

**PLANNING BOARD
JANUARY 17, 2013
MINUTES**

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

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

Member absent: Giger

TOWN CENTER DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Board met with Peter Flinker of Dodson & Flinker to continue discussion about revisions to the Town Center Overlay District (TCOD) Design Guidelines. Lorayne Black, Fay Raynor, and Maureen Giattino of the Design Review Committee were also present.

Mr. Flinker said the Comprehensive Master Plan included many ideas for the future vision of the Town Center. The completion of the revisions to the Design Guidelines is the task before the Board at the present time. He reviewed the slides presented at previous working sessions with the public. The slides showed areas to be preserved such as the views of Gibbet Hill on the easterly side of Main Street, and areas to be developed such as the Station Avenue area on the westerly side of Main Street. Mr. Flinker said improvements to traffic circulation and pedestrian safety are also part of the Town Center vision.

Mr. Flinker provided a marked up copy of proposed revisions to the text and a number of photographs that may be included in the revised guidelines.

Member Wilson asked about the reference to the “new century” on Page 5 which states:

“The design shall respect the historic context of the district, responding to local architectural traditions, but may also explore creative approaches to design that express Groton's unique character for a new century.”

Ms. Raynor said there should not be a choice between traditional and contemporary architectural style. Good design is good design. Board members stated that the addition to the Groton Public Library and the Performing Arts Center at Groton School are examples of how different architectural styles work well together. Both are located in the Historic District.

There was lengthy discussion about the Boynton Meadows project at 134 Main Street including the expedited permitting process and roles of the Planning Board, Historic Districts Commission (HDC), and Design Review Committee. The process resulted in some overlap and mixed messages for the applicant. Everyone agreed that the jurisdictions should be clarified so there is not as much overlap and that communications should be improved by liaisons attending other departments' meetings.

Town Planner Michelle Collette suggested amending the provisions of the Town Center Overlay District in the Zoning By-law so projects in the TCOD Historic Districts are reviewed by the HDC and that projects in the TCOD but not in the Historic Districts are reviewed by the Design Review Committee. The HDC has statutory jurisdiction under MGL Chapter 40C and Chapter 153 of the Code of the Town of Groton. The Design Review Committee is an advisory committee to the Planning Board under Chapter 218-30.2 Town Center Overlay District.

The Board also discussed the role of the Town Meeting vote and required concept plan approval process as prescribed in §218-25 Major Protects and §218-27C Planned Residential Development. The Board may consider possible amendments to the concept plan requirements in the future.

Mr. Flinker presented a series of photographs and asked the Board for its recommendations on which photos should be included. Board members offered to take other photos showing examples of good design projects. The Board discussed which sketch up models of the Town Center vision should be included. Board members will review the draft revisions to the guidelines for discussion at the January 24, 2013 meeting.

MONARCH PATH SURETY

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Svarczkopf, to accept the Letter of Credit in the amount of \$265,000 from the Enterprise Bank as surety for the Monarch Path subdivision. The cost-to-complete estimate is detailed in the report dated October 18, 2012 from Nitsch Engineering. The motion passed unanimously.

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Svarczkopf to release the Performance Bond #1063759 for the Monarch Path Development (Subdivision) in the amount of \$337,535.75. The motion passed unanimously.

(Note: Chairman Giger arrived late and did not vote.)

MINUTES

The Board voted to approve the minutes of November 29, 2012; December 6, 2012; December 13, 2012; December 20, 2012; and January 3, 2013.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted

Michelle Collette
Land Use Director/Town Planner