

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD
FEBRUARY 1, 2007
MINUTES**

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

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

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Board met with consultant Peter Flinker of Dodson Associates to discuss design guidelines. Mr. Flinker presented the plans that were generated from the January 24, 2007 Station Avenue charrette. The plans show the recently delineated wetlands boundary, the building envelopes, parking envelopes, and areas of green space.

Mr. Flinker said the report from traffic engineer Gary Hebert of Fay, Spofford and Thorndike (FST) said Station Avenue can accommodate about 1000 new trips per day at full build out. FST also recommended that the Town implement traffic calming measures to direct traffic away from existing residential neighborhoods. The plan shows retail and residential uses, a green network along James Brook, and rain gardens and other Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for treating stormwater. A strong focal point should be created at the end of Station Avenue.

Member Barringer said the view of the wetlands from Station Avenue should be enhanced.

Member Degen suggested that Court Street be a dead-end street with two-way traffic.

Tim Hess of the Station Avenue Redevelopment Committee suggested the circular road layout at the end of Station Avenue to create a pedestrian-friendly plaza.

Mr. Flinker said the parking layout varies with the different plans and types of use. However, the 20,000 gallons per day of sewer capacity limits the amount of development.

Chairman Wilson asked about economic viability considerations. Mr. Flinker said parking is a driving factor in the type of use that would be allowed. For example, 1000 SF of residential development requires two parking spaces, and 1000 SF of retail development requires four parking spaces. The requirement may result in more parking than necessary for a mixed use development. He said Dodson recommends three spaces per 1000 SF for retail use in suburban areas.

Member Degen noted that restaurants, professional offices, and medical offices require more parking than retail uses.

Chairman Wilson said the proposed public space at the end of Station Avenue creates a more pedestrian friendly area.

Member Barringer asked if the plan would be economically viable for the developer or for the Town. Mr. Flinker said consultant John Mullin is an expert on economic development issues.

Member Clements said he prefers to see more business use than residential use because the Town does not need more market-rate housing.

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Chairman Wilson said it is important that the by-law require a percentage of affordable units for people who want to downsize and continue to live in town.

Member Clements asked if the non-residential units would be on the first floor with the residential units on the second floor. Mr. Flinker said the units could be combined in a number of different ways.

Member Perkins said the group has done a great job planning this project. She said she is concerned about the level of density for the area and the scale of the buildings. This could be a very good plan for the Town, but the level of density is totally different than what is in the area now. Mr. Flinker suggested looking at the existing density in the downtown area.

Chairman Wilson said economic viability is the key to the success of this project.

Member Eliot said the proposal should create an overlay district based upon the Town's master plan. She said the development could be constructed in phases to accommodate the density.

The motion was made by Degen to send a letter to Mullin Associates confirming the Board's approval of Mullin Associates consulting services at a cost not to exceed \$10,000. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

The Board will meet with Peter Flinker on March 15, 2007 to continue the discussion of design guidelines to be used town wide. The motion was made by Perkins to accept the proposal from Dodson Associates to complete Phase I of the Design Guidelines at a cost not to exceed \$5000. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

CROSSROADS PLAZA

The board received a request to assign the special permits for Crossroads Plaza to Samantha Realty Trust. The motion was made by Perkins to execute the document for Crossroads Plaza special permit assignment to Samantha Realty Trust. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

COMMENTS TO SELECTMEN – EARTH REMOVAL EXEMPTION

(Member Degen did not participate because he is a Selectman.)

The motion was made by Eliot to recommend that the Board of Selectmen grant the Certificate of Exemption to Honeywell International, Inc. for removal of 800 cubic yards of earth material from the Conductorlabs site. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Town Planner

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