

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD  
NOVEMBER 30, 2006  
MINUTES**

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

**PUBLIC HEARING – CRYSTAL SPRINGS ESTATES SPECIAL PERMIT**

At the request of the applicant, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on the special permit for Crystal Springs Estates to January 25, 2007 at 7:30 PM.

**BATTEN WOODS**

The Planning Board received a letter dated November 26, 2006 from homeowners John and Sheryl O’Sullivan regarding a number of outstanding matters on their lot in the Batten Woods.

The motion was made by Perkins to send a letter to developer Ken Mok of Verdant Arch requesting that he remove the fence posts that were installed around the detention basin because the basin drains and does not hold standing water. The Board will remind him that the Board is still holding \$5000 in the performance bond until all issues with the subdivision road and drainage system have been resolved.

**PUBLIC HEARING – ROCKY HILL SPECIAL PERMIT MODIFICATION**

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the application submitted by Fox Meadow Realty Corporation to modify the special permit for the Rocky Hill subdivision. Applicant David Moulton, Attorney Robert Collins, and design engineer Drew Garvin of R. Wilson and Associates were present at the public hearing.

Mr. Collins reiterated the proposed modifications to the plan including a reduced setback for the house on Lot 2 and the relocation of Lot 3 from the area near Route 119 to an area in the interior portion of the site. The elimination of Lot 3 will enlarge the area of Lot 4 to 47,500 square feet. An easement will be added to the plan establishing a “no cut” area along the subdivision road between Route 119 and Quail Ridge Road in order to protect the vegetated buffer and view from Route 119.

Mr. Collins said a new lot (Lot 36A) will be created in the area near the age-restricted housing so there will be three lots rather than two lots in this location. No grade changes are required for the reconfiguration of these lots.

Member Degen said he does not have any concerns about the reduced set back. He would prefer not to see a retaining wall installed, but the grading will have to be done carefully to preserve the hardwood trees. He asked about the location of Lot 36A in relation to the age-restricted housing. Mr. Collins pointed out the lots to be reconfigured.

Member Capes asked how much land area would be taken from the lot with the age-restricted housing to create Lot 36A. Mr. Garvin said about 9000 sq ft of lot area would be transferred to create Lot 36A. Mr. Collins said the change in the location of the houses is very slight.

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Member Perkins asked about the size of the smallest lot in this area. Mr. Garvin said the smallest lot is 17,000 sq ft.

Mr. Collins said the applicant is requesting a waiver to allow a 2:1 slope so the retaining wall along Robin Hill Road does not have to be constructed as shown on the definitive plan. It is better to have a natural slope in this location instead of a retaining wall.

Chairman Wilson asked if grading the 2:1 slope would require tree removal. Mr. Collins said constructing the retaining wall would require removal of more trees.

The Board's engineer, William Maher of Nitsch Engineering, said he would look at the site and make a recommendation to the Board. He said he would prefer a 3:1 slope rather than a 2:1 slope. He noted that a guardrail would be required in this location.

Chairman Wilson asked if a 3:1 slope would require the removal of more trees. Mr. Collins said the trees to be removed would be replaced with new plantings as shown on the landscaping plan.

Mr. Garvin said there is a stable 1:1 slope there today. A 3:1 slope can be created but there would be less tree removal with a 2:1 slope. Mr. Maher requested that the area be staked in the field to show the proposed grade changes. Mr. Garvin agreed to do so. Mr. Collins will submit a written request for the waiver and will submit the ANR plan for the Board's consideration.

The Board voted unanimously to close the public hearing.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING – 536 MAIN STREET SPECIAL PERMIT**

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40A, §§ 9 and 11, M. G. L., the Groton Planning Board held a public hearing to consider the application submitted by Gillis Homes for a Special Permit, under the provisions of Groton Zoning By-law Section 218-25 Site Plan Review, for approval of the Level II site plan entitled, "Commercial Development, 536 North Main Street, Groton, MA," prepared by GPR, Inc., dated November 14, 2006. The proposed project is located on Assessors' Map 216, Parcel 93, located on the easterly side of Main Street.

Chairman Wilson called the public hearing to order. Clerk Capes read the notice published in the November 17 and 23, 2006 issues of *The Groton Herald*. Applicant Steven Gillis and design engineer Jude Gauvin of Goldsmith, Prest & Ringwall (GPR), and the Board's consulting engineering William Maher of Nitsch Engineering were present.

Mr. Gauvin presented the plan to construct a new, two story business building located on a one acre site. The second story of the building will contain offices and the first story will be retail use. There are 50 parking spaces shown on the plan. The applicant is requesting a waiver to allow only one entrance on Route 119. Groundwater elevations are about two feet below the surface according to the soil testing done in May. The grade of the site will be raised to accommodate the drainage system. A stormwater recharge/retention system will be installed beneath the surface of the parking lot. The rate and volume of runoff from the 100-year storm will be reduced by one-half. There is a shallow depression in the front of the site so there will be no discharge to the storm drain system in Route 119. The landscaping plan shows trees to be removed, trees to be saved, and a planting plan. A photometric diagram was submitted with the site plan.

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Chairman Wilson read the comments from the Board of Health, Water Department, Assessors, Sewer Department, Historic Districts Commission, Police Chief, and Fire Chief.

Mr. Maher presented his report dated November 30, 2006. He said if the building is used solely for office space, then 57 parking spaces would be required. Member Degen noted that medical offices require more parking than other offices.

Mr. Gillis said they plan to have retail on the first floor and offices on the second floor. They will comply with the parking requirements.

Member Perkins said the traffic study mentioned a restaurant which would require more parking. Mr. Gauvin said restaurant was used to demonstrate various types of uses in the traffic study. A restaurant is not proposed for this site.

Mr. Maher said the soil testing should be witnessed by an agent of the Town to determine the infiltration rates. The Board agreed.

Member Eliot asked about the change in elevation between the road and the site. Mr. Gauvin said the site will be raised three feet - the road is at elevation 217 ft and the building is at 220 ft.

Member Eliot said she would like to see more screening around the parking lot, especially in front of the building. She asked if there is sufficient water for the trees to grow in the parking lot islands. Mr. Gillis said the site will be irrigated.

Member Clements asked if an operating and maintenance plan would be submitted for the drainage system. Mr. Gauvin said, "yes," it would be submitted to the Planning Board and to Nitsch Engineering.

Member Clements asked about snow storage. Mr. Gauvin said snow storage areas are shown on the landscaping plan.

Member Perkins expressed concern that there may not be enough room to store snow in these areas and that the snow may damage the shrubs and plantings. She asked if there would be any increase in runoff toward the north of the site. Mr. Gauvin said the runoff will be directed toward the catch basins. There will be curbs in the parking lot to contain the runoff.

Member Perkins asked if the lights would be shielded. Mr. Gauvin said there would be shielded fixtures on the front of the building.

Member Perkins asked about the cobble stone at the entrance to the site. Mr. Gauvin said the cobblestone would be flush with the pavement surface.

Member Perkins asked about fire truck access. Mr. Gillis said they would meet with the Fire Chief to go over the details of the plan.

Member Perkins asked about the trips per day projected in the traffic study. Mr. Gauvin said all the trips for the office space are new. The trips for the retail space will be 75% passerby trips and 25% new trips for a total of 225 new trips per day on Route 119.

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Member Capes asked if elevating the site by three feet would cause water to collect at the intersection of the access road and Route 119. Mr. Gauvin said the driveway slopes toward the road with a dip at the gutter line to prevent runoff from reaching the street. Member Capes asked if the 100-year storm would be contained in the northern basin. Mr. Gauvin said the drainage report details runoff for the 2-, 10-, 25- and 100-year storms. Runoff is reduced by 50% for the 100-year storm.

Member Degen said the building and landscaping designs are beautiful. He asked if the Linden tree would cause problems with the stormwater system. He said yews can provide very effective screening for headlight glare.

Member Degen said the plans should show the topography within 200 ft of the site as required in the Site Plan Review regulations. He suggested installing a trench drain to prevent runoff from going onto Route 119. Mr. Gauvin described the proposed grading plan and dip in the curb cut area.

Member Degen asked if there is two feet of separation between the bottom of the stormwater system and high groundwater. He said it is very important to test for high groundwater. Mr. Gauvin said they are confident in the groundwater elevations shown on the plan, but they will do additional testing that can be witnessed by an agent of the Town.

Member Eliot said there should not be any adverse impact on adjacent land. Mr. Gauvin described how the water will flow from the site.

Member Clements asked if the applicant is confident that there is enough capacity in the sewer system. Mr. Gillis said they will meet with the Sewer Commissioners to discuss the matter.

Chairman Wilson said the plan is a good design. He asked if some of the parking could be moved to the rear of the site. Mr. Gillis said, "no." He added that it is better to break up the parking areas rather than have one large parking lot.

Chairman Wilson asked about soil types. Mr. Gauvin said the soils have very high percolation rates. Chairman Wilson asked if they considered using any Low Impact Development (LID) techniques. Mr. Gauvin said LID would not be appropriate for this site because the rain is discharged to the groundwater and there is no room for bioretention cells.

Member Degen asked about the request for a waiver to allow only one curb cut. Mr. Gauvin said they applied for a curb cut permit to MassHighway and will defer to MassHighway on this question.

Member Eliot asked that the plan show other curb cuts in the area.

Member Perkins asked that the traffic study include the trips per day in the peak hours. The Board will send the traffic study to Fay, Spofford and Thorndike (FST) for review.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on December 14, 2006 at 7:45 PM.

### **PUBLIC HEARING - BROOKS ORCHARD SPECIAL PERMIT**

*(Member Degen stepped down and did not participate.)*

At the request of the applicant, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing for the special permit for the Brooks Orchard shared driveway to December 14, 2006 at 8:30 PM.

### **SITE PLAN REVIEW – MILL RUN PLAZA MODIFICATION**

*(Members Wilson and Capes stepped down and did not participate.)*

The Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline on the Mill Run Plaza modification to December 31, 2006 as requested by the applicant.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the site plan review on December 14, 2006 at 9:00 PM.

### **ACADEMY HILL LOT RELEASES**

The Board received a memorandum dated November 30, 2006 from the Conservation Commission indicating that it had received the deed for the conservation land in the Academy Hill subdivision. The Commission voted to accept the gift of land subject to the approval of the Selectmen and review by Town Counsel.

The motion was made by Degen to release Lots 24-57, inclusive, and Lot A and B in the Academy Hill subdivision and to hold the lot release form until the Board receives evidence that the deed has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

### **STATION AVENUE CONSULTANTS**

The Station Avenue Redevelopment Committee recommended that the Planning Board hire Comprehensive Environmental, Inc. (CEI) for the Station Avenue hydrology studies for the following reasons:

- CEI's experience includes similar redevelopment projects in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.
- CEI's approach is a conceptual, "big-picture" perspective. They are willing to work with the Board and the Committee on evaluating the carrying capacity of the land. They will recommend the best methods to treat stormwater including improvements to the Town's existing stormwater system.
- CEI has a broad range of experience in writing by-laws, regulations and guidelines for states and municipalities.
- CEI's generally works with municipal or public-sector clients rather than doing design work for the private sector.

The motion was made by Perkins to hire CEI for an amount not to exceed \$10,000. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

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**SURRENDEN FARMS ARTICLES**

The motion was made by Clements to support the Surrenden Farms articles at the Special Town Meeting on December 11, 2006. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette

Town Planner