

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2009  
MINUTES**

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

**ACADEMY HILL AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Planning Board postponed its discussion of the Academy Hill affordable housing units to September 24, 2009. The Planning Board will request comments from the Board of Health regarding its approval of the sewage disposal system.

**SIGN BY-LAW**

The Board discussed proposed revisions to the Sign By-law drafted by the Sign Committee and presented at an Economic Development Committee meeting. The Sign Committee will meet with the Board of Selectmen on November 10, 2009 to discuss the proposed revisions to the by-law. The existing by-law is part of the Town's General By-laws and there have been numerous enforcement problems. The Sign Committee would like the Building Inspector to issue sign permits with the appeal to the Sign Committee and Board of Selectmen. The Historic Districts Commission will continue to have jurisdiction over all signs within the Historic Districts.

**COMMENTS TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN – 134 MAIN STREET**

The Planning Board received a request for comments and Form of Intent for a proposed concert event at 134 Main Street. The Selectmen will consider the entertainment license at its meeting on September 21, 2009.

The Board will submit the following questions/comments to the Board of Selectmen:

1. There is not enough information about the proposed event on the application.
2. Will a tent be installed? If so, the applicant should inquire whether or not a building permit is required.
3. Will sanitary facilities be provided? Has the applicant checked with the Board of Health on this matter?
4. How will parking be provided for the event? Have arrangements been made for overflow parking if necessary?
5. The Board recommends that the Selectmen consult with the Police Chief to determine if a traffic supervisor will be needed.

**COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN**

The Board prepared for the meeting with the Board of Selectmen concerning the warrant article to fund the Comprehensive Master Plan. The Board will cover the following points in its presentation:

1. When the Planning Board presented its request to the Finance Committee in the spring of 2009, the Finance Committee requested that the Board to advertise the Request for Proposals select a consultant with a defined scope of work, timeline and budget. The Board did what the Finance Committee requested and selected Communities Opportunities Group as its consultant to complete the work outlined in the proposal. The total cost of the project is \$100,000 - \$70,000 for Phase I and \$30,000 for Phase II.

2. State statute, Chapter 41, §81-D, requires that the Planning Board update the Master Plan periodically. The statute specifies the nine required elements of the master plan including economic development. The upcoming Master Plan will emphasize the Economic Development component and will also include a Sustainability component.
3. Many state grants and funding programs require that the Town submit an application under the Commonwealth Capital program to determine the Town's compliance with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles. The first question on the application asks if the Town has a current master plan. The Town has scored well on the Commonwealth Capital program as a result of its proactive planning initiatives. If the Town does not have an up-to-date Master Plan, the Town may not qualify for funding.
4. The Town and Planning Board are in a position to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach by having a Master Plan with the proper planning tools in place. Future residential and commercial growth is inevitable. The Town should be in a position to manage growth through an efficient and effective process to minimize the fiscal impact. The implementation phase of the master plan will give the Town such tools.
5. Conditions in the Town are quite different today than they were ten years ago. The previous plan reflects the conditions of 2000, not 2010. The Master Plan must be updated to be relevant with today's social, economic and environmental conditions.
6. If the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and other permit granting agencies base the findings on consistency with the Master Plan, their decisions will not be considered "arbitrary and capricious" when they are appealed in Court.
7. The Community Preservation Committee's plan is based upon the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Master Plan.
8. A successful master plan should be generated from an active public participation process. Although preparation of the Master Plan is under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board, the Master Plan is the Town's plan and should reflect the Townspeople's vision for its future. The Board encourages townspeople to be actively engaged in the process.
9. The decision to fund the master plan should be made by the voters at Town Meeting.

The Planning Board decided it would manage the Comprehensive Master Plan project rather than appointing a Master Plan Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette  
Town Planner

