

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD
NOVEMBER 10, 2005
MINUTES**

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

SITE PLAN REVIEW – CROSSROADS PLAZA

The Board continued its review of the Crossroads Plaza site plan submitted by Nam Hang, LLC, for construction of 30,000 sq ft of retail space at the intersection of Boston Road and Sandy Pond Road. Applicant Joe Wong, design engineer Mark Sleger of LandTech, architect Philip Thibeault, real estate manager Frank Hartnett, and many abutters were present.

Mr. Thibeault presented the revised plan which reduces density from 30,000 to 27,000 sq ft. The applicant identified future tenants as requested by the Board. Curb cuts along Route 119 have been resolved with MassHighway and installed in the locations shown on the site plan. The buildings are closer to the street than on the previous plan. More landscaping has been added near the intersection. Speed bumps will be used to deter cut-through traffic. Sidewalks will be constructed for safe pedestrian access. Snow storage and trash removal issues have been addressed.

Mark Sleger said the new plan shows an improved engineering design with the sewage disposal system to be installed under the parking lot. The applicant will apply for a special permit under the Water Resource Protection Districts requirements once the lay-out of the site has been determined. Stormwater management will be handled with a closed drainage system and series of sumps. Oil and grease traps will be installed in all catch basins. Thenatural depression in the rear of the site will be used as a drainage basin. The site has well-drained, sandy soils as indicated in the soil logs.

Chairman Clements read comments from the Water Department, the Conservation Commission, the Board of Health, and the Fire Chief.

William Maher of Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc. (JNEI) presented his report dated November 11, 2005. Outstanding issues include the proposed increase in the number of parking spaces, the stormwater management issues, the amount of impervious surface, and the requirement a special permit pursuant to §218-30 Water Resource Protection Districts. In addition, seven parking spaces for the disabled must be provided as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Access Board regulations. The parking spaces should be located as close to the main entrances as possible.

Peter Flinker of Dodson Associates said he reviewed the site in the spring in relation to development around the Four Corners intersection. Pedestrian circulation in the Four Corners area is an important consideration. He requested that the applicant consider moving the buildings closer to the road so the parking could be in the rear of the site. He commented that the site layout had not changed since last March.

Mr. Thibeault responded that there are five buildings on the revised plan, rather than four. The two front buildings are connected now.

Gary Hebert of Fay, Spoffard and Thorndike (FST) presented his report dated November 8, 2005. Hesaid the latest plans show 30,600 sq ft of floor area, not 27,000 sq ft as previously stated. All left turns now have to go through the intersection of Boston Road and Sandy Pond Road. The new curb cuts are better than those shown on the previous site plan. There will be major traffic impacts from the development of this site. A left turn lane may be needed on Sandy Pond Road. He expressed concern with the turning radius for trucks and the potential hazard at the throat of the Sandy Pond Road entrance. He said the site should be designed to discourage cut through traffic. The steep grade of 8-10% at the Route 119 entrance with no real leveling area is a major issue. He said ADA requires seven parking spaces for

the disabled based upon the whole site, but 12 spaces are required if the calculation is based upon what is required for each building. He said he believes an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) must be submitted to MEPA for the proposed project.

Mr. Hebert expressed concern about the queue blocking times at the Sandy Pond Road access in the PM peak hours. He noted that Route 119 has a finite capacity of 1450 trips per hour. If this volume is exceeded, the queue could back up through the intersection.

Mr. Sleger said traffic engineer Jennifer Conley is not present at this meeting, but she will prepare a written response to Mr. Hebert's report.

Member Lewis asked about collection of stormwater and icing on the steep access at Route 119. He also expressed concern about safety at the 17-ft high versa-lok wall. Mr. Sleger said a guardrail and fence will be installed as required by the Massachusetts Building Code.

Member Lewis asked about lighting and dumpsters. He stated that there is too much impervious surface shown on the proposed plan and not enough room for snow storage.

Member Degen said the original plan was submitted to the Planning Board over a year ago and he would have preferred to see the plan much farther along at this stage. He noted that the design of the retaining wall must be stamped by the Structural Engineer and that a fence at the top of the wall is required. Mr. Sleger said Versa-Lok will provide stamped plans for the wall.

Member Degen stated that soil logs must be submitted for the site, including any off site drainage areas. There is a stone wall shown in the front of the site. The plan should specify a boulder wall rather than a block wall in this location. Member Degen said the plant material table states, "or similar". He said "or similar" should be removed from the plans. In conclusion, Member Degen stated that he has no problem with the proposed lay-out of the buildings.

Member Perkins asked how much fill would be required. Mr. Sleger said he does not know the quantity at this time.

Member Perkins expressed concern with the density of the proposed development and the steep slope of the access on Route 119. Mr. Sleger said MassHighway dictated the locations and configuration of the curb cuts.

Member Perkins said the Board must look at stormwater issues as well as impact on groundwater quality. She asked the applicant to submit a three-dimensional, scale model for this site. Mr. Sleger said the scale model can be very expensive to construct. He requested that the model not be submitted until the layout is finalized.

The motion was made by Perkins to require a three-dimensional plan as stated in §218-25G2(h). ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

Member Perkins asked if the sidewalks along Route 119 could have a green space between the sidewalk and the road. Mr. Sleger said these sidewalks are as shown on the MassHighway plan. Member Degen suggested checking with MassHighway on the possibility of changing the sidewalks before they are constructed. Mr. Sleger said he would follow-up with MassHighway.

Member Wilson said the density shown on the plan is much too great. He said the amount of density is creating the problem with the applicant's flexibility in redesigning the site. He agreed that the buildings should be moved closer to the intersection with the parking in the rear. There is too much impervious surface on the proposed plan and not enough screening at the front of the site. The applicant should work toward softening the impact of the development of this site and consider other designs.

Member Barringer stated his concerns about the entrance off Sandy Pond Road accommodating trucks and other traffic. He agreed that the buildings should be scaled down to reduce the required number of parking spaces. He said

there will be problems at the entrance off Boston Road that may cause stacking on Boston Road. He said the five parking spaces near the throat of the Boston Road entrance should be eliminated. Member Barringer stated that safe emergency vehicle access is required from both entrances. He requested that the applicant submit a photometric plan of the proposed lighting as well as architectural elevations showing the colors of the buildings.

Member Barringer asked about the groundwater elevations. Mr. Sleger said testing has been done and the results will be submitted to the Board. Member Barringer said the Board must see the soil logs.

Chairman Clements said there are many environmental issues with this site including Conservation Commission, Board of Health and Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) concerns. He asked if an ENF would be submitted. Mr. Sleger said it is in progress. Mr. Sleger said they would meet with the Conservation Commission to discuss these issues.

Chairman Clements asked if the proposed development would cause backup on Route 119 in the future. Mr. Hebert said, "yes," if the volume exceeds the capacity of the road. It could be difficult to merge at the intersection.

Member Degen requested that the applicant respond to the Fire Chief's request for Opticom scanners for emergency vehicles.

Linda Diciccio said it would be very helpful if the plans showed the houses on the other side of Route 119. She asked about hours of operation, delivery times, and traffic cutting through the parking lot.

David Martin asked how the engineers could determine the pre-construction conditions at the site with the level of disturbance.

Sarah Campbell said the Four Corners Neighborhood Association submitted a letter of concern in 2004. The Association is still concerned about the same issues. She noted that the buildings face away from the road so the rear of the building will be seen from Route 119. She asked about the length of time that traffic will be congested in the future. Mr. Hebert said about two to three hours per day, but not only as a result of this plan.

Member Degen said the Board should see the rear elevations of the Building 1 & 5 because these buildings do not face Route 119.

Member Lewis requested that the HVAC units be screened. Mr. Thibeault said a "well" will be constructed in the roof to screen the units.

John Giger said the plan is fundamentally flawed because it is trying to squeeze too much building on this site. He said the plans should be designed to fit on the land.

Member Degen said the plan must be designed to meet all the zoning requirements. Member Perkins said she is not sure that this plan complies.

Sarah Campbell asked about hours of operation and harmonious development. Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said both are under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen.

The applicant requested that the Board continue its review and extend the deadline.

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline to February 28, 2006 as requested by the applicant.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the site plan review on January 5, 2006 at 7:30 PM.

SHAW'S LIGHTING PLAN

The motion was made by Lewis to send a letter to Shaw's requesting that it comply with the site plan approval conditions to reduce lighting after the store closes and to prohibit left hand turns from the access onto Route 119. The

Board will request a response within one week. *The motion was seconded and passed with Clements, Degen, Lewis, Perkins and Wilson in favor; Barringer abstaining.*

GROTON RESIDENTIAL GARDENS

Design engineer Mark Sleger of LandTech met with the Board to describe the proposed modifications to the drainage system at the Groton Residential Gardens development. He said he was representing LandTech at the meeting. The Board is concerned because Mill Run Plaza and Groton Residential Gardens share the third detention basin. After heavy rainstorms in October, the basin overflowed and flooded abutting properties on Anthony Drive.

Mr. Sleger said the system was designed to handle the 100-year storm, but there were a series of rain events in October that saturated the ground and exceeded the design standards. In addition runoff from Route 119 flowed into the basin and compounded the situation.

Mr. Sleger said the proposed solution raises the elevation of the berm around the detention basin to 219 ft and will provide an emergency overflow connection to the catch basin in Route 119. The Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing to consider the proposed modification on November 16, 2005.

Member Perkins expressed concern that the wall at the emergency vehicle access road off Anthony Drive created a dam and caused water back up in the yard at 10 Anthony Drive. Mr. Sleger said the previous owners at 10 Anthony Drive had water problems prior to the construction of Groton Residential Gardens. However, he said a new culvert would be installed under the emergency vehicle access road to accommodate the flow of water.

Member Lewis noted the problems with flooding at this site over the years, the poor soil conditions and the high groundwater levels.

Member Barringer asked about the connection to the storm drain system in Route 119 because the water in the catch basin on Route 119 was up to the grate during the rain on October 15. Mr. Sleger said the peak flows would not occur at the same time. A riser above the 100-year flood elevation will be used in the emergency overflow pipe and the system will discharge at a later time.

The motion was made by Degen to recommend that the Zoning Board of Appeals require the following additional measures to help correct drainage problems at the Groton Residential Gardens site:

1. The final retention basin at Groton Residential Gardens receives stormwater from Mill Run Plaza, Mill Street, and the drainage system at Groton Residential Gardens site. Therefore, siltation should be removed from the two detention basins at Mill Run Plaza, if recommended by Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc. (JNEI), to prevent siltation and degradation of the final retention basin.
2. The applicant should submit the deep hole and soil logs to the Zoning Board of Appeals, as required in Condition #27A of the Comprehensive Permit, to verify the high groundwater level and soil conditions at the site.
3. The catch basins at Mill Run Plaza should be cleaned each spring and fall, or more frequently if necessary, as required in the "Maintenance Schedule" shown on the "Erosion Control Plan - Mill Run Plaza" (sheet EC-1). Catch basin cleaning and other maintenance measures (Items 1-5) are essential to prevent siltation of the final detention basin at Groton Residential Gardens. The entire drainage system must be properly maintained in order to function as designed.
4. The Highway Surveyor should investigate whether the realignment of Mill Street is contributing to the drainage problems. Perhaps the pavement should be planed to direct runoff to the catch basin at the intersection of Mill Street and Route 119. In addition, adding a berm along Anthony Drive may help alleviate flooding problems at 10 Anthony Drive. These measures are under the jurisdiction of the Highway Surveyor because Mill Street and Anthony Drive are public ways.

5. The developer and homeowners on Anthony Drive should be encouraged to work together to find a permanent solution to the drainage problems on the Anthony Drive lots. The Board stresses the importance of ensuring that the drainage problems on abutting lots must be resolved.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator