

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD
DECEMBER 16, 2004
MINUTES**

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

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

Member absent: Lewis

SITE PLAN REVIEW – OLIVER WRIGHT MEADOWS

The Board considered the site plan for the Oliver Wright Meadows housing development submitted by James Patierno of Missic Realty Trust. Mr. Patierno, Attorney Robert Collins, and design engineer Robert Pine were present.

Mr. Pine said the applicant purchased the land from the Town as part of an agreement with the Board of Selectmen. The proposed plan shows 36 rental units and 12 condominium units for a total of 48 units on 14.5 acres. The units will be for people 55 and older.

Mr. Collins said as part of the agreement with the Selectmen, the applicant will extend Town water 6000 ft to the Highway Garage and dog pound.

Mr. Pine said the site is a former gravel pit located off Cow Pond Brook Road. The Town's playing fields are on the other side of the road. There is a shooting range used by area police departments on Town-owned land to the north of the site. The development is located below the elevation of the road. A pond will be excavated and the material used as fill to create more gentle grades. The units will have a view toward the open fields and pond. An earthen berm will be constructed to shield the development from the shooting range. The rental units will be located in three buildings with 12 units each. The 12 condominium units will be in duplexes. The pond will be the focus of the site. The area surrounding the pond will be a gathering place and will provide a sense of community. Mr. Pine said the site will drain internally to a retention basin and groundwater infiltration system.

Mr. Collins said the proposed housing development is being submitted under Section 218-27B Subsidized Elderly Housing, with the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) as Special Permit Granting Authority. The provisions of §218-27B would permit a density of 195 units. The proposal, with dwelling 48 units, has less density than the by-law permits and less density than a Comprehensive Permit under a Chapter 40B.

Member Degen asked about architectural design. Mr. Collins said this is still a work in progress and the ZBA's public hearing is still open. Architectural plans will be submitted to the ZBA and Planning Board as soon as they are available. Member Degen asked if the buildings will be clapboard. Mr. Patierno said, "yes."

Member Degen asked about the size of the units. Mr. Patierno said the duplex units will be about 1700 square feet each with 3400 square feet of living space per duplex. The total will be 4200 square feet including garage space. Mr. Collins said the rental units will have 1040 square feet per unit. Member Degen asked about the footprint of the larger buildings. Mr. Pine said the buildings will be about 120' x 50' so the footprint will be 6000 square feet. Mr. Patierno said each building will have two stories and a full basement with laundry facilities and HVAC system. Mr. Patierno said several units will be accessible for disabled people with oxygen and an alarm system.

Member Degen asked about the sewage disposal systems. Mr. Patierno said the larger buildings will have a community system, and each duplex will have its own system. Mr. Collins said they may add exclusive use areas to the plan.

Member Degen asked about the Fire Chief's requirements. Mr. Pine said the housing will be designed to meet Fire Department requirements.

Member Degen asked why the proposed berm is on land owned by the Town and not on the site. Mr. Collins said the construction of the berm was worked out with the Board of Selectmen to protect the Town's use of the Highway

Department site. Mr. Pine added that constructing the berm on site would take away from the design and sense of community around the pond.

Member Degen said the proposed 24 ft earth berm is very large. If the berm is on site, the houses will be farther away from the shooting range. Mr. Collins said they discussed moving the shooting range to a better location with the Police Chief.

Member Perkins said having a shooting range this close to housing for people 55 and older is very disturbing. Mr. Pine said the 24 ft earthen berm was designed to deflect the sound from the shooting range.

Member Perkins asked how many parking spaces would be provided. Mr. Pine said 87.

Member Perkins asked if there would be cut and fill greater than five feet. Mr. Pine said, "yes," they are working out the amount of cut and fill with the ZBA as part of the special permit process.

Member Perkins asked if the tenant qualification would be done by the Groton Housing Authority. Mr. Collins said, "Yes," under §218-27C, 50% of the units must be affordable. There will be 24 affordable units, but 36 will count toward the Town's 10% because they will all be rental units. Member Perkins asked if the units would be rented to people with low or moderate incomes. Mr. Patierno said, "moderate," with rents around \$900 to \$1000 per month.

Member Perkins asked if the accessible units would be for moderate income people. Mr. Patierno said it depends upon the need.

Member Perkins asked about the 12 duplex units. Mr. Patierno said they are all market rate condominium units.

Member Clements said he liked the plan and asked if the units would have finished basements. Mr. Pine "yes," all the duplex units would have unfinished, walk-out basements.

Member Clements asked about groundwater elevations. Mr. Pine said the water table fluctuates between 68 and 78 ft elevation shown on the plan. During a 100-year flood, the groundwater is four feet below the basements of the buildings. The basements will be at a higher elevation than the ground level is today.

Member Wilson said this is a very creative plan and thanked Mr. Patierno for submitting the plan for affordable housing. The site design solves physical problems and transforms the site to an attractive residential area.

Member Wilson asked about the length of the roadway. Mr. Pine said it is about 900 ft from Cow Pond Brook Road to the end.

Member Perkins asked if the road will be constructed to Subdivision Regulation standards. Mr. Pine said, "yes."

Member Wilson asked about the proposed extension of Town water. Mr. Pine said the water main will be extended 6000 ft to the site and the Highway Department facilities.

Member Wilson asked how many rental units will be in each building. Mr. Pine said, "12."

Member Barringer asked about access for emergency vehicles. Mr. Pine said the road will meet Subdivision Regulation standards, and there are full loops for turning in the parking areas. Member Barringer asked if there is any other emergency vehicle access to the site. Mr. Pine said emergency vehicles can drive through the Highway Department site if necessary. Member Barringer said they cannot drive through the berm if it is constructed along the entire property line.

Member Barringer asked how kids will be protected from getting into the 8-ft deep pond. Mr. Pine said the proposed housing is for people 55 and older. Member Barringer said the residents may have visitors.

Member Barringer asked about the grade of the access road. Mr. Pine said it would be 9%.

Member Barringer asked if there would be individual sewage disposal systems. Mr. Pine said, "yes," they will be raised beds. The systems have not been designed yet.

Member Barringer asked if the apartment buildings would have elevators. Mr. Patierno said he is considering it, but he is trying to keep costs down so the units will be more affordable. Each elevator would cost about \$125,000.

Member Barringer asked about the total number of parking spaces because there are only 12 spaces per parking area. Mr. Collins said the plan shows several smaller parking areas. The number of parking spaces complies with the by-law.

Chairman Eliot said this location is a prime place for industrial or commercial use rather than residential use. She objected to siting housing for people 55 and older close to the Highway Department and shooting range. She said such a development should be located closer to the Town Center. Mr. Pine said there is a considerable amount of conservation land nearby.

Chairman Eliot asked about architectural and landscaping plans. Mr. Collins said more information would be submitted to the Board prior to its January 13, 2005 meeting.

Chairman Eliot asked if all the walkways would meet emergency vehicle standards. Mr. Collins said, "yes," they are designed to meet the weight-bearing load of a fire truck.

Chairman Eliot noted that there should be an easement on land owned by the Town to be sure the berm is not removed in the future. Mr. Collins agreed.

Member Degen noted that the Site Plan Review regulations require that the plan show topography within 200 ft of the property line as well as proposed and finished grades. Mr. Pine said additional engineering information will be submitted.

Member Perkins asked how the moderate income units would be protected. Mr. Collins said there would be deed restrictions. Member Perkins asked if the deed restrictions would be in perpetuity. Mr. Collins said, "yes."

The Board will walk the site on Saturday, January 8, 2005 at 9:00 AM. The Board continued its review of the site plan to January 13, 2005 at 8:00 PM.

Mr. Collins asked the Board to waive submission of a traffic study because Cow Pond Brook Road was constructed to accommodate very large gravel trucks and the sight distances are very good in this location.

COMMENTS TO ZBA – OLIVER WRIGHT MEADOWS

The motion was made by Perkins to send the following comments to the ZBA on the special permit for Oliver Wright Meadows:

1. The Planning Board is reviewing the plan pursuant to § 218-25 Site Plan Review. The applicant will be submitting more information including architectural elevations, a lighting plan with a photometric diagram, and stormwater management plan.
2. The Board is very supportive of the plan and appreciates the applicant's willingness to construct rental units. The project will help the Town meet its affordable housing needs.
3. The Board recommends that the ZBA and the applicant work with the Selectmen, Police Chief, and Highway Surveyor to relocate the shooting range on the adjoining property owned by the Town.

The motion was seconded and passed with Barringer, Clements, Degen, Perkins, and Wilson in favor; Eliot

opposed.

Chairman Eliot stated that she is opposed to the motion because the site should be for commercial or industrial uses rather than for residential purposes.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION – McGOVERN PROPERTY, LONGLEY ROAD

(Chairman Eliot stepped down because she is an abutter.)

Vice Chairman Barringer chaired the informal discussion with members of the McGovern family, Attorney Robert Collins, and design engineer Robert Pine. Mr. Pine requested an interpretation from the Board on the submission of an ANR plan prior to the submission of an application for a special permit under the new Flexible Development provisions of the by-law. Mr. Pine showed the Board a plan depicting the location of the proposed ANR lot.

(Member Degen stepped down, stating that he does not like informal discussions as a procedure.)

Chairman Barringer reminded the applicant that plans cannot be displayed at informal discussion. Mr. Pine removed the plan.

(Member Degen returned to the Board because the plan was taken down.)

Mr. Collins described the location of the site owned by the McGoverns who have owned this land since the 1950's. Mr. McGovern's daughter would like to construct a house on the ANR lot on the property, but the McGoverns do not want to jeopardize their application for a special permit to develop the land in the future. Mr. Collins asked if the McGoverns could proceed with the creation of the ANR lot at this time. The land has considerable linear frontage along public ways and could be developed as ANR lots. However, the McGoverns would like to use the Flexible Development by-law to preserve the land.

Member Wilson noted that the provision prohibiting the creation of ANR lots is not longer in the by-law, although such a provision was contained in the previous Open Space Residential Development by-law. Member Wilson agree with using a creative approach in the development of this site with the houses set back away from the road. Mr. Pine agreed.

Member Degen said, at a previous informal discussion, he suggested that the applicant consider using the Residential Compound provisions. Mr. Collins said they are considering it.

PGI REALTY, 318 MAIN STREET

Attorney Robert Collins, representing PGI Realty, said the 24" drainage pipe at the 318 Main Street site had been damaged during construction. As it turns out, the pipe is actually 12" in diameter rather than 24". He said applicant Paul Palmer of PGI Realty plans to replace the pipe instead of repairing it. Mr. Palmer submitted Notice of Intent for the work with the Conservation Commission.

The Planning Board's site plan approval included the following condition:

“The 24" drainpipe under the existing building shall not be disturbed. If the pipe is damaged, it must be repaired at the expense of the applicant. If the pipe is located during construction, a Registered Land Surveyor shall show the elevation and location of the pipe on the as-built plan.”

The Board agreed that the pipe should be replaced and that the new pipe location should be shown on the as-built plan.

MILL RUN PLAZA

The Board received a letter dated December 15, 2004 from Attorney Collins regarding the installation of drainage pipes under the relocated Mill Street. The approved site plan shows a 24" culvert, but LandTech authorized the installation of two 15" culverts due to conditions in the field. The Board will forward the information to JNEI for review.

COMMENTS TO MEPA – ACADEMY HILL

The Board discussed its comments to MEPA on the Notice of Project Change submitted by LandWest, Inc. for the Academy Hill subdivision. The motion was made by Perkins to send the following comments to MEPA:

1. The Board voted to modify the special permit for the development on November 4, 2004. Condition#2 of the Special Permit Modification states:

“The applicant shall submit an application to modify the Academy Hill definitive plan approved by the Planning Board on May 14, 2002. The applicant shall obtain a Conservation Permit pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, GL Chapter 131A, §3, from the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program prior to submitting the proposed definitive plan modification to the Planning Board.”

2. All the traffic from this development will be directed onto Townsend Road increasing traffic in this area by 50%. The impact on the intersection of Townsend Road and Route 119, Townsend Road and West Main Street (Route 225), and Pepperell Road and Kemp Street should be evaluated.
3. The Board believes 94 units is still too much density for this environmentally fragile site.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

COMMENTS TO MEPA – WEST GROTON WATER SUPPLY ENF

The Board received a copy of the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the West Groton Water Supply District's proposal to develop a new well site in the Groton Town Forest. The motion was made by Perkins to send a letter to MEPA supporting the WGWSO proposal. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

ZONING AMENDMENTS

The Board discussed a list of possible zoning amendments to be presented at the 2005 Annual Town Meeting. Member Perkins suggested that the Board form a subcommittee to work on drafting the proposed amendments. The Board will meet with Mark Bobrowski on January 20, 2005 to work on the proposed amendments.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator