

GROTON PLANNING BOARD

MARCH 9, 2006

MINUTES

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

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

SITE PLAN REVIEW – ROCKY HILL

The Board considered the site plan for landscaping at the Rocky Hill subdivision. Attorney Robert Collins, design engineer Robert Pine, and landscape architect Lorayne Black presented the plan.

Mr. Collins noted that the definitive plan and all the special permit decisions have been recorded at the Registry of Deeds. The proposed site plan shows the street trees as well as access and parking for the open space area. Two other site plans will be submitted in the future for the 12 starter homes and the 24 units of housing for people 55 and older.

Ms. Black said the plan shows a natural street landscape with many native species including red maples, red oaks, white pines, paper birch, honey locust, etc. Disease-resistant American Elm will also be planted. Native shrubs and boulders will be used to provide a more natural look in the cul de sac areas. Trees will be clustered to provide visual screening.

Member Degen said he liked the way the deciduous trees will be clustered as shown on the plan. He asked if the trees would be nursery grown or collected in the field. Mr. Collins said both – some would be from a nursery and some would be transplanted from the site. Member Degen suggested asking the Tree Warden for his opinion. He said white pines are not an acceptable street tree because they would not provide screening in the future. Norway or white spruce would provide much better screening.

Mr. Pine said the primary purpose of street trees is not to provide screening, but the white pines will provide immediate screening until the trees planted by homeowners become mature. There are many more trees shown on the plan than required in the subdivision regulations. Ms. Black said the tree canopy will provide a visual barrier along the street.

Member Perkins said the plating plan looks very nice. Members Wilson and Eliot agreed.

Chairman Clements said there is a nice density of trees shown on the plan.

Mr. Collins said they would look into augmenting the white pines with more shrubs. Member Barringer agreed that it would be helpful to have some under story in certain locations.

Member Degen reminded the applicant to consult with the Tree Warden.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the site plan review on March 16, 2006 at 8:45 PM.

OLIVER WRIGHT MEADOWS

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline for Oliver Wright Meadows to April 30, 2006 as requested in the letter dated March 9, 2006 from Attorney Robert Collins.

MILL RUN PLAZA

(Member Wilson stepped down)

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline for the potential modification of the Mill Run Plaza site plan to March 31, 2006 as requested in the letter dated March 9, 2006 from Attorney Robert Collins.

The motion was made by Barringer to forward the Fay, Spofford & Thorndike report to the Building Inspector for his

review and follow-up action. The motion was seconded.

Member Eliot said she would prefer to meet with the Building Inspector to discuss the matter first. She suggested that the Board ask FST to attend the March 29, 2006 hearing with the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The motion did not pass with Clements, Barringer, and Perkins in favor; Degen, Eliot and Lewis opposed.

The motion was made by Barringer to send the FST report to the Building Inspector for his review. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

The motion was made by Degen to request that the Building Inspector measure the footprints of buildings 1 – 5 at Mill Run Plaza in the field. ***The motion was seconded and passed with Barringer, Clements, Degen, Eliot, and Lewis in favor; Perkins abstaining.***

CROSSROADS PLAZA

Design engineer Bruce Ringwall met with the Board to request an extension of the deadline for the Crossroads Plaza site plan. He said the footprints of the buildings have been reduced from 30,000 square feet to 19,000 square feet. The number of parking spaces has also been reduced from 228 to 130 spaces. He said he would like to meet with the Board's design consultant Peter Flinker of Dodson Associates to discuss the plan before it is finalized.

Members Degen and Lewis said they would prefer to see the plan presented at a Planning Board meeting with abutters present prior to the design engineer's meeting with Mr. Flinker. Mr. Ringwall said he plans to meet with the Four Corners Neighborhood Association before they submit the revised plan to the Board.

Member Eliot said the applicant is making an effort to respond to the Board's concerns and come up with a better plan. She said meeting with Mr. Flinker ahead of time will save everyone time and money. Member Perkins added that the Board asked the applicant to meet with Mr. Flinker the last time Crossroads Plaza was discussed.

Member Degen said he would agree as long as the meeting is posted as a work session so others could attend. The Board agreed.

Mr. Ringwall requested a waiver to allow a scale of 1"=30' rather than 1"=40'. The Board agreed.

Mr. Ringwall also requested that the Board reconsider its requirement for a scale model because it is very expensive to produce. He suggested using a computer-aided model instead. Member Perkins said she would like to see the plans first and then decide on the scale model. The Board agreed.

The motion was made by Barringer to extend the deadline on the preliminary plan to May 18, 2006 as requested by the applicant. ***The motion was seconded and passed with Barringer, Clements, Eliot, Lewis, Perkins, and Wilson in favor; Degen abstaining.***

The motion was made by Barringer to extend the deadline on the Crossroads Plaza site plan to July 28, 2006 as requested by the applicant. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

(Member Lewis left the meeting.)

SITE PLAN REVISION – WALTER PLATT, 214 MAIN STREET

The Board received a letter dated March 7, 2006 from Walter Platt along with a License Agreement from the Union Congregational Church for access to his property zoned Residential Business. Mr. Platt requested that the Board approve the conversion of one of the apartments to office use as a change to his site plan approval dated May 19, 2005. He said ten spaces are required for the business use and four spaces for the remaining two apartments. There are seven or eight spaces on the site and credit for ten parking spaces on the street.

The motion was made by Barringer to approve the change to the Level I site plan entitled, "Platt Builders Design

Studio”, prepared by Walter H. B. Platt, dated April 29, 2005, as described in the attached letter dated March 7, 2006, with the following conditions:

1. If the “License to Use Driveway,” granted by the Union Congregational Church on January 23, 2006, is revoked, the applicant must submit a revised site plan to the Planning Board in accordance with § 218-25 Site Plan Review.
2. All conditions in the original site plan approval, dated May 19, 2005, remain in full force and effect.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

ANR PLAN – LARSEN, MARTINS POND ROAD

The Board considered the Approval Not Required plan submitted by Lawrence Larsen to create one new lot on Martins Pond Road. Mr. Larsen and Attorney Ray Lyons were in attendance.

Mr. Lyons explained the history of the lot that was part of the Star House Lane subdivision, approved in 1986 under the “By Right Flexible” provisions in effect at that time. Mr. Lyons said there was a notation on the definitive plan stating, “Lot 1 through 7 shown on the plan shall not be further subdivided to create additional lots.” However, Lot 1 has 3.82 acres and 488 feet of frontage on Martins Pond Road, not on Star House Lane. Lot 1 could have been created with an ANR plan in 1986. Mr. Lyons submitted a copy of Chapter 41, §81Y, regarding the Planning Board’s authority to waive the note on the plan.

The Board confirmed that all the lots on the Star House Lane subdivision plan had more than sufficient acreage and frontage without reliance on Lot 1.

The motion was made by Eliot to waive the condition of the “Definitive Subdivision of Land in Groton, Mass., Prepared for the Builders Collaborative, Inc., prepared by Charles Perkins Co., Inc. (the “Builders Plan”), that states that the lots shown on the Builders Plan shall not be further subdivided to create additional lots. This waiver does not apply to Lots 2 – 7 as shown on the Builders Plan; Lots 2-7 shall continue to be subject to this restriction against further subdivision.

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

The motion was made by Wilson to endorse as Approval Not Required, the plan entitled, “Plan of Land, Groton, Massachusetts, Owner: Lawrence Larsen,” prepared by Ducharme & Dillis, dated February 8, 2006. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

ROCKWOOD LANE

The Board of Selectmen received a petition from the residents of Rockwood Lane requesting that the street be accepted as a public way. The West Throne subdivision was completed in 2002, but the Board held the bond for an additional year until the spring of 2003. The developer never requested that the Town accept Rockwood Lane, and the Highway Department has been plowing and maintaining the road since 2003.

The motion was made by Degen that the Board of Selectman lay out Rockwood Lane as a public way. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

FITCH’S BRIDGE FUNDING

Member Degen, the Board’s representative to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, said the MRPC will consider its recommendation for including the reconstruction of Fitch’s Bridge on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) list at its meeting on March 15, 2006. He said he plans to attend the meeting and requested that the Board write a letter of support.

The motion was made by Barringer to support the application for funding the reconstruction of Fitch’s Bridge for non-motorized use. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator