

**PLANNING BOARD
FEBRUARY 11, 2016
MINUTES**

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING – REVISIONS TO CHAPTER 381 PLANNING BOARD REGULATIONS

The Groton Planning Board held a public hearing to consider the following revisions to Chapter 381 Planning Board Regulations:

Section 381-11 Stormwater Management– Insert a reference to Chapter 352 Stormwater Regulations to encourage the use of Low Impact Development.

Section 381-12 Municipal Service, C. Fire Protection – Delete existing Item 381C(1) which reads as follows:

- (1) When Town water is not available, a fire cistern shall be installed. Fire cisterns shall be constructed of fiberglass and shall have a capacity of 30,000 gallons, minimum, available through the section piping system. Fire cisterns shall conform to the cistern specifications of the NFPA Standard 1231 – Rural Water Supplies, as modified and approved by the Fire Chief. All hydrants and dry hydrants are to be installed, painted and operational prior to any building permits being issued. Public water supply hydrants shall be painted yellow, and dry hydrants shall be painted red. All appropriate fire cisterns as determined by the Fire Chief shall be inspected by the Fire Chief and shall be operational prior to issuance of any building permits. [Amended 4-3-2003]

And insert a new Item 381C(1):

- (1) When Town water is not available, fire sprinklers shall be installed in every residential structure. Sprinkler shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 13 (Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems). Residential sprinkler systems shall be accompanied by an affidavit by a Fire Protection Engineer prior to occupancy being granted.

Section 381-13 Other Improvements, D. Curbing – Require bituminous Cape Cod berm for all streets with Low Impact Development drainage systems as described in 381-D(2).

Section 381-33 Expedited permitting & 381-50 through 381-60. Change “Station Avenue Overlay District” to “Town Center Overlay District” here and throughout the regulations.

Section 381-36.1 Submission Requirements – G. – Change reference from Chapter 340 to Chapter 341.

Section 381-40B Site lighting – Add the requirement that lighting must comply with International Dark Sky Association standards.

Section 381-40C Stormwater Management – add reference to Chapter 352 Stormwater Regulations.

Section 381-40D Parking Lot Layout, (7) Curbing – add statement about waiving vertical granite curbing for LID drainage systems.

Add New “Part 9” Hours of Site Construction:

The following terms and restrictions will apply to all subdivisions and Section 218-25 Minor and Major Site Plan approvals issued hereafter by the Planning Board or Land Use Departments unless otherwise stated in the permit or waived by the Planning Board or Land Use Departments:

- (1) Site construction operations shall be conducted only between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- (2) Hydraulic drilling, jack hammering, and rock crushing shall be conducted only between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Chairman Perkins called the public hearing to order. Clerk Vega read the notice published in the January 22 and 29, 2016 issues of the *Groton Herald*. Fire Chief Steele McCurdy and Attorney Robert Collins were present at the hearing.

Fire Chief McCurdy explained why he suggested the revisions to the Fire Protection provisions in the Subdivision Regulations to require residential sprinklers rather than cisterns in areas without public water. He said this is an opportunity to increase public safety and expressed concern that the Town would be liable if a cistern fails. The cost to install a cistern is approximately \$120,000 to \$150,000. The cost of residential sprinklers is around \$4000 per home. The Chief McCurdy said residential sprinklers should be required everywhere in the state.

Member Svarczkopf asked what happens if there is a power failure. Chief McCurdy said 10 minutes of pressure must be available in the tank as required in NFPA13,

Member Svarczkopf asked about the risk-benefit of requiring sprinklers and asked what the chance is that a house would be saved with sprinklers. Chief McCurdy said usually only one sprinkler head goes off resulting in a significant reduction of risk in a fire. The statistics demonstrate that there is 80% less chance of injury or death with sprinklers.

Member Barringer said a house with sprinklers would have a higher resale value and lower fire insurance costs. Chief McCurdy agreed.

Member Burke expressed concern about using the Subdivision Regulations to require sprinklers. The Subdivision Control Law, Chapter 41, section Q, says the Town cannot require improvements that are not commonly installed in a city or town. The regulations cannot be more rigorous. The Subdivision Control law is applicable to roads, infrastructure and utilities. Fire sprinklers is a Building Code issue. The Building Code should be amended to require sprinklers – not the Subdivision Regulations.

Member Burke said the Board has granted waivers of the requirements to install cisterns if sprinklers are provided instead. Requiring residential sprinklers in the regulations would risk an appeal on the basis that the Board is exceeding its authority.

Member Giger said the Board has been trying to address this issue for years. Several residential developers have opted to install sprinklers.

Attorney Collins said residential sprinklers do not add that much to the cost of a new house and they are more effective than cisterns.

Member Vega expressed concern about maintenance and upkeep that would shift costs to the homeowner.

Chairman Perkins asked about the risks of cisterns and long-term maintenance. Chief McCurdy said the life span of a cistern is 15-20 years before they must be replaced. Six cisterns should be replaced at a cost of \$120,000 to \$150,000 each. The Town recently installed two new cisterns as part of the Lost Lake Fire Protection system.

Member Burke suggested amending the proposed language to include residential sprinklers with a waiver. Member Giger said he would prefer to have sprinklers as an alternative rather than depending upon a waiver.

Member Burke and Member Giger will each draft language for the proposed revision.

The Board reviewed and agreed with the revisions to stormwater management, curbing, and hours of operation.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on February 18, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

ANR PLANS

Paula Martin, Jenkins Road – The Board considered the Approval Not Required plan submitted by Paula Martin to create **one new lot on Jenkins Road subject to the Special Permit for Flexible Development granted by the Planning Board on June 11, 2015**. The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to endorse as Approval Not Required the plan entitled, “Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, Owner: Paula Martin,” prepared by Ducharme & Dillis Civil Design Group, dated May 1, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.

Janet Thompson, Old Lantern Lane - The Board considered the Approval Not Required plan submitted by Janet Thompson to create three new lots on Old Lantern Lane. Town Planner Michelle Collette explained that Old Lantern Lane is shown on a definitive subdivision plan approved in 1956. Most of the lots in the subdivision have been owned by family members since that time. The Board asked about the condition of the road. Attorney Collins said it is a gravel road that exceeds the width and specifications of the subdivision regulations. The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to endorse as Approval Not Required the plan entitled, “Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, Owner: Kenneth and Janet Thompson,” prepared by Ducharme & Dillis Civil Design Group, dated January 4, 2016. The motion passed unanimously.

Sullivan, Common Street - The Board considered the Approval Not Required plan submitted by John Sullivan to change a lot line between two lots on Common Street. The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to endorse as Approval Not Required the plan entitled, “Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, Owner: John and Michelle Sullivan,” prepared by Ducharme & Dillis Civil Design Group, dated September 1, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.

Roberto, Cow Pond Brook Road - The Board considered the Approval Not Required plan submitted by Sandra Roberto to create one new lot on Cow Pond Brook Road. The motion was made by Svarczkopf, seconded by Barringer, to endorse as Approval Not Required the plan entitled, “Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, 160 Flavell Road, Prepared for Sandra Roberto,” prepared by Land Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. dated January 15, 2016.. The motion passed unanimously.

Fox Meadow Realty Corporation, Mockingbird Hill Road - The Board considered the Approval Not Required plan submitted by Fox Meadow Realty to change a lot line between multiple lots on Mockingbird Hill Lane in the Rocky Hill subdivision. Attorney Collins explained how the lots in the subdivision are being reconfigured. One lot is being eliminated and will be replaced by a future plan subject to a modification of the special permit for the Rocky Hill Starter Homes. The motion was made by Wilson, seconded by Svarczkopf, to endorse the plan entitled, "Lot Line Change Plan, Lots 34, 35, and Lots 27-29 for the Rocky Hill Subdivision in Groton, Mass.," Prepared by R. Wilson and Associates, dated January 26, 2016. The motion passed with Perkins, Barringer, Burke, Svarczkopf, Vega and Wilson in favor; Giger opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW – LAWRENCE ACADEMY ENTRANCE

The Board reviewed the site plan submitted by Lawrence Academy to construct a new entrance to the campus from Main Street. Linda Deasy and Peter Myette of Lawrence Academy, design engineer Stan Dillis of Ducharme & Dillis Civil Design Group, and traffic engineer Ken Cramb of Bayside Engineering were present.

Chairman Perkins read the email comments from the Police Chief and the Fire Chief.

Mr. Dillis presented the plan to construct a new road with a maximum grade of 8% to serve as the primary access to the campus. The road will meet all the requirements of the Subdivision Regulations. The existing Powderhouse Road, a public way, will be discontinued and a new sidewalk will be installed in its place. Powderhouse Road has a grade of 12% today, and there have been many accidents at the intersection of Main Street and Powderhouse Road. The traffic improvement plan includes the creation of left turning lanes on Main Street.

Member Giger noted that the Police Chief requested that traffic supervisors will be required until Powderhouse Road is closed. Mr. Myette agreed.

Member Barringer asked if there would be lighting along the new road. Ms. Deasy said two low lights would be installed subject to the approval of the Historic Districts Commission.

Mr. Cramb described the traffic flows today and as shown on the proposed plan. He said the traffic warrants are met for the left turning lanes on Main Street. Main Street has a 40 ft wide right-of-way so there is room for cars to pass on the right. Turning lanes will calm traffic and improve the existing situation. The signs for the crosswalks will be changed to solar-power crossing signs similar to the signs at Kimball's on Route 110 in Westford.

Chairman Perkins asked about the Thompson House on the opposite side of Main Street. Ms. Deasy said Lawrence Academy owns the house that is a residence for two faculty members.

Chairman Perkins asked why the new road does not line up with the driveway to the playing fields. Mr. Dillis said the grade is too steep in this location. The grade would be 12%.

Member Barringer asked if left turns would be restricted. Mr. Cramb said there would be no restrictions.

Member Barringer asked about parking along Main Street. Mr.; Cramb said parking would be in the field. "No Parking" signs would be installed on both sides of Main Street.

February 11, 2016

Page 5

Member Burke asked if a rumble strip could be installed rather than stripping. Mr. Cramb said they would use stripping, not rumble strips. Mr. Dillis said the DPW Director prefers pavement lines.

Member Giger asked if the pedestrian crossing signs would be installed at all three crosswalks. Mr. Cramb said, "Yes."

Chairman Perkins asked if the applicant asked the Selectmen about installing the "No Parking" signs yet. Mr. Dillis said, "Not yet."

Abutter Ed O'Rourke, 43 Main Street, expressed many concerns about the impact of the proposed project on his home. He said they will not be able to turn left out of their driveway onto Route 119. The intersection of Route 119 and Old Ayer Road is very dangerous and the new entrance will make matters worse. He said he would prefer to keep Powderhouse Road.

Mr. Cramb said the new entrance meets all MassDOT requirements for sight distance. Mr. Dillis said the grades are too difficult in other locations. Mr. Cramb agreed that left turns from the O'Rourke's driveway would be difficult from 7 to 9 AM when there are 1100-1200 cars per hour.

Halsey Platt, Two Old Ayer Road, asked if the applicant met with abutters to discuss the plans. Mr. Myette said, "Yes."

Mr. Platt asked why the road is located across from property that is not owned by Lawrence Academy since Lawrence owns so much land along Main Street. He said headlight glare would be a problem for the O'Rourke's.

Mr. O'Rourke said the proposed plan would diminish the value of their home.

Chairman Perkins asked how much traffic would increase. Mr. Cramb said about 60 cars come out of Powderhouse Road from 7:30 to 8:30 AM and 39 cars from 2:30 to 3pm.

Member Barringer asked if the new entrance could be moved 30 ft to the north to avoid headlight glare on the O'Rourke's home. Mr. Dillis said they would look at it.

Mr. Platt asked if the HDC had approved the pedestrian crossing signs. Member Svarczkopf said he believes public safety signs supersede the HDC and noted the solar-powered speed limit sign on Farmers Row and Groton School.

Member Burke suggested looking at a crosswalk on route 9 in Amherst, MA as another example.

Member Vega expressed concern that the flashing lights may blind drivers who would not be able to see pedestrians.

Mr. Platt noted that Concord Academy does not have flashing lights at its crosswalks. Chairman Perkins said the speed limit in Concord is much lower. She suggested that the applicant discuss the best way to mark the crosswalks with DPW Director Tom Delaney.

Mr. Platt asked why Lawrence Academy cannot use Route 40 instead of Main Street. Mr. Myette said the front of the campus is on Main Street. Route 40 is the rear of the campus.

Mrs. O'Rourke expressed concern about headlight glare shining into the three bedrooms in the front of their house. She said traffic is a concern because cars back up to Old Ayer Road. She said "No Parking" on Main Street will be a problem for residents on Main Street.

Chairman Perkins said there are many concerns that should be addressed by the applicant. The Board voted unanimously to continue its review on March 3, 2016 at 7:30 PM.

PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES

Monarch Path – The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Wilson, to extend the Letter of Credit Agreement for the Monarch Path subdivision to December 17, 2016. The motion passed unanimously.

Academy Hill – The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Wilson to extend the deadline for completion of Academy Hill to August 22, 2018. The motion passed unanimously.

PERMITTING GUIDE

Board members will review the revisions to the Permitting Guide for discussion at the meeting on February 18, 2016.

PRESCOTT SCHOOL

Member Barringer expressed concern about the application submitted by the Friends of Prescott for Community Preservation Funds to renovate Prescott School. The Board voted (4-1-1) to support the application at its meeting on February 4, 2016. Member Barringer said his concern is based upon information that there was a qualified retail business interested in the building. He asked why there was not more discussion about this business' interest in moving to Groton.

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to send a letter to the Selectmen inquiring why there was no serious consideration of "Evans on the Commons" as a possible owner/leaseholder of the building. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES

The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of January 7, 2016; January 28, 2016; and February 4, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette, AICP
Land Use Director/Town Planner