECTMEN – COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT

Attorney Ray Lyons presented a brief overview of the application for a comprehensive permit to be submitted by Paul and Peter Bradley to construct 20 units of rental housing on a 1.58-acre parcel located off West Main Street. All 20 units will count toward the Town's 10% affordable housing requirement because all the units will be rental.

The motion was made by Wilson to submit the following comments to the Board of Selectmen on the proposed "Gloria Drive" affordable housing project on West Main Street:

1. The Board supports the need for affordable housing, particularly rental housing. The Board understands that all the units (both market-rate and affordable) will count toward the Town's required 10% under Chapter 40B.
2. The access to the site is only 20 ft wide. The Board has serious concerns regarding the narrow width of the road and access for emergency vehicles. There is not enough width to provide pull over areas for cars and emergency vehicles to pass each other.
3. The configuration of the proposed parking lot may be difficult to negotiate. The dimensions of the parking spaces and aisle widths must be sufficient to provide safe access for residents, visitors, emergency vehicles, delivery trucks, etc. There is no room to stockpile snow on the lot.
4. The Board suggests redesigning the buildings so they are not identical to each other. The architectural design could be more attractive with some variation in size and design detail.
5. The Board believes reducing the total number of units would allow more sufficient area for parking, interior plantings in the parking lot, play areas for children, and a more attractive design.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

ANR PLAN – DEER HAVEN SUBDIVISION

The Board considered the Approval Not Required plan submitted by David Moulton to change a lot line between two lots in the Deer Haven subdivision. The motion was made by Wilson to endorse the plan entitled, "Plan of Land in Groton, Mass., Owner/Applicant: Fox Meadow Realty Corporation," prepared by R. Wilson and Associates, dated July 7, 2003. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

GIFT OF LAND

The Board received a request for comments from the Board of Selectmen on a proposed gift of a 5663 sq ft parcel of land located at the intersection of Castle Drive and Pepperell Road. Member Clements reported that the parcel is a beautiful, wooded area with a stream. He suggested that the Town accept the parcel as conservation land.

The motion was made by Clements that the Planning Board recommend that the Board of Selectmen accept the gift of land from L & S Builders. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator

MC/lg