

GROTON PLANNING BOARD
MAY 1, 2008
MINUTES

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

Members present: Barringer, Capes, Eliot, Giger, Perkins, and Wilson

Member absent: Hess

CHAPTER 43D UPDATES

Infrastructure Evaluation – Member Eliot reported that the Nitsch Engineering study is nearly complete. The Water Department must finalize details about the fire flow tests, the potential access to Adams Avenue will be included, and a recommendation on easements for access and utilities, and a pedestrian path from the GELD property to Prescott School will be included in the final report.

Parking and Traffic Calming – Member Giger reported that the Parking and Traffic Calming Committee has completed its deliberations. The final report will contain traffic calming options for Broadmeadow, Playground Road, Court Street, Adams Avenue, and Station Avenue. The final report will be ready for distribution prior to the May 15, 2008 meeting.

Streamlined Permitting – Member Perkins reported that the Streamlined Permitting Committee met with Steve Webber and members of the IT Committee to discuss permitting software. The Board and Committees are requesting a change order so the \$15,000 for permitting software can be used to purchase SharePoint, Sequel Server, and Windows 2007, and to provide technical support through Applied Geographics. The Interagency Permitting Board will act on the Board's request on May 14, 2008.

Marketing Studies – Member Capes reported that the Market Studies Committee received 447 completed surveys. The survey was mailed to 3400 households with the Groton Electric Light bills. The return is about 14% to date. The Committee will begin data entry and analysis soon. The business survey to approximately 650 local businesses will be mailed in a few days. Mark Horne of Northeastern University did a presentation to the Committee on a self-assessment tool. The cost is about \$5000 and it is geared toward a more corporate level than Groton needs. The Committee is still waiting to receive the contract from MassDevelopment along with the scope from RKG Associates for the market study.

Design Guidelines – Member Wilson reported that the Design Guidelines Committee is working with Peter Flinker of Dodson Associates to select photographs and other schematics for the design guidelines. Most of the text is now complete. Captions must be written after the photographs are selected.

SITE PLAN REVIEW MODIFICATION – GROTON TRADING COMPANY

The Board met with Cathy DiGrazia of the Groton Trading Company to discuss the following condition of the site plan approval dated March 17, 2008:

“Parking for the disabled and access to the building shall comply with the requirements of the Architectural Access Board Regulations, 521 CMR, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

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Ms. DiGrazia said Selectman Josh Degen and Local Inspector Don Kinney both suggested that the Planning Board waive the condition on access to the building for the disabled. The Selectmen issued a temporary common victualler's license for 30 days. She read a statement regarding the Architectural Access Board regulations as discussed with her architect (see file).

Member Perkins asked about the existing conditions. Ms. DiGrazia said there are two steps down and three steps up to get into the building. She said they are looking into what they can do, but it will take more than 30 days. Providing access to this older, historic building is difficult. The Historic Districts Commission must review and approve any changes to the building. She requested that the Board allow 6-12 months to provide access to the building. She said they will come back to the Board with plans prepared by their architect, but they need more than 30 days to do so.

Chairman Barringer asked if the Selectmen issued a temporary common victualler's license contingent upon this discussion with the Planning Board. Ms. DiGrazia said, "yes."

Member Eliot said she did not have a problem with granting an extension for six months or one year.

Member Wilson said it is not clear that the Planning Board has the legal authority to waive the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Architectural Access Board requirements. However, the conditions must be applied reasonably.

Member Giger said the Board is not being asked to grant a waiver. The request is to extend the time period for compliance. Member Capes agreed.

Chairman Barringer suggested that the Board review the plans within six months.

Member Perkins said the conditions of the site plan approval require that the Board review the site for compliance within one year. She said she understands how difficult it is to provide access to an existing, historic building.

Member Giger suggested that the Board require that the plans for access to the building be submitted within six months with implementation by March 17, 2009. Member Giger said that the plans must be stamped by a Registered Architect.

The motion was made by Wilson to modify the Level I site plan approval dated March 17, 2008 for Kilbridge Antiques as follows:

1. To extend the time period for one year to March 17, 2009 for the applicant to comply with Standard Condition #3 which states:

"Parking for the disabled and access to the building shall comply with the requirements of the Architectural Access Board Regulations, 521 CMR, and the Americans with Disabilities Act."

2. The applicant shall submit plans demonstrating how compliance will be achieved. The plans shall be submitted to the Planning Board within six months.
3. The applicant shall mark the accessible parking spaces on the ground as required in 521CMR 23:00 Parking and Passenger Loading.

The motion was seconded.

Ms. DiGrazia said they already have a sign designating the accessible parking spaces. She asked if they had to paint the spaces on the ground, too. The Board responded that the regulations require marking the spaces on the ground and that this should be done immediately.

Member Giger said that the plans should be stamped by a Registered Architect. The Board said the Building Commissioner would review the plans for compliance with the regulations.

The motion passed with Barringer, Capes, Eliot, Perkins and Wilson in favor; Giger opposed.

REGULATIONS

Station Avenue Overlay District Parking Guidelines –In accordance with the provisions of the Chapter 218-30.2 of the Code of the Town of Groton, the Planning Board held a public hearing on April 17, 2008 to consider the proposed “Parking and Loading Guidelines for the Station Avenue Overlay District” filed with the Town Clerk on March 31, 2008.

The motion was made by Perkins to adopt the attached “Parking and Loading Guidelines for the Station Avenue Overlay District,” dated March 31, 2008. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

Fee Regulations - In accordance with the provisions of the Chapter 381 of the Code of the Town of Groton, the Planning Board held a public hearing on April 17, 2008 to consider the proposed “Revisions to the Fee Schedules and Regulations Governing Fees,” filed with the Town Clerk on March 25, 2008.

The motion was made by Perkins to adopt the attached “Revisions to the Fee Schedules and Regulations Governing Fees,” dated March 25, 2008. ***The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

COMMENTS TO THE ZBA – SQUANNACOOK HILLS

The Board reviewed the final plans for the Squannacook Hills comprehensive permit project as requested by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Board will send the following comments:

1. The stormwater management system must be properly designed and installed. There has been flooding in this area of Townsend Road in the recent past and the development should be designed to prevent flooding on Townsend Road. Several other developments on Townsend Road have been problematic due to steep slopes and soil conditions.

2. The grade at the top of the driveway is very steep. The Board is concerned that runoff from the driveway may flow toward the housing units and flood the basements.
3. The proposed snow storage areas are not adequate for the amount of impervious surface on the site.
4. A crosswalk should be painted on Townsend Road from the housing development to Cutler Field.
5. The detention basin should have a more natural appearance. The ZBA should encourage the applicant to consider installing rain gardens and other LID techniques.
6. More screening should be provided for along the southerly property line to protect the abutter on Map 103, parcel 36.
7. No invasive species should be planted. Please see the following for a list of prohibited plants:

http://www.mass.gov/agr/farmproducts/proposed_prohibited_plant_list_v12-12-05.htm
8. The trees to be planted should be taller and have a larger caliper. Shrubs should be planted in between the trees to provide better screening.
9. More than eight parking spaces for visitors should be provided.
10. The eight cubic yard dumpster may not be adequate to serve 18 dwelling units.
11. The sidewalks along the access drive to Townsend Road should be properly maintained throughout the year.
12. The ZBA should request that the development construct a school bus shelter at the entrance to the site on Townsend Road.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Town Planner