

**PLANNING BOARD  
AUGUST 11, 2011  
MINUTES**

Chairman Burke called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Members present: Burke, Barringer, Capes, Parent, Perkins and Wilson

Members absent: Giger

**PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL PERMIT, BOYNTON MEADOWS, 134 MAIN ST**

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40A, §§ 9 and 11, M. G. L., the Groton Planning Board held a public hearing to consider the application submitted by Mount Laurel Development, LLC, for a Special Permit for construction as shown on the plan entitled, "Town Center Overlay District, Mixed Use/Residential Development, Boynton Meadows," prepared by GPR, Inc., dated July 18, 2011. The proposed project is located at 134 Main Street. The proposed project is located on Assessors' Map 113, Parcel 9, on the easterly side of Main Street.

Chairman Burke called the public hearing to order. Clerk Parent read the notice posted with the Town Clerk on July 20, 2011 and published in the Groton Herald on July 22 and 29, 2011. Applicant Robert France of Senate Construction, Architects Brent Mangel and Steve Wychorski of Mangel Associates, design engineer Bruce Ringwall of GPR, inc.; Attorney Robert Anctil, financial advisor David Valletta, the Board's consulting engineer Timothy McGivern of Nitsch Engineering, Selectman Anna Eliot, Affordable Housing Trust member Allen King, and Design Review (DRC) Member Timothy Hess were present.

Mr. Wychorski presented the architectural design plans for the mixed use development including the existing historic structure on Main Street, and a typical duplex, triplex and single-family house. The units will be sited to provide privacy. The homeowners will have a choice of three colors. The single family houses will have wrap-around porches with views of Gibbet Hill. The retail use will be located in the first floor of the existing historic structure. Residential units will be created on the second floor. The front entrance and view of the existing building from Main Street will remain unchanged. The rear and side of the building will contain an open-air café and seating area. The café is designed to become a gathering place.

Mr. Ringwall described the modifications to the site and stormwater management system. A proposed 15-space parking area will be constructed for retail use. A portion of the stormwater will be directed toward Main Street. Runoff will flow into tree box infiltrators and a catch basin at the intersection of the proposed access driveway and Main Street. An overflow pipe will be tied into the municipal stormwater system on Main Street. The volume of runoff to the municipal system will be reduced and the rate will be increased by 0.01 cfs. The majority of the stormwater runoff will be discharged into the Low Impact Development (LID) drainage system toward the rear of the site. Mr. Ringwall described the proposed drainage system including the leaching galleys for roof runoff, the constructed wetland in the cul de sac, energy dissipaters, and bioretention/rain gardens. The Mass Stormwater Policy 80% Total Suspended Solid (TSS) removal requirements will be met.

Mr. Ringwall said he met with the Town's public safety officials to discuss fire truck access and hydrant locations. The plan will provide adequate access for the ladder truck and hydrants will be installed in locations requested by the Fire Chief. Public/pedestrian access will be permitted over a board walk through the constructed wetlands to a viewing area of the open meadow and Gibbet Hill. Invasive species will be removed and replaced by natural plantings.

Tim McGivern presented the Nitsch Engineering report dated August 9, 2011. He advised the Board that the increase in the rate of runoff to the municipal stormwater system is acceptable provided that the catch basin structure can handle it. He said the stormwater management system was designed using a 6.5" storm for the 100-year event and the Planning Board regulations require a 7" storm. Mr. Ringwall requested a meeting with the town's consulting engineer to resolve engineering issues. The Board agreed.

Tim Hess submitted a letter dated August 10, 2011 from the DRC summarizing the DRC's concerns about the plan's lack of consistency with the vision statement in the Design Guidelines. He stated that each of the three members of the DRC are looking at two elements and drafting recommendations. The DRC will review and compile the recommendations and forward a report to the Planning Board. The DRC has not completed its review of the project yet.

Chairman Burke stated that the Design Guidelines were crafted for Station Avenue, not for the Town Center. He said the DRC must determine which guidelines are applicable to Main Street and which are not.

Mr. Hess said there is a substantial disconnect since 134 Main Street is not connected to the Station Avenue Overlay District and does not have the geometric characteristics of Station Avenue such as connection to the Nashua River Rail Trail. However, the mix of uses, massing and civic space can be extrapolated. Mr. Hess said the DRC would provide the Board with recommendations on the waivers requested by the applicant.

Mr. Hess said the DRC has articulated and prepared a diagram of the vision for the Town Center. He said the plan for 134 Main Street will set a precedent for the downtown before a greater vision exists. He said the proposed project should be held to the high standards of the design guidelines.

Member Wilson asked if the DRC sees a solution given the lack of a coherent road for the proposed project. Mr. Hess said the Design Guidelines and Chapter 43D anticipated a lengthy pre-submission review process that this project did not have. He said DRC members suggested that the applicant look at the Riverwalk development in West Concord. He said the project should be consistent with New Urbanist principles such as creating a pedestrian-friendly community with a sense of place. The applicant has not made any changes to the plan in response to the DRC's suggestions. Mr. Hess said the DRC respects due process and understands that the Planning Board is the Special Permit Granting Authority.

Member Parent asked if the DRC could extrapolate from the Design Guidelines in its review of the 134 Main Street plan. Mr. Hess said there is no graphic of the TCOD and it is not contiguous to the properties on Station Avenue.

Chairman Burke agreed that is a challenge. However, the Planning Board has an application before it that was approved by Town Meeting. The Boards must review the project in accordance with Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting. He requested that the DRC submit comments on design details such as materials, windows, and the number of curb cuts on the access road with garages facing the street, etc. Mr. Hess said the DRC would comment on the design details. He understands that the Board can take the advice of the DRC or discount it.

Member Wilson asked what the DRC's top three concerns are. Mr. Hess said 1) the lack of civic space, 2) the conversion of retail space to residential space on the second floor of the existing building, and 3) the proposed mixed use does not promote connectivity with its neighbors – the entire site will be private.

He noted that the Design Guidelines envisioned a ratio of 1/3 retail, 1/3 office, and 1/3 residential use. He added that stormwater management and emergency vehicle access should not drive the shape of the Town Center.

Karen Corey, 150 Main Street, said she had five pages of questions she would like to ask at a later date. Chairman Burke said the Board's traffic engineer will attend the continuation of the public hearing and there will be time for questions and comments from abutters and others.

Mrs. Corey said the Station Avenue Overlay District and Town Center Overlay District requirements seem to conflict and they are difficult to understand. She said she would like to learn more about the process as an abutter. She requested that the Board keep the public hearing open for more comments.

Member Barringer said this application is being reviewed as an "expedited permit" so the Board cannot delay the process too long. He said different Boards and DRC have different authority and jurisdiction.

Allen King of the Affordable Housing Trust said the Town is a partner in the project. Town Meeting approved the project for the benefit of the Town.

Mr. France said he and his team have had several meetings with the DRC and have not disregarded or dismissed their suggestions. He said they understand the issue of connectivity, but the road was designed to meet the requirements of the Fire Department.

Member Barringer asked how much choice homeowners would have with exterior architectural design of the buildings other than color. Mr. Wychorski said the plans he presented are models from various perspectives around the property.

Member Barringer asked the applicant to designate the non-shared parking spaces and address the parking calculation requirements. Mr. Ringwall said they would do so.

Member Barringer asked about the tree box infiltrators and type of curbing along the street. Mr. Ringwall said curbing would be installed near Main Street to control runoff to the tree box. Curbing will also be installed around the external side of the cul de sac. About 33% of the site will be impervious.

Member Barringer asked about the proposed guardrail around the cul de sac and the depth of water in the constructed wetland. Mr. Ringwall said there would be a guardrail as shown on the plan. The depth of water will be about 1 – 1.5 feet.

Member Barringer asked why the drainage calculations used the 6.5" rather than 7" rain event for the 100-year storm. Mr. Ringwall said the town has conflicting requirements in its stormwater regulations. He said he would work with the Town's consulting engineer to resolve the issue.

Member Capes asked how much of the drainage system would be LID and how much would be conventional drainage. Mr. Ringwall said the drainage system is 99% LID with only 1% traditional. The tie into the Town's storm drain system in Main Street is the only traditional component. All the LID techniques address the DEP Stormwater Guidelines. Mr. McGivern agreed that the only traditional aspect is the tie into the existing catch basin. Mr. Ringwall described the constructed wetlands and forebay.

Member Capes asked if fire truck access would work with the proposed trees to be planted. Mr. Ringwall said, "Yes."

Member Capes asked about a “pedestrian friendly gathering spot” as encouraged in the Design Guidelines. Mr. Ringwall said there will be a public seating area overlooking the meadow with a view of Gibbet Hill.

Member Perkins asked about the list of plantings and who would be responsible for maintenance. Mr. Ringwall said the Operating and Maintenance Plan addresses each of the Condominium Association’s responsibilities.

Member Perkins asked about the waivers of the 2000 square feet residential units. Mr. Ringwall said there are at least four units with more than 2000 square feet.

Chairman Burke noted that the residential units to the east of the entrance have quite a few driveways and garage doors. He asked if the applicant could consolidate the curb cuts to reduce the amount of asphalt on the right side of the road in this area.

Mr. Ringwall said the development has a number of constraints including moving buildings out of the buffer zone. There is only one house in the buffer zone as shown on the plan.

Chairman Burke said the garages are side by side. Mr. Maugel said changing the location of the garages would result in more asphalt. Mr. Ringwall reiterated that they are trying to stay out of the buffer zone.

Chairman Burke asked Nitsch Engineering if the increase in flow to the catch basin is acceptable. Mr. McGivern said, “yes,” because there is a reduction in volume of the runoff.

Chairman Burke said the Planning Board is relying on the Design Review Committee to comment on architectural massing and design details. Mr. Hess said the local compositions are appropriate. The DRC will provide more detail in its recommendation to the Planning Board. Mr. Hess asked if the Board wanted the DRC recommendations sooner or later in the process. Chairman Burke said sooner would be the most helpful.

Chairman Burke asked about pedestrian access and whether it promotes social engagement. He asked if the centerline of the proposed road, building locations and trees to be removed could be flagged in the field prior to the Board’s site walk. Mr. Ringwall agreed.

Member Barringer asked the applicant to provide drawings of the views from the property lines.

The Board will walk the site on Thursday, August 25, 2011 at 6 PM.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on August 25, 2011 at 7 PM and to focus on traffic engineer issues.

#### **ANR PLAN – BLACK & HALLOCK, BURNT MEADOW ROAD**

The Board considered the Approved Not Required Plan submitted by Bennett Black & Norman and Rebecca Hallock to change a property line between lots on Burnt Meadow Road. The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Wilson, to endorse as Approval Not Required the plan entitled, “Plan of Land in Groton, Mass. Prepared for Norman & Rebecca Hallock,” prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated July 29, 2011. The motion passed unanimously.

**PRE-SUBMISSION REVIEW – GARY GRANTZ, 142 MAIN STREET**

The Board received a letter dated August 10, 2011 from Gary Grantz regarding converting the screen porch into a waiting room for the law offices located at 142 Main Street. The motion was made by Perkins, seconded by Wilson, to waive Site Plan Review for the work described in the letter dated August 10, 2011 from Gary Grantz. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARING – WOODLE RESIDENTIAL TRUST SPECIAL PERMIT**

At the request of the applicant, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on the Woodle Family Residential Development special permit applications to August 25, 2011 at 8:30 PM.

**PUBLIC HEARING – ACADEMY HILL DEFINITIVE PLAN MODIFICATION**

At the request of the applicant, the Board voted unanimously to extend the 90-day deadline for the Academy Hill modification to September 15, 2011.

At the request of the applicant, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on the Academy Hill definitive plan modification to August 25, 2011 at 9:00 PM.

**ARTICLE FOR FALL TOWN MEETING**

The Board received a proposal from Dodson Associates to prepare Design Guidelines for the Town Center Overlay District. Chairman Burke suggested that the Board request \$15,000 at the Fall Town Meeting for public participation and visioning as part of the preparation of Design Guidelines for the Town Center, noting the possible expansion of the District to include the Prescott School and Groton Inn properties.

The motion was made by Perkins, seconded by Wilson, to submit an article for the Fall Town Meeting Warrant requesting \$15,000 for Design Guidelines for the Town Center Overlay District as part of the Phase II Master Plan Implementation. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette  
Land Use Director/Town Planner