

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD
APRIL 30, 2009
MINUTES**

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

SITE PLAN REVIEW – GROTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The Board reviewed the site plan submitted by the Groton Community School to construct additions to the existing pre-school facility at 110 Boston Road. Attorney Robert Collins and Surveyor Stan Dillis presented the plan.

Attorney Collins said the school must raise the funds for the project first, so construction may not commence for some time. He requested that the Board ask Nitsch Engineering for an estimate of the cost to review the site plan. He reminded the Board that, as an educational use, the school is exempt from zoning. Chapter 40A, section 3, limits the Board's review to "the bulk and height of structures and determining yard sizes, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking and building coverage requirements." The Board respectfully disagreed since site plan review issues include parking, access, and other site-related issues.

Mr. Collins said there will be two additions – one on each side of the building. The new space will be used for a sixth classroom, bathrooms, a library, and a meeting room. The plan includes reconfiguration of the parking lot and update of the drainage system. The enrollment varies from 150 to 190 students with flexible schedules. There are 19 full and part-time teachers. The addition will not expand the school population. Approximately three quarters of the students are from Groton.

Mr. Dillis said the entire site is within the 200-ft riverfront area. Stormwater runoff from impervious areas will be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio. No impervious area will be added to the site. There are 50 parking spaces at the site today even though only 16 are required. A new stormwater management system will be installed so runoff will be pre-treated before being discharged to the wetlands.

Chairman Perkins read the comments from the Conservation Commission and Water Department.

Mr. Dillis said the number of parking spaces has been reduced from 57 to 50 as shown on the revised plan.

Attorney Collins said §218-23B(3) requires 16 parking spaces based upon one per classroom and one for every two employees other than teachers. The number of required spaces increases to 49 if you include one for every three persons capacity for a place of public assembly. He said people can also park at the Middlesex Savings Bank and CVS. This site is an opportunity for shared parking. He asked the Board to determine how many parking spaces would be required.

Member Barringer said he believes 50 parking spaces should be sufficient. He asked if the lights would be shielded. Mr. Dillis said, "yes." Lights will be added around the playground and will be on from 4-6 PM in the fall.

April 30, 2009

Page 2 of 3

Member Wilson asked if the wetlands would be replicated. Mr. Dillis said, "no," but the plan includes 1:1 mitigation for impervious area since this is a previously developed site.

Member Giger asked about the maximum capacity of the auditorium under the State Building Code since it is a place of public assembly. Mr. Collins said he would ask the architect.

Member Giger asked if the auditorium would be rented. Mr. Collins said if the opportunity arises, it would be rented. He noted that Lawrence Academy, Groton School and the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District all rent their facilities.

Member Burke said he thinks the Board should be flexible with the number of parking spaces. He asked about the provisions for drop-off and pick-up. Mr. Dillis described how the drop-off and pick-up operations work at the present time with teachers meeting the children at their cars.

Member Burke asked if the parking lot would be treated with salt during the winter. Mr. Dillis said, "no," there are other deicing chemicals available.

Member Burke said he liked the rain garden and use of pervious pavers. He encouraged the applicant to work out shared parking arrangements with the other property owners.

Member Hess noted that the Conservation Commission suggested adding a second story to the building. He stated that the soils on site may not be suitable for a two-story structure if the site is all fill. Mr. Collins agreed that the first floor of this building cannot support a second story. Mr. Dillis said the proposed addition to the building is a concern to the Conservation Commission.

Member Hess agreed that this plan is a good opportunity to reduce the number of parking spaces and to encourage shared parking with nearby businesses. Mr. Collins said he would approach the other landowners.

Member Capes asked if there would be 19 teachers and one non-teaching staff. Mr. Collins said "yes," but the teachers are not full time. Member Giger suggested looking at full-time equivalents.

Member Capes said 40 spaces would be required for six classrooms, one other staff person, and 33 for the auditorium. He said he is comfortable with the 50 parking spaces proposed by the applicant.

Member Capes said he liked the rain garden and asked if it could be expanded in the center of the site. Mr. Dillis said the rain gardens are limited to the ends of the site for pretreatment of stormwater before it is discharged to James Brook. Member Capes asked if there would be landscaping in front of the building. Mr. Dillis said, "yes."

Chairman Perkins reminded the applicant that only non-invasive species could be used. Mr. Dillis agreed.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the Site Plan Review on May 21, 2009 at 7:35 PM.

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN RFP

The Board reviewed and approved the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Comprehensive Master Plan with minor edits.

April 30, 2009

Page 3 of 3

MINUTES

The Board voted to approve the minutes of January 8, 2009; January 15, 2009; January 22, 2009; January 27, 2009; February 12, 2009; February 19, 2009; February 26, 2009; March 5, 2009; March 19, 2009; March 26, 2009; April 2, 2009; April 9, 2009; and April 16, 2009.

PLANNING BOARD REPORT TO TOWN MEETING

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to reconsider the Planning Board's report to Town Meeting on Article 10. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to recommend approval of Article 10 Schedule of Use Regulations. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to send a letter to the Groton Electric Light Department thanking the GELD Commissioners for supporting the Wind Energy Conversion Facilities by-law. The Board especially appreciates your comments and explanations at Town Meeting. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

STATION AVENUE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Board discussed the Selectmen's RFP for design engineering of the Station Avenue infrastructure. The motion was made by Hess, seconded by Burke, to send a letter to the Selectmen reminding them that the streetscape and other improvements are subject to the Station Avenue Design Guidelines and must be reviewed by the Design Review Committee and Planning Board. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Town Planner