

**PLANNING BOARD
MAY 15, 2014
MINUTES**

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

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

Member absent: Giger

PUBLIC HEARING – GROTON INN SPECIAL PERMITS

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 128 Main Street, LLC, for a special permit under the provisions of Section 218-25 Site Plan Review to redevelop the Groton Inn and associated improvements to the property located at 128 Main Street as shown on the plan entitled, "Site Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, 128 Main Street," prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated April 21, 2014. The proposed project is located on land owned by George Pergantis, shown as Assessors' Map 113, Parcel 10, on the easterly side of Main Street.

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 128 Main Street, LLC, for a special permit under the provisions of Section 218-13 Schedule of Use Regulations for "Motel, hotel, or inn," and Section 218-18 Special Permits for Business or Manufacturing Use to redevelop the Groton Inn and associated improvements to the property located at 128 Main Street as shown on the plan entitled, "Site Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, 128 Main Street," prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated April 21, 2014. The proposed project is located on land owned by George Pergantis, shown as Assessors' Map 113, Parcel 10, on the easterly side of Main Street.

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 128 Main Street, LLC, for a special permit under the provisions of Section 218-27 Planned Multifamily Residential Development to redevelop the Groton Inn and associated improvements to the property located at 128 Main Street as shown on the plan entitled, "Site Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, 128 Main Street," prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated April 21, 2014. The proposed project is located on land owned by George Pergantis, shown as Assessors' Map 113, Parcel 10, on the easterly side of Main Street.

Vice Chairman Parent called the public hearing to order. Clerk Svarczkopf read the three legal notices posted with the Town Clerk on April 23, 2014 and published in the April 25 and May 2, 2014 issues of the Groton Herald.

Applicants Chris Ferris and Rich Cooper, Attorney Robert Ancil, Design Engineer Jesse Johnson of David E. Ross Associates, Landscape Architect Lorayne Black, Architect Peter Pitman of Pitman & Wardley, Real Estate Broker John Amaral, the Board's consulting engineer Tim McGivern of Nitsch Engineering, and landowner George Pergantis were present.

Attorney Anctil presented a slide shown including an overview of the project and permitting process including the approval of the concept plan at the 2013 Fall Town meeting. The slides showed how the plan had evolved since concept plan approval.

The project includes 29 rooms in the Inn, a 60-seat restaurant, nine units in the stable, and a single-unit cottage for a total of 39 guest rooms. There is going to be a new carriage house with an activity center and living space for a caretaker. Six long-term rental units will be constructed with one single family, one duplex, and one triplex.

Mr. Amaral presented an overview of the project's history and economic viability based upon a needs analysis for the proposed use. The Groton Inn, as a destination, will support other businesses in Town.

Jesse Johnson, design engineer of David E. Ross Associates, described the site plan, soil testing and remediation, traffic flow, and proposed drainage system. Access meets all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Architectural Access Board (AAB) requirements. Fire trucks can navigate the entire site. Fire sprinklers will be installed in the inn, the stable, and the triplex. Hydrants will be installed in the locations recommended by the Fire Chief and Water Department.

Mr. Johnson said he met with the DPW Director about tying the stormwater management system into the municipal storm drain system in Main Street. At the present time, untreated runoff flows into Main Street. After the site is developed, a small portion of the treated runoff will be piped into the catch basin in Main Street. The majority of the site will drain into a detention basin at the rear of the property. The volume of runoff will be decreased, and the water quality will be improved.

Member Burke asked about existing runoff patterns. Mr. Johnson said the drainage divide is in the middle of the site with flow to the street and flow to the rear of the site.

Mr. Johnson said the proposed plan will consolidate impervious area and parking. The new parking will be only 5000 SF larger than the existing parking. The site does not work well for Low Impact Development (LID) because the groundwater is high and the soil type is too tight and does not work well. The drainage system is conventional. There will be no alteration within 50 ft of wetlands. Only the stormwater detention basin and walk out areas will be within 100 ft of wetlands.

Landscape Architect Lorayne Black presented the landscaping plans for the site, including the front entrance and scenic vista of Gibbet Hill. They will preserve the mature maple trees on Main Street and the specimen tree at the front corner of the lot. Buffer plantings will be installed along the Lawrence Academy property line. Snow storage area will be along the side of the parking lot. There will be a small sitting area in a perennial garden and a larger terrace for functions. Flowering trees and evergreens will be planted along the edge of the parking lot. Accent pavers will be used for traffic calming. Ms. Black described the stable building with terraces and walls for sitting. A walkway will connect to the Inn and parking lot. Screening will

be provided along the Boynton Meadows (134 Main Street) lot line. The cottage in the rear will have a private sitting area with views of Gibbet Hill.

Architect Peter Pitman described the architectural elevations of all the proposed buildings. He said they are using the original granite blocks at the entrance. The front porch on the Groton Inn building will be similar to the original inn. He described how the buildings would be situated to preserve the scenic vista of Gibbet Hill. All universal accessibility issues were addressed without the use of handrails. Mr. Pitman described the stable, cottage, carriage house, and long-term rental units. The single-family rental will be completely ADA compliant. The unit will have two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Vice Chairman Parent read the comments from the Fire Chief, the Board of Health, and the Water Department.

Tim McGivern of Nitsch Engineer presented his peer review dated May 13, 2014. He highlighted major concerns including:

- *Section 218-18.D.(1)(c)[4] states that pedestrian movement within the site and to other places will be well provided for.*

The Plan does not appear to include pedestrian ramps at the onsite crosswalks or at the driveway curb cuts. The Plan should be revised to include pedestrian ramps for all the onsite crosswalks and for the sidewalks at the driveway curb cuts.

- *Sections 218-18.D.(1)(c)[5] states that vehicular movement within the site will be safe and convenient and arranged so as to not disturb abutting properties; visibility of parking and service areas from public streets will be minimized through facility location and the use of topography and vegetation; and potential disturbances such as noise, glare, and odors will be effectively confined to the premises through buffering or other means.*

The Plan includes a driveway at the back of the Inn and Tavern that leads to the Farmhouse. This driveway is 6 feet from the northwest property line at the closest point. Vehicles traveling on this driveway would have headlights facing the abutting property. The Plan also includes parking spaces in close proximity to the northwest and southeast property line and five (5) parking spaces at the front of the property. The Applicant should demonstrate that the vehicular movement within the site does not disturb abutting properties with noise, glare, and odors; and that the use of topography, vegetation, and other means will minimize visibility of the front parking area from Main Street.

- *Section 218-25.H.(1)(d) states that the Site Plan shall integrate the development into the existing terrain and surrounding landscape and protect abutting properties*

and community amenities. Project sites shall be buffered from adjacent uses if required by the Board, preferably with a natural landscaped buffer. Obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations shall be minimized. Unique historic and cultural amenities and stone walls shall be preserved to the greatest extent possible.

The Plan indicates parking and a dumpster location within 6 feet of the northwest property line, and parking within 8 feet of the southeast property line. The Plan also includes landscaping in these areas. The Planning Board should determine if the landscaping is sufficient to buffer the site from adjacent uses and protect abutting properties.

- *Section 218-25.H.(1)(m) states that groundwater recharge shall be provided for throughout the development, and impervious surfaces shall be kept to a minimum.*

The Plan indicates a number of sidewalks and walkways including a “terrace” that are cement concrete. The Plan also includes bituminous concrete pavement for the site driveways and parking area except two areas comprised of pavers. These surfaces appear to be impervious. The Applicant could minimize impervious surfaces by using pervious paving material for the site walkways, parking areas and site driveways. The Planning Board should determine if the Applicant has kept impervious surfaces to a minimum.

- *Section 352-8.B.(3) states that the site planning process shall include creating a decentralized stormwater system: manage runoff at the source to the extent practical through the use of small decentralized structures such as swales, bioretention areas, infiltration structures, filter strips, rain barrels, cisterns, dry wells, and vegetated areas. Increase the time of concentration (average time for rainfall to reach a point) by using open, vegetated drainage systems and maximizing overland or sheet flow.*

The Plan includes recharge trenches for some of the structure roofs; however, in general the plan does not appear to incorporate a decentralized stormwater system. The Applicant should consider providing recharge and water quality treatment closer to the source of runoff. For example, the roof drains for the Inn and Tavern could be directed to infiltration trenches prior to discharge into the stormwater system. Another example would be to include bioretention basins at the parking lot islands.

- The Plan indicates a 5-foot wide walking trail easement that abuts the site. Nitsch Engineering understands that this easement is associated with a proposed walking trail located on the 134 Main Street site. The Plan does not appear to include a continuation of this trail system. The Planning Board should determine if the Plan should be revised to include a continuation of the trail system and associated easement.
- The Plan indicates a handicap parking space in the vicinity of the long term rentals; however, it is unclear if this handicap parking space is also for the Carriage House. There does not appear to be an accessible pathway from this handicap space to the Carriage House. The Plan should be revised to include an accessible path from the handicap space to the Carriage House.
- The Plan indicates a driveway slope of approximately 12% at the northerly driveway intersection with Main Street. The Plan indicates a stop sign at this location directly preceding a pedestrian sidewalk. This creates a potentially dangerous situation especially in winter. The Plan should be revised to ensure a cross slope of less than 2% in the location of the pedestrian crossing, and to provide an area the length of a car preceding the stop sign that is less than 5% if possible.

Member Burke asked about waivers requested by the applicant. Mr. Johnson reiterated the waivers requested in his letter dated May 14, 2014:

1. Section 218-18.D.1.(c)[2] – Topographic change will not result in cuts or fills exceeding 7 feet. *The proposed excavations exceeding 7 feet are required to mitigate the fill/trash mixture on the site.*
2. Section 218-25.H.(1)(a) – Preserve trees 12 inches' caliper or larger unless it can be demonstrated that such removal is necessary and that there are no alternatives to said removal. *We are requesting a waiver from showing this information on the plans. The site is proposed to be re-graded within the limit of work as shown on the site plans. All vegetation within those limits, regardless of size, will have to be removed in order to establish grades and install infrastructure. The proposed landscaping design mitigates removal of all vegetation on the site.*
3. Section 352-14.A. – Stormwater treatment devices used to handle water quality as well as treat water quality shall do so to the 1-inch rule standard.

The site is a re-development project with existing C-soils throughout. By DEP Standards, this would require treatment to the maximum extent practicable for 0.5-inches of runoff over all the impervious surfaces. Enforcement of a stricter guideline would require substantially more drainage infrastructure and disturbance within environmentally sensitive areas. We feel that project as designed strikes a good "balance" between state and local requirements.

4. Section 352-17 – For the purposes of Redevelopment, "pre-development" refers to the site in its natural state. It does not refer to existing conditions.

The site is a re-development project with extensive existing disturbance and impervious surfaces throughout the site. Without getting credit for the site with existing conditions and having to analyze in a "natural state", this project would not be able to be constructed. The existing C-soils, topography, and high groundwater throughout the site severely limit your ability to develop the site. The project, as designed, complies with the DEP Standards for all increases in impervious surfaces. Additionally, it improves existing stormwater conditions as required by this same section of the Bylaw. Stormwater flows are treated at least twice, the rate and volume of stormwater is reduced, and long-term Operation and Maintenance of the site will be implemented .

Attorney Ancil said the applicant is also requesting waivers of the scale model and a full traffic study. He asked the Board for guidance on the amount of information required for traffic assessment. Member Burke said the applicant should submit enough detailed information for the Board to be comfortable to consider traffic impacts.

Attorney Ancil said the applicant is requesting a waiver of the 100 ft setback from property lines required in Section 218-27C Planned Multifamily Housing for the long-term rental units.

Member Perkins asked if people would have to drive onto the site to the front of the Inn and then drive back onto Route 119, turn left, and then turn into the parking lot. Mr. Pitman said this is how the traffic flow was historically. Mr. Ferris said they would look at other options for check-in traffic flow.

Member Barringer asked about the photometric diagram. Mr. Johnson said it would be submitted. Member Barringer said the lamps must be shielded to prevent glare. Mr. Johnson agreed.

Member Perkins asked if a list of plantings had been provided. Ms. Black said the plantings are shown on Sheet L-2. The plants will be labeled on the next plan.

Member Barringer said the viewshed of Gibbet Hill is very valuable. He asked if some parking spaces could be eliminated to keep the views. The Board would consider waiving parking spaces to keep the views.

Member Perkins asked about the rear of the site. Mr. Johnson said the stormwater basin and a 5 ft wide trail easement will be in the rear of the site. The trail easement connects with the trail easement on 134 Main Street.

Member Perkins asked about fire truck circulation. Mr. Johnson said they are discussing curb cuts and the slope of the entrance with the Fire Chief.

Attorney said they will be meeting with the Historic Districts Commission on June 3, 2014. He asked if the Planning Board and HDC would be willing to hold a joint meeting to consider the plan. The Board agreed.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on June 12, 2014 at 8 PM.

CHAMBERLAINS MILL

The Board received a request for comments from the Board of Selectmen regarding an earth removal exemption for the Chamberlains Mill subdivision. The Board voted unanimously to recommend that the exemption be granted for construction of the subdivision road and drainage system.

May 15, 2014

Page 7

MEETING WITH THE GROTON BOARD OF TRADE

The presentation to the Groton Board of Trade will be held on Wednesday, June 25, rather than Wednesday, June 18, 2014 as previously scheduled. Members Burke and Wilson will do the presentation on proposed changes to business zoning.

The Board thanked Member Parent for his years of service on Board.

Meeting adjourned at 10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Land Use Director/Town Planner