

**PLANNING BOARD  
DECEMBER 6, 2012  
MINUTES**

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

Members present: Giger, Barringer, Burke, Parent, Perkins, Svarczkopf and Wilson

**PUBLIC HEARING - GELD SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN REVIEW**

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the application submitted by the Groton Electric Light Department (GELD) for TCOD Special Permit and Site Plan Review to construct a new office and operational facility on Station Avenue. GELD Commissioner Kevin Lindemer, GELD Manager Kevin Kelly, Attorney Robert Collins, Architect Fabrizio Caruso of CDR Maguire, and Design Review Committee (DRC) members Dan Barton and Lorayne Black were present.

Mr. Barton presented the draft report from the DRC, acting as advisors to the Planning Board. He said the DRC had three meetings with the architect and design team and the review is very favorable. The proposed building is a great opportunity for civic architecture on Station Avenue. Mr. Barton said the process worked well and GELD has been very responsive. He commended the Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management approach and other sustainability elements. The project will create a pedestrian environment where people can gather. The project reflects good design in the spirit of the TCOD Design Guidelines. Mr. Barton requested that the DRC have an opportunity to review construction drawings as work progresses to resolve a few minor details such as gutters and the proposed rain chains that may be problematic for pedestrians.

Mr. Collins said the design team is still exploring various options. GELD would be happy to consult with the DRC when construction drawings are being finalized.

Member Wilson thanked the DRC for its work and professional job. He noted that the process would have been better if the applicant had met with the DRC earlier. Mr. Barton agreed but noted that this application was not submitted under Expedited Permitting so pre-submission review was not required.

Chairman Giger asked what the process would be to resolve on-going construction issues. Mr. Barton said the DRC wants minor clarification on some construction details. If there is an impasse, the question will be referred to the Planning Board. Mr. Collins said GELD agreed to have follow-up consultation with the DRC.

Lorayne Black said GELD addressed all the DRC's concerns about streetscapes and plantings.

Member Perkins asked about the drop-off mailbox and whether people would have to get out of their cars to use it. Mr. Kelly said, "no," drivers will be able to use the drop off box without leaving their vehicles.

Member Svarczkopf said he was concerned that GELD did not consult with the DRC earlier in the process for the proposed 15,000 square foot building. He said the proposed use is not compatible with other Town Center Overlay District uses in his opinion. He said he could not support the project.

Mr. Barton said he has been involved with the Planning Board and others in the planning for Station Avenue for many years. He said perhaps the GELD facility was not envisioned when the plan was adopted, but a public utility is an asset to the Town and to the public. The DRC reviewed the project as presented by the applicant and agreed that the project has many positive aspects. He cited the pleasant

December 6, 2012

Page 2

pedestrian access, the storage of vehicles indoors, and the architectural design reminiscent of the train station as attributes. He said the GELD facility will not preclude other development on Station Avenue.

Mr. Collins presented the revisions to the plan since the November 29, 2012 public hearing. The revised architectural elevations are a more authentic representation of the train station. The garage doors were changed to have glass with windows above the doors similar to old train stations. The applicant has made great efforts with landscaping around the building. A walkway and benches are incorporated into the streetscape. Pedestrians can sit on the wall or in the seating area around the flagpole. The project creates an anchor for other development on Station Avenue.

Member Wilson asked where utility poles would be stored. Mr. Lindemer said at GELD's substation on Lowell Road. Mr. Kelly said some storage will be inside the garage on Station Avenue but there would be no outside storage or equipment.

Member Burke asked if the employee parking lot would be gated for security concerns. Mr. Kelly said, "no," it will not be gated. Mr. Lindemer said the area would be more secure with the indoor storage than it is now.

Member Burke said the DRC focused on the office building, but the garage is a Butler building. Mr. Barton agreed that the garage is a utilitarian-type building. He said the front building and roof features will screen the mechanical equipment.

Member Burke thanked the DRC for its review of the project and for its willingness to remain involved during construction.

Member Barringer asked about the parking calculations and photometric diagram. Mr. Collins said the parking calculations are on the plan and the applicant submitted a photometric diagram as required in the regulations. Mr. Barton said the DRC will work with GELD on the lighting design. Member Barringer reminded GELD that cutoff fixtures are required to prevent glare.

Member Barringer asked why there was no elevator to the second floor in the garage. Mr. Kelly said only linemen will be using the garage and they must be able-bodied as a condition of employment. All public spaces in the building will be fully accessible.

Mr. Collins said the existing sign will be installed inside the new facility. A new hanging sign 26" x 26" will be installed outside the office door.

Member Burke asked about the "G" logo in the cupola. Town Planner Michelle Collette said the Board could approve the logo in the cupola under the "Special and Unique Circumstances" provisions of the Sign By-law. Mr. Collins said he would submit the Sign Permit applications before the December 13, 2012 meeting.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on December 13, 2012 at 7:45 PM.

#### **ANR PLAN – EVANS/NORDIN, O'NEILL WAY**

The Board considered the Approval Not Required (ANR) plan submitted by Robert Evans and Jean Nordin to combine a 3.9 acre parcel with their existing lot at 18 O'Neill Way. Surveyor Russ Wilson presented the plan.

December 6, 2012

Page 3

The motion was made by Wilson, seconded by Barringer, to endorse as Approval Not Required the plan entitled, " Plan of Land in Groton, Mass., Owner/Applicant: Bob Evans & Jean Nordin; Owner: Gary & Miriam Hegeman," prepared by R. Wilson & Associates, dated November 20, 2012. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARING (con't) – COACH HOUSE (aka Carriage House) RESTAURANT SITE PLAN REVIEW**

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing for the Coach House Seafood Grill and Restaurant site plan submitted by George Pergantis. Applicants George Pergantis and Gloria Lammi and design engineer Jeff Brem were present.

Mr. Brem submitted revised plans dated October 22, 2012 with additional details as requested by the Board. The Historic Districts Commission (HDC) issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project on November 20, 2012. New trees have been added to the front of the site, the curb stops will be painted black, and the parking spaces will be painted with white not yellow lines as required by the HDC. The fence around the pool will be repaired as required by the Board of Health. The easement at the westerly curb cut will be worked out with the abutting property owner.

Town Planner Michelle Collette said the Board has not received anything in writing from Mt. Laurel Development, owner of the 134 Main Street property.

Chairman Giger read the letter dated November 28, 2012 from the Building Commissioner and letter dated December 3, 2012 from the Fire Chief. The letters state that the total occupancy of the premises is 271 people and fire sprinklers are required by the Building Code.

Member Barringer said the note regarding the light fixtures on utility poles should only apply to poles on the eastern side of the site. Mr. Brem agreed.

Member Barringer stated that the Board of Health has jurisdiction over the swimming pool on the site and said the Planning Board has jurisdiction as well in order to protect the public health and safety of the community as stated in Section 218-25. Mr. Brem said the applicant will repair the fence around the pool.

Mr. Pergantis said the water in the pool was drained. It is just rain water in the pool today. He said he does not have any income and cannot install fire sprinklers for one year.

Member Perkins said the fire sprinkler issue is up to the Building Commissioner and Fire Chief, not the Planning Board.

Chairman Giger said before the public hearing is closed, the Planning Board must determine how many parking spaces are required and whether or not to grant a waiver.

Member Svarczkopf said the Board knows the building has the capacity of 271 people which is more than 64 seats in the restaurant and 90 seats in the function hall. Chairman Giger agreed and said the Board cannot lower the occupancy number but it can limit the number of parking spaces.

Member Parent asked what number would be posted in the building. Town Planner Michelle Collette said the Building Commissioner will post the "Certificate of Inspection" with the Allowable Occupant Load signed by the Fire Chief and Building Commissioner.

December 6, 2012

Page 4

Mr. Brem asked about the number of parking spaces at the Town Hall and if a waiver was granted when the building was renovated. Town Planner Michelle Collette said the parking requirements were based upon on-going municipal use and available on-street parking.

Mr. Brem said the applicant would agree to limit the number of occupants to 154 as stated in the application. Member Burke said the Town Building Commissioner and public safety officials have no way of limiting the number of occupants to less than what is allowed by the Building Code. Enforcement would be laborious.

Member Barringer said temporary, overflow parking could be provided with "grass-crete" or similar type surface. Member Burke agreed that "green banking" additional parking spaces is preferable to trying to limit occupancy.

Member Perkins agreed that another 46 parking spaces would require paving the entire front area. She would prefer to see that area left as grass and used for overflow parking when needed. She said she is not inclined to waive 46 parking spaces.

Mr. Pergantis said the use of the Carriage House will be up to 150 people – not 270. He said the facility is not a nightclub. There will be 64 people in the restaurant, 90 people in the function hall, and the outside is only for smoking. The patio is never used.

Member Barringer asked if the applicant could fit enough green-banked parking spaces on the site. Mr. Brem said, "yes," he would show the required number of parking spaces on the site plan.

Patrick Cain said the Main Street Café has no parking and everyone must park on the street. He added that Lawrence Academy uses Mr. Pergantis' parking lot on a regular basis. Everyone uses his property as a "turn-around."

Mr. Brem said he appreciates the Board's willingness to work with the applicant on providing overflow parking.

Town Planner Michelle Collette said the applicant must obtain an easement or license to remove the pavement encroaching on the 134 Main Street property. Mr. Brem said there are three outstanding issues: the easement for 134 Main Street, overflow parking, and clean up of the debris and dumping on site.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on December 13, 2012 at 8:00 PM.

#### **BLUESTONE DRIVE REVIEW**

The Board received an estimate of \$3910 from Nitsch Engineering to review the Bluestone Drive residential development site plan. The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Perkins, to accept the estimate provided by Nitsch Engineering. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **MINUTES**

The Board voted to approve the minutes of November 15, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette  
Land Use Director/Town Planner

December 6, 2012

Page 5