

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD  
FEBRUARY 18, 2010  
MINUTES**

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

Members present: Capes, Barringer, Burke, Giger, and Perkins

Members absent: Hess and Wilson

**COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN ADVISORY GROUPS**

The Board reviewed the list of volunteers interested in serving on the Comprehensive Master Plan Advisory Groups. The number people who volunteered to date for each group are:

Economic Development	5
Open Space & Recreation	5
Housing	3
Community Services	4
Sustainability	2
Cultural Resources	1
Land Use	9
Transportation	5

The Board met with Judi Barrett and Angela Insinger of Community Opportunities Group (COG). Ms. Insinger presented the following summary of her interviews with community stakeholders.

***Issues discussed during interviews on Feb 11 & 12:***

- Reuse of Prescottt & Tarbell Schools and Squannacook Hall.
- Station Avenue – why hasn't anything happened?
- In general, Groton's boards and committees get along well! One exception is some tension between the School Committee and other town boards and committees.
- Groton has a strong conservation ethic, but are other town needs and concerns being pushed to the sidelines? Is there a need for a broader picture?
- Groton needs more business activity – but how much can the town sustain? And how much/what types will people tolerate?
- Concerns about the scale/quality of recent commercial development (e.g., Shaw's, Mill Run development).
- People value Groton's rural character. Any efforts to bring more business activity must be appropriate in scale, placement, activity level, etc.
- Traffic in town center.
- Groton needs to be more walkable, especially in and around the center of town.
- Groton's "villages" and the 4 Corners area – what does it mean to be a village in Groton?
- Possible long-term need for another elementary school and the need to plan for this.
- GDRS budget crisis – what will changing schools mean for Groton?
- Division between Groton and West Groton (and other areas?)
- Town center needs focused design attention and implementation, both for quality of life and economic development reasons.

- Groton is not business-friendly, or at least does not offer guidance or support for small businesses.
- Groton has rallied around sustainability in its many forms – environmental, economic, and social.
- Groton Local is an example of citizen involvement in and dedication to these issues.
- Agriculture is an extremely important part of Groton's history and its future, and the town government and citizens are generally supportive of it. Can/should the Town do more to support its agriculturists, large and small?
- Lost Lake sewerage issues.
- Groton is working on its IT issues – efficiency, capacity, and ability for Town government to communicate with residents could all be improved.
- ***Issues we did not get to yet ...***
  - Housing.
  - Development issues.
  - Social services.

The Board discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Groups. COG will prepare a list of questions to be addressed for each of the elements in the plan. Each element will include a question on sustainability.

Ms. Insinger said it is important for the Planning Board to define “sustainability” for the purposes of the Master Plan.

The Board will continue to recruit volunteers and may combine some committees. Each group will include a member of the Planning Board and a member of the Sustainability Commission. The Board stressed the importance of having balance on each group. The Board decided to establish seven advisory groups with five to seven members on each group. The Planning Board will maintain responsibility and oversight of the overall project as specified in State Statute, Chapter 41, §81D.

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

The Board discussed outreach for the community forum to be held on May 20, 2010 (date changed to May 13, 2010).

Chairman Capes will appear on the “Around Town” cable television access program as part of the Master Plan outreach. Announcements will be placed in the newspapers, on the internet, on Cable television, and on posters distributed throughout town. Advisory Group members will assist with public outreach.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette  
Land Use Director/Town Planner

