

**PLANNING BOARD
MAY 4, 2017
MINUTES**

Chairman Burke called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM at the Town Hall

Members present: Burke, Perkins, Vega and Wilson

Members absent: Barringer, Giger, and Svarczkopf

SPECIAL PERMIT & SITE PLAN REVIEW– 788 BOSTON ROAD

Chairman Burke called the public hearing to order at 7:25 PM. Member Wilson read the legal notice published in the April 14 & 21, 2017 issues of the *Groton Herald*. Applicants Donald (Mickey) Higgins and Frank Hartnett of NJLJ Properties, design engineer Bruce Ringwall of GPR, architect Jon Cocker of Mangel Associates, landscape architect David Fisher of the Fisher Design Group, and the Board's consulting engineer Jared Gentellucci of Nitsch Engineering were present.

Chairman Burke said the Board will only discuss the Site Plan Review application because there are only four members present. A simple majority is required for site plan approval. The Board will consider the special permit for the Water Resource Protection Districts when the public hearing is continued because a 2/3 super-majority is required to grant a special permit.

Chairman Burke read the letter dated May 2, 2017 from the Economic Development Committee in support of the application. He said the reports from GPR and Nitsch are on file with the Planning Board.

Design engineer Bruce Ringwall presented the history of previous development plans for the property located at the Four Corners intersection of Boston Road and Sandy Pond Road. A variety of site plans were submitted in 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012. The Board approved and granted extensions for most of these plans. The property was sold to NJLJ Properties in August 2016.

Mr. Ringwall said the Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee held a public hearing on the proposed project May 2, 2017 and continued its hearing to June 6, 2017. Most of the stormwater management issues have been resolved.

Mr. Ringwall described the topography of the site which is a plateau with a steep drop off at the rear of the property. National Grid owns the abutting land. There is a small 481 SF wetland at the base of the slope. The wetland replication will be 1441 SF. The Conservation Commission has jurisdiction under the Code of the Town of Groton, Chapter 215 Wetlands, but not under the Wetlands Protection Act, MGL Chapter 131, §40. The Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on May 9, 2017 to consider the Notice of Intent.

Mr. Ringwall said the site plan includes a parking computation table on Sheet C3.1 for the proposed 2484 SF coffee shop, the 3330 SF bank, the 7959 SF retail building, and the 8006 SF medical office building. A minimum of 83 and a maximum of 158 parking spaces are required. The site plan has a total of 127 parking spaces. He described the pedestrian aspects within the

site and connections to the sidewalks on the public ways. There is a proposed drop-off area in front of the medical building. The 26 ft wide access road onto Sandy Pond Road will be located directly across the street from the Shaw's access. The plan shows a modified curb cut on Boston Road. The new access was moved south from the access shown on the previous plans. Fire sprinklers will be installed in the medical office and retail buildings, but are not required in the bank or coffee shop as stated by the Fire Chief, Building Commissioner, and Water Superintendent. Natural gas will be extended to the site from Sandy Pond Road.

Mr. Ringwall then described the site layout plan and stormwater management system. The existing wetland will be replicated by at a 3:1 ratio. Runoff will be piped from the rear portion of the retail building and the adjacent tree box filter into the new wetland. Tree and shrub boxes will be installed to treat runoff. The applicant will contract with a company to maintain and replace the trees, shrubs, and media as necessary. The tree boxes will treat the "first flush" from rain events. After that, runoff will flow to the catch basins and outlet at the infiltration basin. Roof drains will be collected in subsurface storm chambers. The stormwater management system will meet the 80% Total Suspended Solids (TSS) requirements. Nitsch Engineering reviewed the stormwater management system for the Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory committee.

Member Perkins asked how much fill would be brought onto the site. Mr. Ringwall said 27,000 CY. He said the applicant is requesting a waiver for the 23 ft high retaining wall in the rear of the site.

Chairman Burke said a structural engineer must design and stamp the plans for the retaining wall. Mr. Ringwall said the manufacturers will design and stamp the plans for the wall.

Member Wilson asked about the height of the wall. Mr. Ringwall said it would range from 12 ft to 23 ft high.

Chairman Burke asked if there would be a fence on the top of the wall. Mr. Ringwall said "yes."

Mr. Ringwall said granite curbing will be installed along the drives and parking areas, but the applicant is requesting a waiver to install monolithic asphalt curbing near the buildings and cape cod curbing along the drive adjacent to the retailing wall.

Member Perkins asked if left-hand turns would be permitted from Boston Road onto the site. Mr. Ringwall said GPI, the applicant's traffic engineer, and MassDOT would make that determination. Member Perkins noted that this is a dangerous location. Mr. Ringwall said left hand turns from the site onto Boston Road would not be allowed.

Member Vega asked about the location of the ADA compliant curb cuts and ramps. Mr. Ringwall pointed them out on the plan. A total of eight (8) universally accessible parking spaces will be installed.

Landscape architect David Fisher presented the landscape plan (Sheet L-1) showing deciduous trees at the entrances and elm trees along the main access. Oaks and maple will be planted

near the public ways. Plant material will be included in the tree boxes that are part of the drainage system.

Member Perkins said she would like to see more shrubs to provide screening of the parking lots. Mr. Fisher said he was trying to keep the site more open. Member Perkins said the area along Sandy Pond road is a concern to her. She said more screening is needed in this location.

Mr. Ringwall said the applicant would like the medical building to be visible from the street.

Member Perkins reminded the applicant that no invasive species can be planted. Mr. Fisher agreed.

Chairman Burke said he agreed that more landscaping is needed.

Architect Jon Cocker presented the architectural elevations. The bank is a one-story building with an agricultural vernacular. Wood clapboards and an asphalt shingled roof will be used for a traditional New England style. The coffee shop will have awnings and outdoor seating. The 8006 SF medical office building is a one-story, New England style building.

Mr. Ringwall said benches, planters, and bicycle racks will be added to the site plan.

Member Wilson suggested adding mullions to the windows for a more compatible look. Mr. Cocker said the mullions are included – they will be two over one divided light windows.

Abutter Patty Aha asked why retail space is proposed when space at the Shaw's plaza is vacant. Chairman Burke said that is the applicant's market concerns, not the Planning Board's.

Chairman Burke asked if the first three buildings (medical office, bank and coffee shop) would be constructed and the retail would be constructed at a later date. Mr. Higgins said, "yes."

Jared Gentellucci of Nitsch Engineering summarized his peer review letter dated April 27, 2017. He said most of his comments are minor and the applicant agreed to update the plans to address the comments. He said the proposed non-granite curbing is appropriate near the buildings. The proposed snow storage areas and limit on the height of the snow banks should be added to the plan. There are no outstanding issues with the stormwater management system. He said all the requested waivers are reasonable.

Chairman Burke said the Board received three quotes from traffic engineers for the peer review: Beta Group, Nitsch Engineering, and Vanasse & Associates. Mr. Higgins said he prefers Vanasse & Associates. The Board will ask Vanasse & Associates to review the traffic study submitted by the applicant.

Mr. Ringwall asked the Board to consider allowing the site work to commence after the Stormwater Management Permit and Order of Conditions have been issued. The applicant would like to begin the first phase of construction including site clearing, installing erosion control, bringing in fill before the 20-day appeal period for the special permit has expired. The

applicant understands that it would be at their own risk. They have a commitment to close in the shell of the medical office building by December 31, 2017. The Board said it would consider the applicant's request.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on May 18, 2017 at 7 PM.

ROCKY HILL PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE

The motion was made by Wilson, seconded by Perkins, to release the funds held in the "Agreement and Contract – Town of Groton Planning Board, Middlesex Savings Bank" for Robin Hill Road and Cardinal Lane in the Rocky Hill Subdivision. The Board will continue to hold \$330,516.75 for Mockingbird Hill Road as recommended in the Nitsch Engineering report dated December 9, 2016. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Perkins will present the reports to Town Meeting on the acceptance of Robin Hill road and Cardinal Lane as public ways.

ACADEMY HILL AFFORDABLE UNITS

The Board met with George Gallagher of Academy Hill, LLC and Housing Coordinator Fran Stanley to discuss progress on the affordable units at the Academy Hill subdivision.

Mr. Gallagher submitted a new marketing plan prepared by lottery agent MCO Housing. A lottery will be held for two units in July 2017.

Ms. Stanley said she is pleased with the timing of the lottery in July and her concerns about progress on the units is satisfied.

Member Perkins asked how many of the ten required affordable units will be left after the lottery for the two units in July. Mr. Gallagher said there are two additional units. Ms. Stanley said six units have been sold to date with one up for resale.

The motion was made by Vega, seconded by Perkins, to inform the Building Commissioner that the Planning Board has no concerns regarding the issuance of a building permit for the unit at 8 Rose Crest Way. The motion passed unanimously.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Chairman Burke suggested that the Planning Board consider adding associate members to the Planning Board. Associate members could participate as members when the Board is acting on an application for a special permit which requires a supermajority vote. The Zoning Act, Chapter 40A, §9, states:

"Zoning ordinances or by-laws may provide for associate members of a planning board when a planning board has been designated as a special permit granting authority. One associate member may be authorized when the planning board consists of five members, and two

associate members may be authorized when the planning board consists of more than five members. A city or town which establishes the position of associate member shall determine the procedure for filling such position. If provision for filling the position of associate member has been made, the chairman of the planning board may designate an associate member to sit on the board for the purposes of acting on a special permit application, in the case of absence, inability to act, or conflict of interest, on the part of any member of the planning board or in the event of a vacancy on the board."

The Board will consult with Town Counsel on the process of appointing associate members.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette, AICP
Land Use Director/Town Planner