

GROTON PLANNING BOARD
AUGUST 9, 2007
MINUTES

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

PUBLIC HEARING – HUGHES-ORTIZ SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN REVIEW

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the special permit/site plan review application submitted by Patricia Hughes-Ortiz for the roofing business located at 60 Boston Road. At the request of the applicant, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on August 23, 2007 at 7:30 PM.

PRE-SUBMISSION REVIEW – GDYFC-PARK DEPARTMENT

David Howes, president of the GDYFC program, and Park Commissioner Don Black met with the Board to request a waiver of the Site Plan Review requirements for the installation of temporary lights at the Cow Pond Brook Road playing fields. The request is outlined in the letter dated July 16, 2007 from the GDYFC program. Mr. Howes noted that he is also a Park Commissioner.

Member Perkins asked how long the temporary lights would be used. Mr. Howes said about four weeks.

Member Perkins asked how far away is the closest neighbor. Mr. Black said about 6000 feet.

Member Perkins asked if the lights would be an issue for MIT's Haystack Observatory, located nearby. Mr. Black said he would check with MIT to be sure the lights would not create any problems.

Member Giger asked about the letter dated July 23, 2007 from Attorney Robert Collins to the Building Commissioner regarding installation of lights at the Groton Dunstable Middle School and a response letter dated July 19, 2007 from the Building Commissioner to Attorney Collins. Mr. Howes said that is an out-dated request. The GDYFC program will practice at the Cow Pond Brook Road fields. The Board thanked Mr. Howes and Mr. Black for finding a more suitable location.

The motion was made by Wilson to waive Site Plan Review, pursuant to Section 218-25F Pre-Submission Review, for the installation of four to six temporary trailer lights at the playing fields on Cow Pond Brook Road as requested in the letter dated July 16, 2007 from David Howes of the GDYFC program with the condition that the applicant consult with MIT about any potential interference with Haystack Observatory. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

MINUTES

The Board voted to approve the minutes of July 12, 2007 and July 26, 2007.

ORCHARD LANE IMPROVEMENTS

The Board discussed the memorandum dated July 18, 2007 from the Police Chief to the Board of Selectmen regarding proposed changes to Orchard Lane. The Police Chief recommended that

the proposed changes are not warranted because only three lots are being developed and there have not been any accidents in that location in over five years.

The Planning Board granted a special permit for the Groton Land Foundation to create three new lots. Special permit #2007-02 states:

1. The applicant will work with the Board of Selectmen and Highway Surveyor on traffic mediation measures for Orchard Lane.

The motion was made by Eliot that the Planning Board has no problem with the request made by the Groton Land Foundation in its letter dated June 28, 2007. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

INTERVIEW CANDIDATES FOR THE VACANCY ON THE PLANNING BOARD

The Board received letters of interest from four candidates to fill the vacancy on the Planning Board created by the resignation of Bruce Clements. The four candidates were:

Fran Stanley, Court Street – Ms. Stanley described her work as an attorney for a contractor dealing with hazardous waste sites for the EPA. She emphasized her interest in land use planning issues. She said the Board has a responsibility to adhere to the rules and work fairly with everyone.

Tim Hess, Main Street – Mr. Hess described his work as an architect and past member of the Station Avenue Redevelopment Committee. He emphasized the importance of designing places where people will thrive. He said evaluation of the design schematics should be part of the review process.

Alan Hoch, Peabody Street – Mr. Hoch described his work as an attorney who has been a litigator, arbitrator and mediator for 20 years. He emphasized the importance of protecting the Town's interests in the granting of any waivers from the rules and regulations. He said the Board must protect the Town's character and the natural environment.

Robert Breton, Nashua Road – Mr. Breton described his work as a software engineer for a not-for-profit involved in government research. He said it is important to balance development concerns with the needs of senior citizens, tax implications, and protection of open space.

The Board thanked all the applicants and noted that the election will take place at a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, tentatively scheduled for September 10, 2007. *(Note: The date was later changed to September 17, 2007 when all members of both Boards would be present.)*

STATION AVENUE UPDATE

Station Avenue Economic Viability Committee – Member Capes reported that the Economic Viability Committee is looking for direction from the Planning Board on the charge and scope of work to be performed by the Committee. Member Capes summarized the possible tasks as:

1. Estimate the cost of the infrastructure required to enable development per the proposed zoning (rough figures have been calculated and discussed).

2. Recommend whether to adopt 43D or not. What are the benefits to town? What are the costs to town? If yes, what would be the plan to move forward with 43D implementation? What additional funding is available if 43D is adopted?
3. Do any aspects/requirements of the proposed SAOD zoning make development economically unfeasible? The answer to this question should help rebut those in the public hearing who think the zoning will prohibit profitable development. These concerns were raised at the first public hearings so the Planning Board should be prepared to respond to this question at Town Meeting.
4. What are the long term economic impacts to the town? Does the town come out ahead in 10, 15 or 20 years? This will be important to address at Town Meeting if someone asks if this is good for the town in the long run.

After some discussion about how the Committee was formed in the first place, the motion was made by Wilson to send a memorandum to the Station Avenue Economic Viability Committee with the four items as drafted by Member Capes. *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

Station Avenue Redevelopment Committee – Member Wilson reported that the Station Avenue Redevelopment Committee met with Town Counsel Judith Cutler and Peter Flinker of Dodson Associates to discuss revisions to the proposed Station Avenue Overlay District amendment. If the draft zoning amendment is finalized by the end of August, the Committee will make a recommendation to the Planning Board so the Board can advertise public hearings.

Member Eliot said the zoning amendment should be as simple as possible and the design guidelines should address the variables. The Board agreed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Town Planner