

**PLANNING BOARD
JANUARY 29, 2015
MINUTES**

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

Members present: Barringer, Burke, Giger, Perkins, Vega, and Wilson

Member absent: Svarczkopf

COMMENTS TO MEPA – LOST LAKE FIRE PROTECTION

The Board received the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) filed with MEPA for the Lost Lake Fire Protection water mains, cisterns, and a dry hydrant. Water Superintendent Tom Orcutt presented a summary of the project including a locus map and copy of the report to the 2014 Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Orcutt said the water mains will be installed in the rights-of-way of existing roads. Two cisterns will be installed – one on land owned by the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts (Grotonwood) and the other one on land owned by the Groton Conservation Trust. The dry hydrant will be installed in Lost Lake, off Island Road, in an area that is accessible and has sufficient water depth.

Member Giger agreed that the project would enhance fire safety.

Member Perkins asked if the project is just for fire protection at this time. Mr. Orcutt said the project will go out to bid with an add-alternate for drinking water connections so it is possible that there may be water hook-ups included. The cost will be included in the bid for construction at a later date.

Member Burke asked if the project will provide potable water as well as fire protection. Mr. Orcutt said that is yet to be determined. Homeowners will have to pay for water service to their property line. The Water Department is not doing betterments for this project.

Member Giger asked if water service would be provided to the houses. Mr. Orcutt said if potable water is included, the service will be installed to the property line at the edge of the public way.

Member Burke asked how many vacant lots will be on the route. Such lots may become developable without private wells if public water is available. Mr. Orcutt said he did not know the potential number of developable lots but did not think there are very many.

Member Burke said the project is good for fire protection but the water mains may make land developable that is not today. He said he has concerns with more sewage disposal systems and the water quality of Lost Lake.

Chairman Barringer said it is a good plan with construction in the roadways and cisterns on private land. He asked Mr. Orcutt to research the number of lots that may become developable if potable water is available through this project.

The motion was made by Giger, seconded by Perkins, to send positive comments on the Lost Lake Fire Protection Project to MEPA. The motion passed unanimously.

ACCEPTANCE OF OFF-PRESCOTT STREET

The Board met with Richard Wolfe of Grotonwood and Off-Prescott Street resident Farshad Pourmousa to discuss the process for accepting Off-Prescott Street as a public way. The Selectmen recommended

that the residents meet with the Planning Board prior to moving forward with their request. Mr. Pourmousa submitted a sketch of the road prepared by Ducharme & Dillis. He said there are eight residents living on Off-Prescott Street – six are owners and two rent from Grotonwood. The road is in very poor condition and emergency vehicle access is very difficult.

Mr. Wolfe agreed that the road is in terrible shape and Grotonwood would like to have the road improved and accepted by the Town. It is an old right-of-way that eventually became a road. Grotonwood has no intention to develop land along the improved road if it becomes a public way and is offering a conservation corridor to prevent such development from happening. Mr. Wolfe said it is a long dead-end road and he understands there are limits on the length of a dead-end street.

Chairman Barringer said the Subdivision Regulations limit dead-end streets to 1000 feet. The road would have to meet minimum standards with adequate width to provide year-round access in order to qualify for acceptance as a public way. He said he understands that the DPW Director said the road does not meet minimum standards. He asked if there is a private initiative to improve the road.

Member Burke asked if Prescott Street is a public way. Land Use Director Michelle Collette said not to her knowledge. Member Burke said it is difficult to accept a public way off a private way. He said roads come to Town Meeting for acceptance after a subdivision road is constructed to the standards in the Subdivision Regulations.

Land Use Director Michelle Collette said the Roads and Ways By-law includes the following special provisions that were used to accept the roads in the Lost Lake area in 1989:

§ 180-2. Exceptions to street acceptance procedures.

Notwithstanding the provisions of § 180-1 above, a roadway may be voted upon for acceptance by the Town where such roadway is shown on a subdivision plan and is duly recorded with the Registry of Deeds and has been continuously open to public use and has been used for all purposes for which Town roads and ways are customarily used for a period of 50 years or more prior to April 29, 1989, and where such roadway is determined by the Board of Selectmen, following consultation with the Director of Public Works, to be sufficient for the needs of access to serve the existing dwellings on land abutting or served thereby.

She said Off-Prescott Street does not qualify because the road is not shown on a recorded subdivision plan and the DPW Director determined that the road does not provide sufficient access.

Chairman Barringer said the residents could improve the road to “lane” standards in the subdivision regulations. Member Burke said the homeowners could submit a subdivision plan showing existing lots to the Planning Board for approval. If the definitive plan is approved, there would be a plan on record at the Registry of Deeds.

Chairman Barringer recommended eliminating the “conservation corridors” along the road because they could be considered “spite strips” which are not allowed in the regulations. Mr. Wolfe said they would work with Stan Dillis on the preparation of a subdivision plan. Member Giger cautioned the residents to be sure to address stormwater management issues as part of the subdivision plan.

GROTON ELECTIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT DESIGN DETAIL

The Board received an email message dated January 27, 2015 from Bill Murray of Places Associates requesting approval of the bollards to be installed at the entrance with the drop-box and the new Groton Electric Light Department facility. The email was forwarded to the Design Review Committee for comments. The DRC had no concerns and thought the bollards looked appropriate.

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Perkins, to approve the bollards as shown in the cut sheets entitled, "The New Bollards from Neenah." The bollards shall be installed in the location shown as "bollards at either end of island (circled in red) on the plan entitled, "Groton Electric Light Department, Site and Utility Plan, Sheet Number C-2, Sheet 4 of 12," and as detailed on the plan entitled, "Groton Electric Light Department, Landscape Details Plan, Sheet Number C-5.1, Sheet 8 of 12." The motion passed unanimously.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT TO CPC & DCR

The Trails Committee requested that the Planning Board write letters of support for the application to the Community Preservation Committee and the Department of Conservation and Recreation for funding to construction a universally accessible trail on the Rich State Forest Property. The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Wilson, to write a letter of support of the Trails Committee's grant applications. The motion passed unanimously.

PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENTS

The Board reviewed the draft zoning amendments for temporary construction trailers and Site Plan Review. More research is required for temporary trailers for normal business use (e.g. retail, office) during construction.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The motion was made by Giger, seconded by Burke, to enter executive session, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(3) "To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares." The litigation is the Planning Board v. the Zoning Board of Appeals and Thomas Roche, and the Board would not return to open session. The motion passed by roll call vote with Burke- yes, Perkins – yes, Vega – yes, Wilson – yes, Giger – yes, and Barringer – yes.

The motion was made by Perkins, seconded by Giger, to end executive session and to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by roll call vote with Burke – yes, Perkins – yes, Vega – yes, Wilson – yes, Giger – yes, and Barringer – yes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Land Use Director/Town Planner