

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD**  
**SEPTEMBER 21, 2006**  
**MINUTES**

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

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

**SITE PLAN REVIEW – GDRS TEMPORARY LIGHTS**

The Planning Board reviewed the site plan submitted by the Groton Dunstable Regional School District to install temporary lights on the playing fields behind the Middle School. Superintendent of Schools Alan Genovese, Business Manager Tim Sheehan, Facilities Manager Steve Burne, and School Committee members Chuck McKinney, Berta Erickson, and Karen Lofgren were present.

Dr. Genovese presented the plans to install temporary lighting behind the Middle School South as requested by a youth football league. The Building Inspector permitted the lights to be used this week so Board members and abutters could observe the lights. Dr. Genovese thanked the Board for expediting the process.

Mr. Burne said the lights are more than 600 ft from the neighbors on Champney Street.

David Howes of the Groton Football League said the lights would be on from 5:30 to 7:30 PM, but it takes time to set up and break down.

Member Degen said he walked around the school and neighborhood from Champney Street to Common Street to observe the lights and noise. He said the noise from the generator dissipated quickly. There is a line of mature trees between the playing field with the lights and the track. Approximately 60% of the trees are evergreen and 40% are deciduous.

Member Capes said he walked the site, too. He said the noise from the children playing was louder than the generators.

Member Perkins said the lights must be placed carefully to protect the neighbors.

Chairman Wilson said the lights are not shielded now, but that can be modified on the ground. There is significant distance between the lights and the nearest neighbor. He agreed that the orientation of the lights is critical.

Abutter Karen Johnson said the lights shine right into her house. She said the lights can be seen from every room in the house. There is a lot of light and a lot of noise. She added that she is worried about the increase in use in the future.

Abutter Al Demeo said the aura cast a glow over the field. The glare goes in all directions. Light pollution impacts wildlife in the area. The Football League is trying to extend the day with these lights. He expressed concern about West Nile virus and Triple-E for the players, parents and other children who are spectators.

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Abutter Dorothy Davis said the football practice is the loudest activity she has ever heard. The use of the fields into late hours of night is a concern to the neighborhood. Member Degen responded that this situation is temporary only. The GDRSD can look for other sites. If there is adverse impact from the temporary lights, the Board will consider this when reviewing future applications.

Maureen Moisson of Champney Street asked how the temporary lights differ from permanent lights. Chairman Wilson said the Board is only considering the site plan for the installation of temporary lights at this time.

Member Eliot noted that this is not a school program – it is a private organization.

Football league member Kathy Mitchell asked the Board to approve the lights for the next 30 days to give the Football League time to investigate other options for next year.

Karen Johnson noted that the permanent lights would be on 45 ft high poles with 10 ft in the ground and 35 ft above ground. She said there would be 12 poles with 1500 watts on each pole. She said the neighborhood would like to help find a solution for the children.

Don Pomeroy noted that there are only 12 nights left to practice. Member Perkins asked if this season is the first year. Mr. Howes said, “yes.” The School District told the Football League is they could raise the money, they could install the lights in the field. No one ever told them to talk to the abutters. He said he would move the lights if they are causing any problems for the abutters. He said the fathers who coach the program work all day so the practice is schedule at night so fathers can participate.

Football league member Patty Wheeler said football takes more training and preparation than soccer. Practice is longer to provide better conditioning for the seven and eight year old children.

Karen Johnson asked why the football league does not use the lighted fields at the new high school. Mr. Howe said the high school fields are used for soccer and field hockey.

School Committee Chairman Chuck McKinney said football practice starts between 5:30 and 6:00 PM. Soccer practices goes to 7:15 PM at the Cow Pond Brook Road fields.

Mr. Pomeroy said the volunteers work during the day and cannot begin the program until 5:30 or 6:00 PM.

Planning Administrator Michelle Collette said the Board received a letter dated September 21, 2006 from Attorney Robert Collins on behalf of the Groton Dunstable Youth Football and Cheerleading Group. Mr. Collins suggested conditions of approval for the Board’s consideration.

Member Perkins asked if the lights could be oriented so they do not face any houses. Mr. Howe said they would try to reconfigure the lights. He presented a brief video of the field with the lights on from a variety of locations.

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Member Eliot said the lights should be pointed downward and shielded as required in the regulations.

Member Wilson asked if the applicant submitted a photometric diagram. Mr. McKinney said the lighting specifications were submitted with the Site Plan Review application.

Member Degen said this is a Level I site plan for temporary lights only. A photometric diagram is not required at this time but will be required when an application is submitted for permanent lights. The applicant's attorney believes this use is exempt, but the Planning Board does not agree.

The motion was made by Degen to approve the installation of temporary lighting for use until October 19, 2006, or until December 1, 2006 if the team makes the playoffs, with the following conditions:

1. Lighting is to be utilized on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays.
2. Lighting shall be turned off no later than 8:00PM.
3. The lighting units shall not be placed any closer than 500 ft to abutting residences.
4. The lighting units shall be placed in a manner that is unobtrusive to abutters. If there are issues with the lights, the abutter shall notify the Groton Dunstable Youth Football and Cheerleading Group, the Planning Board or the Building Inspector.

The motion was seconded.

The motion was made by Eliot to amend the main motion to include a condition that the applicant must investigate alternative sites that do not impact the character of the neighborhood.

The motion to amend was seconded.

Member Degen said requiring that the applicant find another location is not a reasonable condition. Member Barringer agreed.

***The motion to amend was defeated with Clements and Eliot in favor; Wilson, Barringer, Capes, Degen, and Perkins opposed.***

The motion was made by Wilson to amend the main motion by adding a condition that the Groton Dunstable Youth Football and Cheerleading Group shall investigate alternative playing fields for future use. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

The motion was made by Barringer to amend the main motion by adding a condition that the lights shall be tilted downward 10° from horizontal to reduce sky glare. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

***The main motion, as amended, passed with Wilson, Barringer, Capes, Clements, Degen and Perkins in favor; Eliot opposed.***

**SITE PLAN REVIEW – WEST GROTON WATER SUPPLY DISTRICT**

The Planning Board reviewed the site plan submitted by the West Groton Water Supply District. WGWSO Superintendent Gordon Newell presented a plan to construct a 2000-ft long, 12-ft wide access road and new pumping station in the Town Forest. Mr. Newell said they make daily trips to the pumping station and monthly trips to the well. The 80' x 130' parking area will be for contractors and will not be open to the public.

Chairman Wilson read the comments from the Police Chief, the Fire Chief and the Board of Health.

Member Barringer asked about the nearby ponds. Mr. Newell said the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and the Conservation Commission approved the project. In addition, the WGWSO granted an easement to the Town for the public access on the former railroad bed for passive recreation use. Access will be gated to prevent large vehicles from using the road.

Member Clements said he walked the site with the Conservation Commission and the WGWSO has done a meticulous job on the site.

Member Barringer asked if chemicals would be in a containment area. Mr. Newell said, "yes."

The motion was made by Degen to consider the Site Plan Review application as a Level I because there is less than 2000 sq ft of building construction and only one parking space. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

The motion was made by Degen to approve the plan entitled, "Plans for Water Main Installation, DEP – DWSRF – 2852, Contract 2 of 3," prepared by Dufresne Henry, dated June 1, 2006, with the following conditions:

1. The construction entrance shall be stabilized for a minimum distance of 50 ft as shown on the "Construction Entrance" detail from the "Massachusetts Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines for Urban and Suburban Areas."
2. The pumping station shall have only one external light. The light shall be shielded and on a motion detector.
3. Only one parking space shall be constructed at the pumping station.

*The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

**PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – SPECIAL PERMIT, EDMANDS SHARED DRIVEWAY**

At the request of the applicant, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on October 5, 2006 at 7:30 PM.

**PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – SPECIAL PERMIT, ORCHARD REALTY TRUST**

The Board continued the public hearing to consider the application submitted by Orchard Realty Trust to construct a shared driveway serving two lots on Reedy Meadow Road. Surveyor Stan Dillis presented the plan.

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Mr. Dillis said he cannot save the tree at the entrance of the driveway and address the Fire Chief's concerns about safety. He said a drop inlet structure was added to the stormwater management plan to eliminate the swale along Reedy Meadow Road.

Chairman Wilson read the Fire Chief's comments dated September 20, 2006. Mr. Dillis said he would submit plans to the Fire Chief demonstrating that the driveway has an adequate turning radius.

Planning Administrator Michelle Collette asked the Board if it would like to send the plans to Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc. (JNEI) for review at the applicant's expense. The Board said, "yes." Mr. Dillis agreed.

Member Degen asked if the driveway has a 10% grade. Mr. Dillis said the grade is 8-10%.

Member Degen asked if a clearing limitation could be added to the plan. Mr. Dillis said, "yes."

Member Clements asked about the length of the driveway. Mr. Dillis said the shared driveway is 350 ft long.

Member Clements expressed concern about losing this specimen tree.

Member Degen said the applicant must prove that each lot can be accessed through its frontage.

Member Perkins asked about drainage structures in the street. Mr. Dillis said the street would be cross-sloped to contain the runoff that flows onto the road now.

Member Degen said he would like to hear from the Conservation Commission before voting on this special permit. Mr. Dillis said he is presenting the plan to the Conservation Commission next week.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on October 19, 2006 at 8:30 PM.

#### **MONARCH PATH SPECIAL PERMIT DECISION**

The Board reviewed the draft special permit decision for the Monarch Path subdivision. Superintendent Tom Orcutt was present to express concern about the proposed condition about Town Water. The draft condition stated:

"The water main shall not be extended to the abutting property, Assessors' Lot 253-23, located to the west of the site."

Mr. Orcutt submitted a memorandum dated September 12, 2006 with copies of his comments dated September 12, 2005 and July 20, 2006, regarding the need to loop the water system. He said public water should be extended to the adjacent site owned by Mattbob via Bayberry Road and Sunset Road as stated in the Comprehensive Permit. He said there are many benefits to water quality and fire protection from looping water mains. The Board should not be shortsighted and impose such a condition limiting how water is extended in the future.

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Member Degen said he agreed with Mr. Orcutt on the benefits of looping water mains. He said he proposed the condition because water should not be extended from Monarch Path to the Oakridge development. However, he would not have a problem if water is extended in the reverse direction. Mr. Orcutt said the projects and routes have not been approved by the Water Commissioners yet.

Member Barringer suggested that the Board ask Town Counsel for an opinion on the proposed condition.

The Board will also ask Town Counsel about restricting the lots to single family use only.

Mr. Masahledan said he has been working on this project for eight years and no one has come forward to assist him in the process. He said he has spent a lot of time, money and effort.

The Board postponed voting on the decision until September 28, 2006 so it could consult with Town Counsel.

#### **ACADEMY HILL UPDATE**

The Board met with developer Bruce Wheeler, Attorney Louis Levine, and landscape architect Cindy O'Connell of Beals Associates to discuss the Academy Hill development.

Ms. O'Connell presented the plan for the single family condominiums and multifamily cluster on Lots A, B and B-1. She also showed the Board architectural elevations of the proposed buildings. She said 10 of the 24 units on Lot B will be affordable as required in the special permit.

Chairman Wilson said there are too many garages in the front of the buildings. He asked if some of the garage doors could be on the side of the buildings instead of the front. Mr. Wheeler agreed.

Ms. O'Connell presented the proposed field change for the outlet structure. She said JNEI and the Conservation Commission reviewed and approved the change.

The motion was made by Perkins to approve the field change shown on the plan entitled, "Exhibit Plan, Detention Pond 50 Outlet, for Academy Hill in the Town of Groton, Massachusetts," dated August 31, 2006, prepared by Beals Associates, with the condition that the change be shown on the as-built plan. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

#### **BEALS ASSOCIATES LETTER - TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND**

The Board received a letter dated September 12, 2006 from Beals Associates regarding the Surrenden Farms project with the Trust for Public Land. Ms. O'Connell presented a sketch plan showing the proposed new ANR lots including one hammerhead lot. The Board said a special permit is required for the hammerhead lot. The Board agreed that a new special permit for Major Residential Development is not required because only one new building lot is being proposed. All the other lots contain existing houses.

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Member Degen questioned the new lot shown on Farmers Row. Ms. O'Connell said that lot was shown on the original ANR plan previously endorsed by the Planning Board. Member Degen said the lot was not shown on the Surrenden Farms definitive plan.

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE**

The Planning Board will request funding at the October 23, 2006 Special Town Meeting for master planning, design guidelines, a feasibility study, and preparation of zoning amendments for the Station Avenue Redevelopment.

The motion was made by Degen to request \$50,000 based upon the cost estimate prepared by Dodson Associates. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette  
Planning Administrator