

GROTON PLANNING BOARD
APRIL 8, 2004
MINUTES

Chairman Barringer called the meeting to order at 7:45 PM in the Town Hall

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

PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – SAMANTHA REALTY TRUST, 785 BOSTON ROAD

The Planning Board continued the public hearing to consider the application for a special permit submitted by Samantha Realty Trust, LLC, to utilize the provisions of Groton Zoning By-law Section 218-30 Water Resource Protection Districts to construct a new structure to be serviced by an on-site wastewater disposal system with a design capacity greater than 110 gallons per day (GPD) per 10,000 SF lot area in a Water Resource Protection District III.

Chairman Barringer called the continuation of the public hearing to order. Applicant Steve Catalano of Samantha Realty Trust, design engineers Bruce Ringwall and Brian Connors of GPR, Inc., and Attorney Thomas Gibbons were present.

Mr. Ringwall presented the revisions to the plans including a reduction in the amount of impervious surface from 60% to 49% and the elimination of the driveway around the rear of the site. One of the retention basins was eliminated. The retention basin in the northeast area was enlarged so that it would be shallower and have more gentle side slopes (4:1) as requested by the Board at the last public hearing.

Mr. Ringwall said the applicant is requesting a waiver to allow less than three feet of cover over a drainage pipe. Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc. (JNEI), the Board's consulting engineer, recommended that the Board grant a waiver to allow one foot of cover provided that a Class V drainage pipe is used. The applicant will install a subsurface "Vorteknics" drainage system. Dry wells were added to the plan to accommodate frozen ground conditions. The existing swale along the rear of the site will be used to retain existing vegetation. The applicant must maintain the swale, but no additional grading is required. Grading along the rear of the site will be similar to existing conditions. Dry wells have been added to the bottom of the basin for better drainage during frozen ground conditions. Water quality swales will be constructed along the western side of the property.

Mr. Ringwall presented a cross section of the drainage area near the abutting properties to the north. The cross section showed saturation levels from the retention basin to the abutter's basement. The dry well in the basin will act as a wick to accelerate drainage.

Mr. Ringwall showed rear and side architectural elevations of the proposed new building. He described the proposed landscaping plan, which will save some existing trees and remove others.

Chairman Barringer read the comments from the Water Department and the Board of Health.

Mr. Ringwall said soil testing was done in the location of the proposed sewage disposal system and retention basin. The deep hole test went 12 ft deep without reaching groundwater. The sand and gravel soils meet stormwater management guidelines.

Member Eliot asked about the issues in the JNEI report dated April 8, 2004. Mr. Ringwall said they would respond to all the items in the JNEI report including whether the outlet to the retention basin should have 0.5 or 1 ft of freeboard.

Member Eliot asked about the sight distance obstructions to the east on Forge Village Road. Mr. Connors said there is an existing tree blocking visibility on the abutter's lot to the east of the site. The applicant is working with the abutter to remove the tree, but no agreement has been reached to date.

Member Eliot asked if the utilities would be underground. Mr. Ringwall said, "no." Member Eliot requested that the lights be similar to others in the area rather than the box style shown on the plan. Mr. Ringwall said the applicant

would work with the Historic Districts Commission on this point (*Note: This site is not located within the Historic Districts.*)

Member Eliot asked about screening between the parking lot and the road. Mr. Ringwall said 3-4 ft tall boxwoods would be planted in this location.

Member Perkins said she, too, is concerned about sight distance on Forge Village Road. The lighting design is an important consideration.

Member Lewis expressed concern about the amount of sewage disposal in a Water Resource Protection District. He asked if public water would be used. Mr. Ringwall said, "yes."

Member Lewis asked if the dumpster would be enclosed. Mr. Ringwall said there would be a 6 ft fence around the dumpster.

Member Degen agreed that the cedar tree on the abutting lot must be removed to improve sight distances. He noted that there could be problems with the parking spaces in the northwest corner of the site because there is not enough area to turn around. He said more room is needed for vehicles to back out in this location.

Member Degen asked about the number of uses. Mr. Connors said there would be one restaurant, one retail store, and the remainder will be office space. The new building will have four tenants – two on the first floor and two on the second floor.

Member Degen said the landscaping plan should be changed to provide better screening. Mr. Ringwall agreed that the landscaping plan would be modified and reviewed by the Planning Board for its approval. Member Degen said it is important that the plan, prepared by a landscape architect, be presented to the Board at a meeting.

Member Clements asked if the lights would be left on all night. Mr. Connors said, "yes," for safety reasons. Member Clements asked about the hours of operation. Mr. Connors said from 6 AM to 9 PM. Member Clements said he prefers minimal lighting for the sake of the abutters.

Member Clements asked about the traffic study. Mr. Connors said the applicant submitted a traffic study prepared by Conley Associates. The Board's traffic engineer – Fay, Spoffard and Thorndike - is reviewing the study.

Member Wilson asked where snow would be stockpiled. Mr. Ringwall said in the western corner of the site. These will be temporary stockpiles and will be removed by the site contractor.

Member Degen asked if there is one main entrance to the building. Mr. Ringwall said, "yes."

Member Degen asked if roof gutters would be installed. Mr. Ringwall said, "no," but there will be footing drains that discharge to the retention basin.

Member Degen asked about screening noise from the HVAC units on the ground. Member Lewis said the newer units are not very noisy, and it is not good to put a fence around the HVAC unit because it blocks air circulation. Mr. Ringwall said they might be able to use a shadow box fence if the Planning Board includes it as a condition of approval.

Member Perkins said it is important that trash from Dunkin Donuts be removed promptly so it does not attract rodents. Mr. Catalano said no food will be disposed of outside. Dunkin Donuts sends all its food waste to a piggery.

Chairman Barringer said a berm should be constructed in the area of the snow stockpile to prevent melting snow from running off on Route 119. Mr. Ringwall said runoff from the stockpile would be directed into a swale that flows to the retention basin.

Chairman Barringer asked about deicing chemicals. Mr. Connors said only sand without salt would be used on the

site. No chemical deicers will be applied.

Chairman Barringer asked about cleaners and degreasers that will be used. These chemicals are high in phosphates that may impact groundwater quality. Mr. Connors said all cleaning would be done by hand, using biodegradable products. Chairman Barringer asked whether bleach would be used. Mr. Catalano said other sanitizers are used instead of bleach.

Chairman Barringer requested that the applicant cut down on the lighting that will be left on after operating hours. Mr. Ringwall said they would work out a lighting plan.

Chairman Barringer asked if there would be lights on the sign. Mr. Connors said, "yes," as shown on the photometric diagram.

Chairman Barringer asked if the drainage calculations accounted for runoff from the intersection. Mr. Connors said MassHighway would collect stormwater from the intersection.

Member Degen asked if the lights would be white or yellow. Mr. Ringwall said, "white."

Member Degen suggested that another snow storage area might be necessary. Mr. Connors said snow could be stockpiled in the open space area shown on the plan. Member Degen said that area should be designated as a snow stockpile area on the plan. He said he would prefer to work out a chemical deicing plan with the Board of Health because the site contractor will have to use some deicing chemicals when the parking lot is very icy.

Abutter Douglas Palmisano said sand works well most of the time, but the contractor will use salt if it is in the truck. He asked who would monitor salt application. Mr. Catalano said they hire a local company to maintain their site. He said he will give them very careful instructions.

Member Lewis asked if there are any monitoring wells on the site. Mr. Ringwall said, "no."

Member Wilson expressed concern about the impact on private wells in the area. Mr. Palmisano said his well is very close to the site.

Abutter Matthew Harkins asked about the number of trips per day. Mr. Ringwall said the applicant submitted a traffic study to the Planning Board. Chairman Barringer said traffic impact would be discussed at the continuation of the hearing when the Board has received a report from its engineer.

Mr. Harkins expressed concern about lights being left on all night.

Mrs. Palmisano said she is concerned about the view of the rear of the new building, the retention basin, and the use of chemicals on site. She asked if people would come into their yard to look at their horses. Mr. Ringwall said the applicant would extend the existing fence. Vegetative screening can be added to the plan.

Mr. Harkins said the maximum height of a fence is 6 ft unless it is set back 15 ft from the property line. A 6 ft fence is not adequate. Chairman Barringer said a 6 ft fence would provide screening for most abutters. Mr. Ringwall said the applicant offered to provide a 6 ft fence and plantings, but no agreement has been reached with the abutter.

Mr. Harkins said the applicant is requesting to remove one tree and will provide less screening. Mr. Harkins said the project would decrease his property values.

Member Degen said this area is zoned B-1 and the property owner has certain rights. He encouraged Mr. Harkins and the applicant to work out an agreement.

Member Degen expressed concern about headlight glare in the northeast corner of the site. He asked if more plantings could be added to this area.

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline to May 27, 2004 as requested by the applicant.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on May 6, 2004 at 8:00 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – REEDY MEADOW ESTATES DEFINITIVE PLAN

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on the Reedy Meadow Estates definitive plan on April 22, 2004 at 8:00 PM as requested by the applicant.

SEVEN HILLS WAIVER REQUEST

The Board met with Ed Doucette of Seven Hills Extended Care Center to discuss a waiver of the Site Plan Review requirements. The Board may grant such waivers under Pre-Submission Review, Section 218-25F. Mr. Doucette requested that the Board waive the need to provide topography information within 200 ft of the property lines. He said the site is bounded by roadways and the DEM rail trail. Showing such topography would involve obtaining consent from 23 different abutters, a very time-consuming process.

After some discussion, the Board said it would be willing to consider waiving the requirement where the site abuts the public way, but not along the DEM rail trail or the unconstructed portion of West Street.

PB LIAISON REPORTS

Member Clements, the Board's representative to the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Investigation Committee, and CPA Committee members Bruce Easom, Dan Emerson, and Michael Roberts presented information on the CPA. The Committee presented its summary of the CPA including results on interviews with the 18 cities and towns that had already adopted the CPA provisions. Both a Town Meeting vote and ballot referendum are required. The Committee submitted a detailed list of benefits to the Town in the areas of open space protection, housing, and historic preservation. A number of projects would be eligible for funding if the Town adopts the CPA. In addition, the Town would receive matching funds from the state's CPA trust fund. The Committee requested that the Planning Board support the article at the Annual Town Meeting.

MILL STREET RELOCATION

The Board discussed its comments to the Board of Selectmen on the proposed relocation of Mill Street. The Selectmen will hold a public hearing on April 22, 2004.

Member Degen stressed that the Town should have an agreement signed by Robert Walker before voting on the proposed relocation plan. Mr. Walker has made commitments for approximately \$600,000 in infrastructure improvements. These commitments should be in the form of a written agreement.

Member Degen said he wanted to be sure the Planning Board would have site plan review authority over the commercial development portion of the Comprehensive Permit plan.

Member Perkins said the Zoning Board of Appeals will be sure site plan review is included as a condition of the Comprehensive Permit. She added that the ZBA is doing a very good job reviewing the application and negotiating with the applicant. The Board's memo to the Selectmen should only refer to the road relocation.

The motion was made by Degen to recommend that the Board of Selectmen seek written agreement from Robert Walker of Ryan Development and Groton Residential Gardens, LLC, on the agreed-upon mitigation measures associated with the Groton Residential Gardens Comprehensive Permit plan. The Board believes that this agreement should be in place prior to the Selectmen's public hearing on April 22, 2004 to consider the relocation of Mill Street.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

West Groton resident George Wheatley met with the Board to discuss the formation of an Industrial Commission to look into non-residential development at the Four Corners area, the Cow Pond Brook Road area, and along North Main Street. He said the Town should encourage light industry to relieve the tax burden on residential properties.

The Planning Board agreed to work with Mr. Wheatley on this proposal. However, there is a provision in the Zoning By-Law Section 218-18 Major Projects that prohibits the Board from sponsoring or favorably recommending a rezoning petition without a concept plan.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator