

GROTON PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 25 2003
MINUTES

Chairman Barringer called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall
Members present: Barringer, Clements, Degen, Eliot, Lewis, Perkins and Wilson

PUBLIC HEARING (con’t) - AL PRIME SPECIAL PERMIT & SITE PLAN REVIEW

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the application submitted by AL Prime for a special permit to install underground storage tanks in a Water Resource Protection District. The Board also considered the site plan for renovations to the existing service station including the addition of a convenience store. Applicant Nasser Buisier, Attorney James Gmeiner, engineer Anthony Guba of Ayoub Engineering, engineer Gary Shepherd of David Ross Associates, and many abutters were present.

Mr. Shepherd said the Level II site plan meets all the requirements of the Site Plan Review by-law and regulations. Member Degen noted that there is no off-site topography shown on the plan. Mr. Shepherd said they could not trespass on abutting properties so they requested a waiver of this regulation.

Mr. Shepherd described the traffic flow, snow storage, dumpster screening, utilities and landscaping as shown on the plan. He said the applicant is requesting five waivers of the regulations:

- § 346A-1G Off-site topography
- § 346A-1N Scale of plans
- § 346A-1P Structural engineering for 30’ x 3’ retaining wall
- § 346A-2A3 Landscaping strip around the building
- § 346A 2D7 Vertical granite curbing

Mr. Shepherd explained that the on-site well does not comply with the Board of Health regulations, so the plan shows the proposed well on the adjacent lot also owned by the applicant. If the proposed well cannot be used, the sewage disposal system and tanks will have to be relocated so the existing well can still be used.

Mr. Guba presented the photometric diagram with nine fixtures on the canopy and two fixtures on the driveway. There will be no lighting in the rear of the site. Fixtures will be recessed to reduce glare. He noted that a Registered Architect stamped the architectural plans as required in the regulations. Mr. Guba described the stucco-finish building and the hip-like canopy over the pumps.

Chairman Barringer read the comments from the Police Chief stating that he has no concerns.

Member Degen said he would like to see the off-site topography to prevent runoff onto abutting properties. He asked about the height of the proposed retaining wall. Mr. Shepherd said the 1-3 ft high wall would be installed along the northerly property line. Member Degen requested that a note be placed on the plan indicating that the wall shall not exceed four feet in height.

Member Degen asked why there is no landscaping around the building. Mr. Shepherd said they prefer to have a sidewalk around the building rather than landscaping. Member Degen asked if the required green space on the lot has been met. Mr. Shepherd said, “yes,” the plan meets the requirement.

Member Degen suggested that a catch basin be installed in the rear of the site for snow melt in exchange for the waiver of granite curbing.

Member Degen asked why Town water could not be extended to the site. Mr. Shepherd said it is cost prohibitive to bring Town water from the intersection of Route 119 and Whiley Road.

(Member Clements arrived.)

Member Degen asked about noise from the condensers. Mr. Guba said the condensers will be on the roof, and the roof will screen the noise.

Member Degen asked how one-way traffic would work for the tankers. Mr. Shepherd said the tankers and emergency vehicles would be exempt from the one-way traffic flow. Traffic is shut down during fuel deliveries.

Member Degen said runoff from the roof should be discharged into the drainage system and not onto the pavement. Mr. Shepherd agreed that with the suggestion.

Member Degen expressed concern about the lack of any lighting in the rear of the site for safety reasons. Mr. Guba said lighting could be added if the Board wishes.

Member Wilson expressed concern about pedestrian traffic in the winter. He asked if there would be an overhang around the building to protect pedestrians. Mr. Shepherd said, "no," because an overhang would create a zoning offset issue. Mr. Guba said gutters could be added to divert roof runoff to the drainage system.

Member Eliot requested that the applicant grant a landscaping easement on the abutting lot to provide screening for the abutters.

Member Eliot asked what type of material would be used for the roof and canopy. Mr. Guba said there would be a rubberized roof on the flat area and asphalt singles with wood trim on the pitched roof.

Member Eliot said she prefers clapboards rather a stucco finish because it would be more in harmony with the neighborhood area. She asked what the material would be used for the canopy. Mr. Guba said the canopy would be all steel as required in the fire regulations. The canopy will have a white finish.

Member Eliot said she agreed that off-site topography is needed to review drainage impact on abutters.

Member Perkins said she likes the sidewalk around the building because it would be safer for children.

Member Lewis said drainage from the flat roof should be filtered before it reaches the drainage system. The cleaning solution from the condensers should not be allowed to go into the drainage system.

Member Lewis said the snow should be hauled off site before the snow banks reach 2-3 ft in height.

Member Lewis said he did not like the easement on the abutting land – all improvements should be on the site.

Chairman Barringer said he agrees that off-site topography is necessary to evaluate runoff. He said the planting islands should not block the view of drivers accessing Route 119. The plantings should not be more than 30" in height. Chairman Barringer agreed that lighting is needed in the rear of the building, but it should not shine onto the neighbor's yards.

Chairman Barringer asked about the color of the roof. Mr. Guba said it would be charcoal grey.

Chairman Barringer requested that the applicant submit a de-icing plan for the file since the site is located within a Water Resource Protection District.

Member Lewis stated that he would prefer a cistern for collecting runoff from the roof instead of discharging into the drainage system. The cistern would have to be pumped periodically. Member Lewis said the proposed use is located on marginal land in the Water Resource Protection District.

Mr. Shepherd said the options are to do nothing and leave the existing tanks in place or to improve the site by

replacing the tanks and installing a stormwater management system. There is no treatment of stormwater on the site today.

Member Degen asked why the canopy would be yellow. Mr. Guba said yellow is the company color. Member Degen asked what color the building will be. Mr. Guba said it would be white. Member Degen said he prefers that the canopy not be yellow and he prefers clapboard rather than stucco finish on the building.

Chairman Barringer asked if the underground tanks would be double-walled tanks. Mr. Guba said, "yes."

Chairman Barringer asked the applicant to provide the Board with an inventory of all hazardous materials including oil and antifreeze to be sold in the convenience store. Mr. Guba said these materials are sold in small containers. Chairman Barringer asked if the containers would be stored inside or outside the building. Mr. Guba said they would be inside the store.

Chairman Barringer asked if there would be a hazardous waste containment system. Mr. Guba said he did not know.

Member Clements asked if the adjoining lot in the R-A District is buildable. Mr. Shepherd said they are not prepared to address this question at this time because it is not the matter before the Planning Board.

Member Lewis asked that the dumpster be sealed on top and at the bottom since this is a Water Resource Protection District.

Abutter Patrick Kenney expressed concern about noise from equipment on the roof, lights on the canopy, increased traffic, and litter.

Member Degen asked about the existing floodlight on utility poles. Mr. Guba said the applicant would ask the Groton Electric Light Department to shut off the streetlights.

Abutter John Cain said the proposed changes would result in a 33% increase in traffic at the site. The applicant is trying to fit too much onto this small lot. He asked if the plan could be scaled back.

Abutter Kate Sweeney said, without any fencing, there would be nothing to stop people from wandering off this lot onto abutting properties. She expressed concern about runoff and pollution from the site. She submitted photographs to the Board showing the existing drainage problems. She asked if a 21E study is required before work can begin.

Chairman Barringer noted that the applicant offered to provide a fence. Mr. Shepherd agreed that a fence could be added to the plan if the Board wishes.

Member Degen said he would prefer to see a fence along the back perimeter of the lot with landscaping near the front of the lot. He agreed that trash and litter are valid concerns.

Chairman Barringer said a fence would help prevent glare from lights and will protect abutters' privacy. Board members agreed that a fence should be added to the landscaping plan.

Abutter Lloyd Isley said the radius of the curb cut should be installed as shown on the plan. Chairman Barringer asked Mr. Isley if he wanted curbing in this location. Mr. Isley said, "yes."

Dr. Susan Horowitz said a shadow box fence would not prevent headlight glare. She recommended using a solid fence instead. She suggested that the applicant work with Shaws to extend town water to the site. Mr. Shepherd said it is cost prohibitive.

Abutter Greg Sweeney asked about hours of operation and who enforces the regulations. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said hours of operation are covered in the Town's general by-laws and are enforced by the Selectmen. Mr. Shepherd said the hours would be 5 AM to 9 PM.

Mr. Sweenie asked about a 21E study. Dr. Horowitz, Chair of the Board of Health, said it is not required unless property changes hands. Mr. Shepherd said the soils would be tested when the underground tanks are removed. Chairman Barringer said if any contamination is found, the applicant must submit a remediation plan under Chapter 21E.

Member Degen said that Planning Board could require periodic testing of monitoring wells installed the direction of groundwater flow since this site is within a Water Resource Protection District.

Mr. Busier said a tank closure report is required by the Fire Chief and State Fire Marshall. An LSP will take soil samples and test groundwater. He said a 21E is very costly and he is not willing to do a 21E site assessment unless one is required by law.

Member Lewis asked if the applicant is willing to install monitoring wells. Mr. Busier said they are required around the tanks.

Mr. Cain asked about the height of the fence. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said the fence could not be greater than six feet if it is on the lot line.

Mr. Kenney asked that the fence be brought forward because he can see the site from his property.

Member Degen said the fence should be solid rather than shadow box and conifers should be planted to provide screening.

Member Perkins asked why the applicant prefers a shadow box fence. Mr. Shepherd said it is more attractive and has more texture. Member Perkins suggested using a solid fence in the rear of the site and a shadow box fence toward the front.

Member Eliot thanked the applicant for making a good faith effort to address the Board's concerns.

Member Degen suggested using a fence in the rear of the site and planting 7 – 10 ft arbor vitas closer to Route 119.

Mr. Busier said he would fence the abutting lot if the Board would like. The fence will be installed before the next meeting. Mr. Cain said he prefers that the fence be installed on the B-1 zoned lot and not on the abutting lot.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on October 30, 2003 at 7:30 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – VERIZON SPECIAL PERMIT

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on October 16, 2003 at 9:00 PM as requested by the applicant.

COMMENTS TO SELECTMEN – SQUANNACOOK HILL 40B DEVELOPMENT

The Board decided to send a letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting that the applicant present the proposed Squannacook Hill 40B development to the Planning Board so the Board could make more informed comments.

SITE PLAN REVIEW ISSUES

Groton Market/Filho's – The Board discussed the parking problem at the new Filho's restaurant adjacent to the Groton Market building. When the Planning Board approved the Groton Market site plan and the ZBA granted the special permit, the applicant indicated that the restaurant would be take-out only. The ownership of the restaurant has changed and there are now 30 seats. The Board decided to send a letter to property owner John Madigan inviting him to a meeting to discuss ways to resolve the parking issues.

Rivercourt Retaining Walls – The Board received a letter dated September 19, 2003 from David Hamilton of Capstone Properties and a copy of a letter dated September 18, 2003 from Souhegan Valley Engineering to O. Ahlborg

& Sons regarding the retaining walls at the Rivercourt assisted living facility.

Member Degen expressed concern that the letter from the engineer was not based upon a site inspection. The motion was made by Degen to call the Rivercourt plan in for modification. The motion was not seconded.

Chairman Barringer suggested that the Board work with the Building Inspector and ask him to look at it again. The Board agreed and will schedule a site walk with the Building Inspector.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator