

GROTON PLANNING BOARD

JANUARY 20, 2005 MINUTES

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

Members present: Eliot, Clements, Lewis and Wilson

Member absent: Barringer, Degen and Perkins

WORK SESSION WITH MARK BOBROWSKI

The Board met with Planning Consultant Mark Bobrowski to discuss zoning amendments to be proposed at the 2005 Annual Town Meeting. Alvin Collins of the Historical Commission and Richard Dabrowski of both the Historic Districts Commission (HDC) and Historical Commission were present.

Accessory Apartments – The Board reviewed the December 19, 2004 draft of the accessory apartment provisions which permits accessory apartments in houses on hammerhead lots but not in houses on lots created by Flexible Development from 1980-2003. The accessory apartment cannot exceed 800 sq ft in floor area. Mr. Bobrowski said allowing apartments on Flexible Development lots would require modification of the original special permit because the Flexible Development by-law, prior to 2003, was limited to single-family use.

Mr. Bobrowski said in addition to adopting the Accessory Apartment provisions, §218-23.1 Hammerhead Lots would also have to be amended because the current provisions are limited to single-family use.

Richard Dabrowski said the HDC has encountered several illegal conversions when they review applications to create new driveway cuts or add parking spaces. He suggested that the Accessory Apartment provisions limit access to existing driveway cuts. Mr. Bobrowski agreed and will make the appropriate changes to Paragraph C5.

Mr. Dabrowski asked how the Town should deal with existing illegal apartments. Mr. Bobrowski said amnesty provisions could be added to the proposed amendment.

Ridgeline & Scenic Corridors – The Board discussed proposed Ridgeline and Scenic Corridor provisions. Mr. Bobrowski said in both cases, Site Plan Review is used to regulate development in these scenic resource areas. The proposed amendments do not prohibit development. The Courts have upheld similar provisions in other states.

Mr. Dabrowski said the Historical Commission and HDC are interested in the Scenic Roads by-law adopted in 1974. However, there are no regulations or guidelines. Mr. Bobrowski said the Scenic Roads provisions are different because they are adopted under Chapter 40, §15 of the General Laws. Scenic Roads provisions only apply to work within the public right-of-way, but Scenic Overlay provisions would regulate the area beyond the right-of-way. Mr. Bobrowski said Scenic Corridor provisions can be used to minimize the visual impact of ANR development.

Mr. Bobrowski urged the Planning Board to be very selective in deciding what roads should be included in the Scenic Overlay District. He suggested that photographs be taken and presented to Town Meeting. Only the roads that everyone agrees are scenic should be included in the first map. Other roads can be added at a later date if there is consensus.

Al Collins said it is still important to improve the Scenic Roads provisions in the meanwhile. The Historical Commission submitted a draft based upon Scenic Roads by-laws in other communities. Mr. Bobrowski provided the Board with a copy of Scenic Road regulations adopted by the Sterling Planning Board. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said Chapter 184 Scenic Roads states:

“§ 184-3. Additional standards. The Planning Board may adopt reasonable further standards relative to scenic roads not inconsistent with this chapter and the General Laws.”

The Planning Board can adopt regulations after holding a public hearing. The Board will review the draft submitted by the Historical Commission and the regulations adopted in Sterling. The Board will hold a public hearing on February

24, 2005 to consider adopting scenic road regulations.

Member Clements noted that the Town of Harvard has arterial street provisions with larger setbacks.

MINUTES

The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of November 18, 2004; December 2, 2004; December 9, 2004; and December 16, 2004.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT PROPOSALS

The Board received eight proposals from landscape architects in response to the RFP advertised in the Central Register. The Board will review the proposals and schedule interviews.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator