

**PLANNING BOARD
FEBRUARY 18, 2016
MINUTES**

Chairman Perkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 continuation of the public hearing to consider the revisions to Chapter 381 Planning Board Regulations.

The Board discussed two proposed revisions to the Fire Protection section of the Subdivision Regulations. Member Giger and the Fire Chief drafted one version stating that the developer could choose between cisterns or residential sprinklers, both based upon NFPA standards. Member Burke draft a version stating that the developer could request a waiver from cistern requirements and install sprinklers based upon NFPA standards.

Member Burke expressed concerns that the size of the required cisterns changed from 30,000 gallons to 50,000 gallons and thought the hearing should be re-advertised. Other members wanted more information on the required size of the cisterns and NFPA standards.

Judy Anderson asked if the new regulations would apply to her house located more than 1000 ft from the public water system. Chairman Perkins said, "No," the regulations only apply to new houses in new subdivisions.

After additional debate, there was no consensus on the revisions to the Fire Protection section. The Board decided to act on the remaining regulations and hold a new hearing on the Fire Protection provisions at a later date.

The Board voted unanimously to close the public hearing.

The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Burke, to adopt the revisions to the Planning Board regulations filed with the Town Clerk on January 22, 2016, with the exception of Section 381-12 Municipal Service, C. Fire Protection. The motion passed unanimously.

PERMITTING GUIDE

The Board reviewed and edited the revisions to the Permitting Guide originally adopted in 2008 as part of the Station Avenue Overlay District/aka Town Center Overlay District. Member Burke explained that the guide had been revised to be applicable to all projects, not just those in the Town Center.

The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Wilson, to approve and publish the Permitting Guide as edited. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING – ROCKY HILL STARTER HOMES

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 Fox Meadow Realty Trust to modify Special Permit 2004-05 for the 12 starter homes in the Rocky Hill subdivision. The proposed changes are shown on the plan entitled, "Revised Lot Layout Plan for the Rocky Hill Subdivision, Oriole Drive, in Groton, Mass.," prepared by R. Wilson Associates, dated January 18, 2016. The proposed project is located on Assessors' Map 120, Parcel 2.16, on the westerly side of Mockingbird Hill Road.

Chairman Perkins called the public hearing to order. Clerk Vega read the notice posted with the Town Clerk on January 26, 2016, and published in the January 29, 2016 and February 5, 2016. Attorney Robert Collins represented applicant, David Moulton, at the hearing.

Attorney Collins explained the background of the special permit for the 12 starter homes to be located on Oriole Drive in the Rocky Hill subdivision. Mr. Moulton decided he would prefer a variety of homes in this location rather than all starter homes. The proposed revision includes six starter homes, two duplexes, and two conventional homes at the end of the cul de sac. There will also be two starter homes on Mockingbird Hill Road on Lot 35. As a result, there will be a total of nine buildings on Oriole Drive. Mr. Moulton thought 12 buildings would be too dense and that a mix of housing types would be preferable. The layout of Oriole Drive has not changed, except the "T" turn-around will be a cul de sac. Oriole Drive will be a private way constructed to "lane" standards. A waiver will be requested for the cross slope of the cul de sac. The homes will be on individual lots and will not be single-family condominiums.

Town Planner, Michelle Collette asked if these are going to be fee simple lots with frontage on Oriole Drive, constructed to "lane" standards, then how is this not a subdivision. Board members agreed and said they would prefer that Oriole Drive be accepted as a public way after completion.

Attorney Collins requested a continuation of the public hearing to allow more time to prepare engineered plans.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on April 21, 2016 at 7:30 PM.

ROCKY HILL LOT RELEASES

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to release Lots 25 through 31 inclusive in the Rocky Hill subdivision because the Board is holding surety in a tripartite agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

SITE PLAN REVIEW – GROTON SCHOOL ACCESS ROAD

The Board reviewed the site plan submitted by Groton School to construct a new access road on the northerly side of the campus from Farmers Row to the athletic center. Attorney Collins presented the plans.

Attorney Collins said the access road will serve buses and logging trucks so they will not have to drive through the main campus. A new gate will be constructed on Farmers Row and will be similar to the other existing gates. The Historic Districts Commission must review and approve the gate on Farmers Row. The Conservation Commission issued an Order of Conditions for the roadway which includes three wetlands crossings. The Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee is reviewing the stormwater management plan.

Chairman Perkins asked about lighting. Attorney Collins said lighting will be similar to other lights on the Groton School campus. There will be a single light at the gate only. The light will be directed downward.

Member Barringer said lights in the open field would be obtrusive to abutters. Attorney Collins agreed and said there would be no lights in the open field.

Member Giger asked if the land under the box culverts will be natural soil. Attorney Collins said, "Yes," the box culverts must be designed by a structural engineer and meet all DEP stream-crossing requirements.

Member Vega asked if curbing would be installed. Attorney Collins said, "No," the drainage system is a Low Impact Development (LID) system.

Member Burke asked if the gate could be closed. Attorney Collins said, "Yes."

The motion was made by Burke, seconded by Barringer, to approve the site plan submitted by Groton School to construct a new access drive to the athletic center as shown on the plan entitled, "Groton School, North Entry Road," prepared by Samiotes Consultants, Inc., dated November 3, 2015, with the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. The project is subject to the approval of the Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW Director, and Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee.
2. Lighting shall be shielded so there is no glare. Lighting shall not intrude onto other properties or public ways as required in Section 218-25G(1)(h). There shall be only one light on the new gate and there shall be no lights in the open field.
3. A Registered Professional Structural Engineer shall design and stamp the plans for the box culverts.
4. All signs must conform to the Sign By-Law, Chapter 196 of the Code of the Town of Groton.
5. There shall be no net increase in the rate or volume of stormwater runoff from the two-, ten-, twenty-five- or one-hundred-year storm event across the boundaries of the site. The project is subject to a Stormwater Management Permit under the provisions of Chapter 198 and 352 of the Code of the Town of Groton.
6. The removal of any excess earth material from the site requires a Certificate of Exemption from the Earth Removal By-law, Chapter 134 of the Code of the Town of Groton. Chapter 134, Section 10 Exemptions.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Collins brought to the Board's attention that the Groton School plans to work with the Board of Selectmen to provide a pedestrian connection to the bikeway.

ANR PLAN – SHELBY MORRIS, BURNT MEADOW ROAD

The Board reviewed the Approval Not Required plan submitted by Shelby Morris to create a new hammerhead lot on Burnt Meadow Road. The hammerhead lot is subject to Special Permit 2015-34 granted by the Planning board on January 14, 2016. The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Wilson, to endorse as Approval Not Required the plan entitled, "Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, Owned by Beth Ann Monahan, et als.," prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated October 27, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.

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 Halsey Platt and Chris Brown for a special permit under the provisions of Section 218-25 Site Plan Review and Section 218-27 Planned Multifamily Residential Development to renovate and convert Squannacook Hall and associated improvements to the property located at 33 West Main Street as shown on the plan entitled, "Plan of Land in Groton, Massachusetts, Owned by the Town of Groton," prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated October 18, 2013, and plan entitled, "Squannacook Hall, West Groton, MA 01450," prepared by CBM, dated January 27, 2016. The proposed project is located on land owned by the Town of Groton, shown as Assessors' Map 101, Parcel 22, on the northerly side of West Main Street.

Chairman Perkins called the public hearing to order. Clerk Vega read the notice posted with the Town Clerk on February 2, 2016 and published in the February 4 and 11, 2016 issues of the Lowell Sun. Applicant Chris Brown was present at the public hearing.

Mr. Brown described the proposed project to convert the existing Squannacook Hall to four residential apartments. Three apartments will have one bedroom, and one apartment will have two bedrooms. Parking will be located at the front and rear of the building as shown on the site plan. There will be three entrances to the building – one in the front, one in the rear, and the fire escape on the westerly side of the building will be renovated as an entrance to the rear apartment on the second floor. The dumpster will be in the rear and will be screened by a fence. The lighting cut sheet for the three lights at the doorways indicates that the lights are "Dark Sky" and "ADA Compliant."

Member Svarczkopf asked if a more traditional-style light fixture could be used. Mr. Brown said, "Yes."

Chairman Perkins asked if there would be any alterations to the building. Mr. Brown said the two small windows on the front of the building would be replaced with original-style windows.

Member Barringer asked whether pervious asphalt or standard paving would be used. Mr. Brown said, "Standard."

Member Barringer asked about snow removal and snow storage. Mr. Brown said the parking areas would be plowed and snow would be stored at the edge of the parking lot along the property line.

Member Barringer asked if there would be any shared parking. Mr. Brown said they would be sharing access with the Christian Union Church.

Chairman Perkins asked if the units would be condominiums or rental. Mr. Brown said, "Rental." She asked if any of the units would be universally accessible. Mr. Brown said, "No."

Member Wilson asked if the Fire Chief had reviewed the plan. Mr. Brown said all units will have residential sprinklers. *(Note: The Fire Chief did not comment on the Form of Intent (FOI)).*

Member Burke asked if there would be curbs along the edge of the pavement. Mr. Brown said, "No."

Member Burke asked if a stormwater management study was done. Land Use Director Michelle Collette said the lot has 0.28 acres which is under the 20,000 SF threshold for a Limited Stormwater Permit.

Joan Denaro of the Christian Union Church said the Church and the Selectmen have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the project. Provisions include sharing the driveway, protecting the Church's existing sewage disposal system, and the Town installing a parking lot behind the Church.

The Board responded that the MOU is between the Church and the Selectmen, and that the Planning Board has no authority in this agreement. Additionally, the Church will have to submit an application for Site Plan Review prior to installing any new parking spaces.

Member Barringer noted that other site plans have a condition about removing snow within 48 hours if snow banks reach a height of three feet. Mr. Brown agreed to such a condition.

The Board voted unanimously to close the public hearing.

DECISION

The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Svarczkopf, to grant the following special permits to Walter HB Platt and Christopher Brown:

- Special permit under the provisions of Section 218-25 Site Plan Review to redevelop the Squannacook Hall and associated improvements to the property located at 33 West Main Street as shown on the plan entitled, "Squannacook Hall, West Groton, MA, Prepared for CMB, 118 Whiting Street, Lunenburg, MA 01462," dated January 27, 2016, and "Plan of Land in Groton, Mass. Owned by Town of Groton," prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated October 2013.
- Special permit under the provisions of Section 218-27 Planned Multifamily Residential Development to redevelop the Squannacook Hall and associated improvements to the property located at 33 West Main Street as shown on the plan entitled, "Plan of Land in Groton, Mass. Owned by Town of Groton," prepared by David E. Ross Associates, dated October 2013.

Findings:

The Planning Board made the following findings based upon the criteria set forth in Section 218-27C and Section 218-32.1:

Section 218-27C Planned Multifamily Residential Development

The Planning Board determined that the proposed development of four rental units is consistent with the concept plan approved at the 2014 Spring Town Meeting.

Section 218-32.1C Special Permit Criteria

1. **Social, economic and community needs:** The proposed residential development will enhance the vitality of West Groton Center by restoring the historic Squannacook Hall. In addition, the project will provide long-term rental units within walking distance of West Groton Center and local businesses. The project meets the CMP goal to "encourage and promote new housing developments that create a sense of place, promote social interaction, and a sense of community."
2. **Traffic flow and safety:** The proposed conversion to four rental units will generate fewer trips than the historic, municipal use of the site.
3. **Adequacy of utilities:** The property is served by the West Groton Water Supply District and a newly installed sewage disposal system.

4. **Neighborhood character:** The restoration of the Squannacook Hall is a benefit to the Town's historic and cultural resources. The West Groton Center neighborhood will be improved because Squannacook Hall will be restored in a historically appropriate manner.
5. **Impacts on the environment:** The Conservation Commission issued a Negative Determination on April 25, 2014 for the proposed work in the 100 ft wetlands buffer zone.
6. **Fiscal impact on the Town:** The redevelopment of the site will have a positive fiscal impact on the Town.

Conditions

1. Snow banks and snow stockpiles shall not exceed a height of three (3) feet at any time. Snow in excess of three feet in height shall be removed from the site and disposed of properly within 48 hours of a storm.
2. The applicant shall submit new cut sheets for more traditional style lights to the Board for its review and approval prior to installation of the lights.
3. The Fire Chief shall review the site plan and building plans prior to the issuance of a building permit.
4. This special permit shall not be in effect until certified copies of the special permit decision and the subsequently endorsed ANR plan are recorded at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds as required in GL Chapter 40A, Section 11, and Groton Zoning By-Law Section 218-32.1. No construction or site alteration shall commence nor shall any necessary permits be issued by any Board or official until evidence of such recording is submitted to the Planning Board by the Applicant.
5. This special permit shall lapse in 24 months (from the date the decision is filed with the Town Clerk and the 20-day appeal period expires), which shall not include such time required to pursue or await the determination of an appeal referred to in Chapter 40A, Section 17, from the grant thereof if a substantial use thereof has not sooner commenced except for good cause. The recording of the deed conveying the open space to the Town of Groton Conservation Commission or the Conservation Restriction for the open space shall constitute commencement of substantial use as long as continued progress is demonstrated on site development.
6. This special permit runs with the land and applies to any successor in interest or successor in control.

The motion passed unanimously.

PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT

The Board reviewed the proposed amendment to Section 218-6 Nonconformance as drafted by the Non-use Working Group and Town Counsel. The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Giger, to submit the article as drafted for the Spring Town Meeting warrant and to welcome the Zoning Board of Appeals to co-sponsor. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette, AICP
Land Use Director/Town Planner