

**PLANNING BOARD
NOVEMBER 19, 2015
MINUTES**

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

Members present: Perkins, Barringer (participating remotely), Burke, Giger, Vega and Wilson

Members absent: Svarczkopf

PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL PERMIT MODIFICATION, GROTON INN, 128 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, to modify Special Permits 2014-06 & 2014-07 under the provisions of Sections 218-18 Major Projects and 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 plans entitled, “Site Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, 128 Main Street,” prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated April 21, 2014, revised October 26, 2015, and “Schematic Design, Groton Inn, 128 Main Street,” prepared by Pitman & Wardley Architects, LLC, dated October 26, 2015. The proposed project is located on land owned by 128 Main Street, LLC, shown as Assessors’ Map 113, Parcel 10, on the easterly side of Main Street.

Chairman Perkins called the public hearing to order. Vice Chairman Giger read the public hearing notice posted with the Town Clerk on October 27, 2015 and published in the October 30 and November 6, 2015 issues of the *Groton Herald*. Member Barringer will be able to call in at 8 PM, so the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing at 8 PM.

BERTOZZI FARMS LOT RELEASE

The Board received a request dated November 16, 2015 from Daniel Gardner of Greener Living Luxury Homes for release of Lots 6 and 8 in the Bertozzi Farms subdivision. The Town Treasurer is holding \$128,860.23 as performance guarantee in a passbook savings account. The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Wilson, to release Lots 6 and 8 in the Bertozzi Farm subdivision. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMENTS TO THE ZBA

Two Alder Road – The Board recommended that the ZBA inquire what the space on the second floor will be used for and about the total increase in gross floor area. The Board will also recommend that the ZBA consider the recommendations of the Board of Health and Conservation Commission in their responses to the Form of Intent.

23 Stonecleave Lane – The Board reviewed the application for an accessory apartment at 23 Stonecleave Lane and had no concerns. ADA Coordinator Michelle Collette said the apartment is being created for a disabled family member and that this application is in keeping with the purpose of Section 218-16D(1).

PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL PERMIT MODIFICATION, GROTON INN, 128 MAIN STREET

The Board held the public hearing to consider the application submitted by 128 Main Street, LLC, to modify the Special Permit/Site Plan Review for the Groton Inn. Applicant John Amaral, Attorney Robert

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Ancil, landscape architect Lorayne Black, design engineer Rob Oliva of David Ross Associates, architect Sarah Bilello of Pitman and Wardley, and the Board's consulting engineer Tim McGivern of Nitsch Engineering were present.

(Member Barringer called in and participated remotely.)

Attorney Ancil presented the application to modify the site plan approved by the Planning Board on June 26, 2014. The applicant is addressing the Historic Districts Commission's concerns about the 39 ft height of the new Inn. The Zoning Board of Appeals granted a variance for the height of 4 ft greater than the 35 ft height limitation on November 18, 2015. Attorney Ancil said the investors, Peter Twachtman and Phil Kronenthal of the Migis Hotel Group, are present at the hearing. The proposed plan includes 60 rooms in the Groton Inn and a 100-seat restaurant in a separate building toward the rear of the property.

Mr. Twachtman and Mr. Kronenthal presented their vision for the property. The Migis Group manages five properties in Maine and they are excited about being development partners and managing the Groton Inn. The Migis group is a good steward of both people and properties.

Design engineer Rob Oliva presented the changes to the site plan as described in his letter dated November 16, 2015 to the Board. The rental units and cottages have been eliminated and the 100-seat restaurant has been added. The stormwater management system mimics what was on the previous plan. There will be a decrease in impervious area and no changes to the stormwater inlets and outlets. Runoff to Main Street will be less than the previous plan. Overall runoff is less than pre-development conditions. The Stormwater Advisory Committee determined that a new stormwater permit is not required because the changes to the stormwater management system are minimal. There is no additional work proposed in the wetlands buffer zone. The limit of work has not changed.

Member Giger asked about the event tent shown on the plan and whether parking calculations included the tent. Mr. Oliva said, "Yes," the revised plan has 118 parking spaces with an additional 20 spaces in an overflow parking area for a total of 138 spaces.

Member Barringer asked about snow storage. Mr. Oliva said snow would be stored at the edge of the parking lot as shown on the site plan.

Member Barringer said the easement to 134 Main Street should be open for pedestrian use. He asked if the trees could be removed from the easement area. He asked where the dumpsters would be located. Mr. Oliva said there will be two dumpsters – one at the Inn and one at the restaurant. Member Barringer asked if a second dumpster is needed in each location for food waste. Land Use Director Michelle Collette said she would check with the Board of Health.

Member Barringer noted that the lighting plan had not be submitted yet. He stressed the need for a lighting plan. He also requested that two parking spaces at the easterly side of the parking lot be removed to preserve the view of Gibbet Hill.

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The Board's engineer, Tim McGivern, presented his report dated November 18, 2015. He agreed with the design engineer that there is not much change to the stormwater management system and that the basin will function as designed. The open space calculations and traffic analysis have not been updated. The landscaping plan is the most significant change. A new photometric plan and a new operations and maintenance plan are required. The landscaping plan should be included as a sheet in the site plan.

Mr. Oliva said they would address all of Mr. McGivern's concerns.

Landscape architect Lorayne Black said the landscaping plan is very similar to the previous plan. The proposed landscaping on Main Street is more formal. The buffers on the property lines will be planted with Norway Spruce, White Fir, Arbor Vitae, and flowering trees. The view of Gibbet Hill from the front doors of the Inn and court yard will be preserved. The open view to the east includes a mowed lawn and natural meadow near the wetlands. Fifteen shade trees including maple, river birch, and honey locust will be planted in the parking area. The patio in the court yard will have a lawn area with seating and shrubs along the perimeter. Cherry trees will be planted on the easterly side of the building. More natural landscaping will be used in the area in the rear of the property.

Member Burke asked if a bicycle rack would be installed. Ms. Black said she would add one.

Member Giger asked if the applicant met with the Conservation Commission about the changes to the plan. Land Use Director/Town Planner Michelle Collette said the Conservation Commission would review the changes to the plan on November 24, 2015.

Member Giger asked about the snow removal plan because salt and other contaminants will flow into the stormwater basin and then to James Brook. Mr. Oliva responded that the stormwater management system meets DEP standards. The snow storage area can be moved elsewhere on site because there is plenty of space for snow storage. The use of salt and deicing chemicals will be minimal, but pedestrian walking areas must be safe throughout the site. There is a very large, natural buffer area between the wetlands and the stormwater basin.

Member Giger asked if the Operations and Maintenance plan addresses snow storage. Mr. McGivern said the basin must be operational and the stormwater system meets design standards. A revised Operating and Maintenance Plan should be submitted by the applicant.

Resident Robert Pine said he likes the proposed plan much better than the previously approved plan. He said he hopes the view shed would be protected and asked whether the restaurant could be re-oriented to preserve the view. He asked if the tent would be left up all summer. Mr. Kronenthal said the tent would not be left up between events so the view will be protected.

Selectman Anna Eliot asked that the landscaping between the Inn and 134 Main Street not obstruct the signs for Bliss Bakery at 134 Main Street. Ms. Black said the landscaping plan shows the existing sugar maple trees in that area.

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Abutter Linda Jordan, resident at 134 Main Street, expressed concern about traffic on Route 119 from the Groton Inn and 134 Main Street. Mr. Amaral said a traffic study was submitted with the approved plan showing that there would be a minimal increase in traffic on Route 119. He said they would update the MDM Traffic Study. Safety of guests at the Inn is a paramount concern.

Member Giger reminded the applicant that the curb cut near the 134 Main Street property line is for "entrance only" as shown on the plan. The applicant agreed.

Architect Sarah Bilello presented the architectural elevations and floor plans. She also presented a rendering of the historic façade and new wing prepared by Lorayne Black. The rendering is based upon an old postcard.

Ms. Bilello described the plans for each floor in the Inn including the commercial kitchen, breakfast room, functional room, and guest rooms in the new wing on the first floor. Guest rooms and suites will be on the second and third floors. The mechanical equipment will be in the basement rather than outside as it was on the previous plan. The additional four feet height of the roof maintains the historic nature of the original Inn. A 9-pitch roof is now a 10-pitch roof. The gables at the end are as shown on the historic records. The old postcard was used as a model for the new building.

Member Burke asked what type of building material would be used. Ms. Bilello said it would be clapboard. Member Burke asked about the elevations for the restaurant. Ms. Bilello said they are still working on the plans for the restaurant.

Board members were all pleased with the new plans. The Board asked the applicant to submit the following information for the continuation of the public hearing:

- Photometric diagram and cut sheets for lighting
- Restaurant elevations
- Update to the traffic study
- Location of the bicycle rack
- Opening to 134 Main Street
- Location of sidewalks
- A revised Operating and Maintenance Plan
- Response to the Nitsch Engineering Report dated November 18, 2015

Member Burke said the new plan is very credible and has the track record of experienced operators. He asked if they had done a market analysis yet. Mr. Twachtman said, "Yes," 50% will be group businesses and 50% will be transient so guests will be there during the week and on weekends. Migis will manage both the Inn and the restaurant and see this as one site. They want to create a sense of place, both inside as well as outside.

Chairman Perkins read comments from the Sewer Commission, the Water Commission, and the Fire Chief.

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Member Vega said it is important to create pedestrian access for the community so people will walk on the sidewalks rather than on the lawn.

Member Giger asked about the construction schedule. Mr. Amaral said they hope to complete permitting in January, prepare construction drawings by mid-February, select contractors in March, and begin construction in April 2016. They would like to open by April 2017 for the graduation and wedding season.

Mr. Amaral requested that the Board allow them to come back at a later date with elevations for the restaurant.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on December 10, 2015 at 7:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette, AICP
Land Use Director/Town Planner