

**PLANNING BOARD
FEBRUARY 6, 2014
MINUTES**

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

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

Members absent: Barringer and Svarczkopf

PRE-SUBMISSION REVIEW – GROTON INN

The Board met with the representatives of the Groton Inn redevelopment team including prospective buyer Rich Cooper, landscape architect Lorayne Black, and real estate broker John Amaral.

Mr. Amaral said the team hopes the residents will be pleased with the plans to redevelop the Groton Inn and that the traditional use of the property will continue for another hundred years.

Ms. Black described how the site plan has been reconfigured and building locations shifted to allow more green space in the core and to preserve the views of Gibbet Hill. The proposed cottages will look like New England farmhouses with a court yard for outdoor seating and pedestrian walkways throughout the site.

Member Wilson said he liked the cottages and asked if the design had changed since the concept plan was approved by Town Meeting. Ms. Black said the design is the same but there is less density.

Member Parent asked about the outbuilding. Ms. Black said it is for mechanical equipment such as air conditioning.

Member Perkins asked if the townhouses would be condominiums or rental units. Mr. Cooper said there will be seven long-term rental units. The density was reduced from 14 to seven townhouses.

Member Perkins asked about snow storage areas. Mr. Cooper said they have not thought about snow removal and snow storage yet. They will leave those details up to design engineer Jesse Johnson of David E. Ross Associates.

Member Burke asked if LID drainage methods would be used. Mr. Cooper said, "yes."

Chairman Giger noted that the pre-submission review is not a public hearing, but asked if anyone attending had any comments or questions.

Mr. Cooper showed proposed architectural elevations that will recreate the Groton Inn. The architectural plans will be submitted to the Historic Districts Commission (HDC) for its review and approval. The proposed inn will include a 29 rooms, a 50-seat restaurant, gift shop, and function hall. The carriage house will include a bicycle and cross country ski rental shop, a space for classes, and a caretaker's apartment.

Member Perkins asked about the height of the carriage house. Mr. Cooper said 34 feet, 9 inches.

Mr. Cooper described the 524 SF cottage with a private patio and nine farmhouse units to the rear of the inn. Town Planner Michelle Collette asked if any units would be universally accessible. Mr. Cooper

said he is not sure about the number of accessible units, but one of the long-term rental units will be for low income people.

Member Parent asked about coordination with Gibbet Hill Grille. Mr. Amaral said the owners of Gibbet Hill and the Groton Inn team have met and will work together since this project is the gateway to the Town Center.

Member Burke asked if the site plan would include pedestrian crossing areas to abutting properties for non-vehicular pedestrian connectivity.

Chairman Giger recommended that the lighting be adequate, but gentle.

Selectman Anna Eliot said parking will be a major issue and asked for a connection to 134 Main Street. Mr. Cooper said they will meet the parking requirements in the Zoning By-law.

Dorothy Janes asked if any variances are being requested. Mr. Amaral said, "None at this time."

Ms. Janes asked if a traffic study would be required because the project would certainly have impact on Main Street. Mr. Amaral said the applicant would submit whatever the Planning Board requires.

Ms. Janes asked who owns the property. Chairman Giger said this is still pre-submission review. No applications have been submitted to date.

PROPOSED BUSINESS ZONING MEETING WITH LANDOWNERS

The Board invited all landowners of business-zoned property and business owners to attend an informational session on proposed amendments to the business zoning provisions.

Chairman Giger presented the Power Point slides detailing the proposed new zoning districts: Village Center Business (VCB), Neighborhood Business (NB), and General Business (GB), the draft changes to the Schedule of Use Regulations and the Intensity Regulations. Additionally, the Conservancy and Open Space Agricultural District will be eliminated.

Member Burke explained the draft changes to the Schedule of Intensity Regulations for setbacks and impervious cover with minimum and maximum setbacks that can be waived by the Planning Board. Smaller lots in the VCB District will be allowed a higher percentage of impervious coverage.

Connie Sartini asked if the concept plan requirements would be removed from the by-law at this time. Member Burke said the Board is not proposing to remove concept plan approval by Town Meeting at this time. However, the courts have ruled against it in other communities so we could be challenged in court.

Dorothy Janes expressed concern that the proposed changes would hurt the value of her property located at 247 Main Street. The Board explained that 247 Main Street is zoned Residential-Agricultural (R-A) and there are no proposed changes to the R-A District. Ms. Janes asked if anyone did due diligence so the proposed zoning changes would not destroy people's investment in their property. The Board reiterated that there is no proposed change to the zoning of Ms. Janes' property.

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The Board reviewed individual maps with landowners and agreed that the automotive repair shop on Elm Street should be NB rather than VCB and agreed to consider changing the Herbal Lyceum on Main Street from RB to NB.

Bob France of Mount Laurel Development asked how the proposed changes would affect the Town Center Overlay District (TCOD). The Board said the TCOD provisions would remain intact and would not be changed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Land Use Director/Town Planner