

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD
AUGUST 11, 2005
MINUTES**

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

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

Member absent: Barringer

ACADEMY HILL DEFINITIVE PLAN ENDORSEMENT

The motion was made by Perkins to accept the covenant with the effective date of June 30, 2005 (the date of the vote to approve) the Academy Hill subdivision. *The motion was seconded and passed with Degen, Eliot, Lewis, and Perkins in favor; Clements abstaining.*

The motion was made by Degen to endorse the Academy Hill definitive plan. *The motion was seconded and passed with Degen, Eliot, Lewis, and Perkins in favor; Clements abstaining.*

(Member Wilson arrived.)

The motion was made by Degen to accept the covenant as written with the effective date of August 4, 2005 (the date the 20-day appeal expired). *The motion was seconded and passed with Degen, Eliot, Lewis, and Perkins in favor; Clements and Wilson abstaining.*

NRWA – MARK ARCHAMBAULT

Mark Archambault of the Nashua River Watershed Association met with the Board to present his role as Smart Growth Circuit Rider, funded by an EPA grant. Mr. Archambault presented a power-point slide show describing the grant program in five towns in the Squannacook-Nissitissit basin and the on-going projects with other communities. The purpose of the grant is drinking water source protection.

The Board agreed that working with the Earth Removal Advisory Committee on a Stormwater Management-Low Impact Development By-law would be the best project for Mr. Archambault to assist with in Groton.

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

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on September 22, 2005 at 7:30 PM as requested by the applicant.

SITE PLAN REVIEW QUESTIONS

West Groton Water Supply District – Gordon Newell of the West Groton Water Supply District requested permission to pave the accessible parking spaces at the office on Townsend Road. Mr. Newell said the parking spaces must be paved as directed by an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation. The parking spaces are stonedust at the present time and do not comply with the regulations.

Chairman Clements asked if the area is within the 100-year floodplain. Mr. Newell said, “no.”

The motion was made by Lewis to accept the change to the site plan to comply with ADA as described in the letter dated July 27, 2005 from the West Groton Water Supply District. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

Platt Builders – Architect Tim Hess requested permission convert an existing apartment to expand the proposed business use. The site was rezoned from R-A to R-B in the fall of 2004, and the Board approved the site plan on May 15, 2005. Mr. Hess said the proposed revision creates private offices for six employees. The maximum number of employees is 12. The site has two existing parking spaces and credit for ten on-street spaces.

Member Perkins asked if the two spaces on the site are for the apartments and the ten on street are for employees, then

where will the customers park? Mr. Hess said he did not know, but that could be determined in the future.

Member Perkins expressed reservations about lack of parking at the site if the apartment is converted to offices.

Member Degen shared the concerns especially since the existing parking for the apartments is on land owned by the Congregational Church. He said he did not want to approve a change for the use of these parking spaces without a recorded easement.

Member Degen asked how many spaces are required. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said one space for every 180 sq ft plus two spaces for the apartment.

Member Lewis said he has the same concerns and there should be a permanent easement to park on the church's land.

PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – SAMANTHA REALTY TRUST MODIFICATION

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the modification of the special permit and site plan submitted by Samantha Realty Trust for property located at 785 Boston Road, aka 3 Forge Village Road. Applicants Steve and Frank Catalano, Attorney Brian Levey, design engineer Bruce Ringwall of GPR, Inc., traffic engineer Jennifer Conley of Conley Associates, and several abutters were present.

Mr. Ringwall said he met with the Board of Health to address the issues regarding the sewage disposal system. All issues have been resolved as stated in the report dated August 3, 2005 from the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health. The proposed day spa with seven hair-dressing chairs, a manicure station, pedicure station, and massage table, will dispose all its waste water to a tight tank as required by the Board of Health. All plumbing from the second floor will be connected to the tight tank. An existing well on the premises will be decommissioned and used to monitor groundwater quality. The amount of water used by the day spa will be monitored through meter readings and compared with the amount of waste water pumped from the tight tank. All pumping records will be submitted to the Board of Health.

Mr. Ringwall said the first floor will contain a Dunkin Donuts and Subway sandwich shop rather than a Dunkin Donuts and convenience store as proposed in the original special permit. Traffic will increase on Saturdays and during the evening peak hours, but the Level of Service (LOS) will stay at "B" during these times.

Member Wilson asked if all the concerns regarding the sewage disposal system had been resolved. Mr. Ringwall said, "yes."

Member Perkins asked if there would be an increase in parking with the proposed change of use. Mr. Ringwall said, "no," the uses with the original special permit required 84 parking spaces and the uses with the present application require 84 parking spaces as detailed on the "Parking Computations" table shown on the plan.

Member Perkins asked if there would be an increase in traffic flow. Ms. Conley said, "yes," on Saturdays at lunch time there will be approximately 50 trips per hour. The LOS will still be "B".

Member Degen asked if the amount of traffic doubled on Saturday and during the afternoon peak. Ms. Conley said, "yes."

Resident Linda DeCiccio noted that the Saturday trips increase from 130 to 235 as shown on the handout distributed at the previous hearing.

Member Degen asked about the queue on Forge Village and at the intersection. He asked if the numbers will change when the bridge in Forge Village is reopened.

Ms. Conley said she could not remember whether the traffic counts were taken before or after the bridge was closed, but they used the same baseline data as the original special permit project. She noted that the Board and its traffic consultant, Gary Hebert of FST, approved the original special permit plan.

Ms. DeCiccio said she recalled that the LOS was C with the original plan. Ms. Conley said the LOS is C during the morning peak with Dunkin Donuts, but the traffic peak from Subway will be at lunchtime and the evening when the LOS is B.

Sarah Campbell asked about tenant commitments, hours of operation, lighting and pedestrian access.

Michael Aho said it would be difficult turning left into and out of the site.

Ms. Frisby said she is concerned about traffic turning right on Route 119. There have been many close calls at this intersection.

Member Degen said the spa would be a great addition to the Town. However, he said he is concerned with the increase in traffic from the third new use. Ms. Conley said the original traffic data, from the Boston Road Marketplace traffic study, was taken when the Forge Village bridge was open. Left hand turn into and out of the site were considered with the original application. The morning peak is 320 trips, and the Saturday noon peak will have 235 trips. There is less traffic on the road on Saturdays than on week days. Left hand turns will not be a problem.

Ms. Campbell asked about pedestrian access and lighting. Mr. Ringwall said sidewalks connecting with MassHighway's sidewalks and the crosswalks are shown on the plan. He said there is no change in the lighting. The Board reviewed and approved a photometric diagram with the original application.

Ms. Frisby asked about the school bus stop on Forge Village Road. Ms. Conley said school buses were considered in the original application and shown in the traffic simulation presented by FST, the Board's traffic engineer.

Member Eliot asked about signage. Mr. Catalano said they are working with Broadmeadow Sign Studio on the sign.

Member Eliot asked if the applicant would be willing to meet with Dodson Associates, the Board's landscape architect. Mr. Ringwall said, "yes," they would be attending the meeting on August 17, 2005.

Member Lewis said the new traffic light will make a major difference in this location. He said he did not think that much additional traffic would be generated from the proposed change in use. He said he was ready to vote on the application.

Attorney Levey said the applicant is willing to grant an extension of the deadline if the Board would like to ask its traffic consultant to review the information. Members of the Board agreed that additional review is not necessary.

The Board voted unanimously to close the public hearing.

Mr. Levey said the applicant will still attend the August 17, 2005 meeting with Dodson Associates and will agree to any recommendations from that meeting.

The motion was made by Lewis to MODIFY the special permit to Samantha Realty Trust, LLC, to utilize the provisions of Groton Zoning By-law Section 218-30 Water Resource Protection Districts to allow a change of use from the office space to a day spa on the second floor and from a retail convenience store to a sandwich shop on the first floor, as shown on the plan entitled "Permit Plan, 785 Boston Road, Groton, MA," prepared by GPR, Inc., dated January 2004, with revisions through May 19, 2005.

Findings:

1. **Social, economic and community needs:** The proposed special permit plan serves social and community needs by renovating the existing historic structure on the property and by constructing a new building for office/retail use in a location zoned B-1.
2. **Traffic flow and safety:** The Planning Board reviewed the revised traffic study submitted by the applicant's

traffic engineer, Conley Associates. The Conley study determined that the Boston Road-Sandy Pond Road intersection will function at a Level of Service C or better in the future and that the exit from the site will function at a Level of Service B with the proposed change of use. The plan provides pedestrian access connecting with the sidewalks constructed by MassHighway.

3. **Adequacy of utilities:** The proposed use will be served by Town water and an on-site sewage disposal system, subject to the approval of the Board of Health.
4. **Neighborhood character:** The facility is located on land zoned B-1 (Business). Fencing and landscaping will screen the abutting residential area as shown on the plan.
5. **Impacts on the environment:** There is no surface or stormwater management system on the site today. The improvements to the site include installation of a new drainage system. Stormwater runoff and snowmelt will be directed to the new drainage system. Groundwater quality will be monitored in accordance with the condition contained herein. The existing sewage disposal system will be replaced with a new secondary treatment system in compliance with current regulations and the recommendations dated August 3, 2005 from the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health.
6. **Fiscal impact on the Town:** The proposed development will have a positive fiscal impact on the Town because the assessed value of the property and tax revenue will increase.
7. **Water Resource Protection Districts:** The Board received comments from the Board of Health and Water Department indicating that the installation of the new sewage disposal system, with the proposed secondary treatment process known as the "FAST" system, as well as the use of the tight tank for the day spa, will protect drinking water resources in the WRPD III District.

Conditions:

1. The sewage disposal system shall be installed and monitored in compliance with the following recommendations, dated August 3, 2005, from the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health:

"On August 1, 2005, in public meeting the Groton Board of Health voted unanimously to allow the project at the above-referenced location to discharge a maximum of 2,048 gallons per day (GPD) to an appropriately sized leaching facility. Furthermore, the Board unanimously voted that waste discharged to an industrial waste water holding tank should not be included as part of the maximum 2,048 GPD leaching facility discharge.

The Board of Health (BOH) placed the following conditions on the approval:

- The owner of the facility shall maintain at least one monitoring well on the site adjacent to the leaching facility and that monitoring well shall be sampled quarterly (once every three [3] months) for volatile organic compounds (EPA method 524) and heavy metals. The results of the sampling must be provided to the BOH in a timely manner.
 - All sewage effluent discharged to the leaching facility must be metered and the meter readings must be made available to the BOH upon request.
 - Any change of use of the facility, including but not limited to the types of business operations, must receive BOH approval.
 - All tight tank pumping records must be submitted to the BOH in a timely manner.
2. All conditions in Special Permit 2004-07 remain in full force and effect.
 3. This special permit modification runs with the land and applies to any successor in interest or successor in

control.

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

The motion was made by Lewis to approve the modification of the Level II site plan entitled, "Permit Plan, 785 Boston Road, Groton, MA," prepared by GPR, Inc., dated January 2004, with revisions through May 19, 2005, with the following conditions:

1. As agreed by the applicant, Certificates of Occupancy will not be issued for the restaurant-fast food establishments until Massachusetts Highway installs temporary or permanent signalization at the intersection of Route 119 and 225.
2. The sewage disposal system shall be installed and monitored in compliance with the recommendations, dated August 3, 2005, from the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health
3. All conditions in the original site plan approval, dated July 15, 2004, remain in full force and effect.
4. This special permit modification runs with the land and applies to any successor in interest or successor in control.

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

BROOKS LYMAN – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Brooks Lyman met with the Board to discuss his ideas for building affordable housing on town-owned land located off Cow Pond Brook Road. Mr. Lyman said he is acting as an individual and not as a member of the Groton Housing Authority at this point. He said funding is needed to do engineering studies of this 34-acre parcel owned by the Town. The cost of the preliminary engineering is between \$10,000 and \$20,000. If Town Meeting appropriates the funds, soil testing could be done in the spring of 2006.

Mr. Lyman said if the Town builds its own housing, future Chapter 40B applications can be avoided. He suggested using a ratio of 1:3 for required affordable units rather than 1:4, the minimum in Chapter 40B requirements.

The Board suggested that Mr. Lyman consult with the Highway Surveyor because he is very familiar with the site. The Board thanked Mr. Lyman for his initiative, but suggested that he work with the Groton Housing Authority on such affordable housing proposals.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Board discussed the proposed Scope of Services prepared by Dodson Associates for the Design Guidelines project. Members of the Board want to complete the work in phases, limit the cost, and focus on critical areas such as commercial and 40B developments.

The Board will set aside the last meeting of every month to work on Design Guidelines. The first meeting on the project will be on September 29, 2005 at 7:30 PM with Landscape Architect Peter Flinker of Dodson Associates.

CPA APPLICATIONS

Conservation Fund - The motion was made by Wilson to support the application for Community Preservation Funds submitted by Conservation Commission for \$200,000 to be added to the Conservation Fund. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

Fitch's Bridge - The motion was made by Wilson to support the application for Community Preservation Funds submitted by the Groton Greenway Committee for funding the structural design work for Fitch's Bridge. The restoration of the bridge for pedestrian access and passive recreation has been a goal since the 1980's. The bridge will provide the only non-motorized link between trails on the east and west sides of the Nashua River. The restoration of

the bridge also qualifies as an important historic preservation project. *The motion was seconded and passed with Clements, Degen, Eliot, Perkins, and Wilson in favor; Lewis abstaining.*

MINUTES

- The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of June 9, 2005.
- The Board voted to approve the minutes of June 16, 2005 (Degen abstaining).
- The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of June 30, 2005.
- The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of July 14, 2005.

EARTH REMOVAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Board voted unanimously to appoint Bruce Clements as its representative to the Earth Removal Advisory Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator