

TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD

September 14, 2017

Town Hall

A meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, September 14, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the second floor meeting room at Town Hall, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450

Chairman Wilson declared the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and called the roll.

Members Present:

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair
Mr. Timothy M. Svarczkopf, Vice Chair
Mr. Russell Burke
Mr. John Giger
Ms. Carolyn Perkins

Members Absent:

Mr. George Barringer, Clerk
Mr. Michael Vega

Also Present:

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Discussion

Senior Center Building Committee

Ms. Kathy Shelp, Director, Council on Aging; Ms. Michelle Collette and Mr. Peter Cunningham of the Senior Center Building Committee were present to discuss the Fall Town Meeting Warrant Article.

Mr. Cunningham said that the Senior Center Building Committee had been analyzing the entire process trying to figure out why it did not pass the ballot. He said the one take-away from that was there apparently was a fair amount of confusion amongst a lot of the voters about what was being proposed. He said there were two Articles relating to the Senior Center, one was the purchase of land on Farmers Row and the other one was going with the current site in West Groton for monies to pay for architectural design and spec documents for building on that site. Mr. Cunningham said that the reason it was on the ballot was because the article was asking for a certain sum (not-to exceed \$400,000) of the money to be borrowed. He said what would be different at the coming Fall Town Meeting was that they were going back with an Article seeking a specific amount of money for design and spec documents but he did not know what that exact figure was. He further said that he would know that figure sometime the following week; noting that there were about 30 architects who responded to the RFP. He stated that they were looking for the architect to look at a possible renovation of the existing building versus new construction on the same site. Mr. Cunningham commented that this Committee and past committees had done needs assessments and it was determined that they would stay in West Groton. He stated

that it would be done in two phases; the first would be getting a firm number from the architect with the second phase going to the Annual Town Meeting and having a contractor bid on it. He said he felt they needed to have a specific number in order to have a forthright conversation with the taxpayers.

Mr. Svarczkopf asked for confirmation that the proposed Fall Town Meeting Warrant Article was specific to the existing Senior Center site only. Mr. Cunningham confirmed.

Ms. Perkins asked if there would be a firm number for the building by the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Cunningham replied that was correct. Ms. Perkins confirmed that the money that was being asked for was for an architect to come in and do a complete plan. Mr. Cunningham replied that was correct.

Mr. Burke asked if an architect had been selected as of yet. Mr. Cunningham replied a RFP was out but an architect had not been selected yet. The bids are due next week, September 20th.

Ms. Shelp stated that they had asked voters, via newspaper and social media, to let them know if they voted no and why they voted no. She said one of the reasons was the cost of the final project noting that at one point the estimated cost (from an architect) was up to \$7 million. She further said that the current RFP requires architects to be creative with how to make the space usable while being fiscally responsible.

Chairman Wilson asked if the architects had experience working with municipalities or senior centers. Ms. Shelp replied that was not necessarily the case and that a lot of things would be considered when selecting the architect.

Ms. Collette stated that there was also a separate RFP out for the owner's project manager which was required under procurement law. She said that position would provide the Town with professional support in evaluating all of the bids, cost estimates and anything else that was required. She further stated that one of the things that she had stressed as a member of the Building Committee was that the civil engineer would play a very important role on the team dealing with all of the site work.

Mr. Svarczkopf asked if the Senior Center had multiple uses, i.e. a polling place. Mr. Cunningham replied that the community had expressed the need to have a gathering place of 100 or 150 plus people and the building remaining multi-use was part of the plan.

Ms. Shelp stated that there were currently outside groups using the Senior Center three nights per week as well as various groups throughout the year; she said it was very much a community building.

Mr. Svarczkopf commented that he knew the group Groton Neighbors had contacted the Senior Center and that they were coordinating together. He said the group seemed to be getting some traction and the idea of having a Senior Center and having more support for those people; especially if the idea was to keep people in their homes then having that interaction was very important.

Ms. Shelp stated that the Senior Center's mission was to help people remain independent.

Mr. Burke stated that Medway, MA and Mashpee, MA had very nice Senior Centers that were multi-purpose. Ms. Shelp replied that they had visited about eight different newer Senior Centers and spoke with 13 in total but did not have the price tags for some of them. She said that every Senior Center

pulled out the personality of the town they were in and they all had varying degrees of funding and financial support.

Mr. Cunningham said that one of the things the committee had learned was that there was a significant amount of private money that would be donated to Senior Centers.

Chairman Wilson asked if there was a sense of how much money would be privately funded. Mr. Cunningham replied that it was hard to say because you could not go out and engage in serious outreach or fundraising until you had a commitment from the community that they really wanted to do it and number two, have a design describing what we want to build. He said in that case people would likely want to contribute to bricks and mortar through completion.

Mr. Burke asked if there would be actual construction bids received before the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Cunningham replied that was the plan.

Chairman Wilson asked if they had scoped out a program that spelled out square footage and a list of uses. Mr. Cunningham replied that they had already done a fair amount of work and that the Feasibility Oversight Committee, which was the predecessor to this committee, had done a lot of work with the professionals at the Senior Center. He said there was a significant “boom” in the number of seniors and there were certain activities that they wanted to provide services for and be a one-stop place where people could call if they had an issue which related to aging.

Ms. Collette commented that the Senior Center was a very important social services organization.

Ms. Shelp said that the Office of Elder Affairs had guidelines and recommendations for square footage and although she could not remember the exact number, Groton’s was pretty high and much higher than what they anticipated was needed. She said Groton was unique in that it was more event and educational orientated so she did not believe some of the recommendations that came from the Office of Elder Affairs really applied. Ms. Shelp said that most Senior Centers had a daily congregant meal and Groton only had that once per week. She commented that they had scaled back on the square footage based on the population because the usage in Groton was a little bit different.

Chairman Wilson asked if as folks aged and the demographics became clearer if they already had a pretty good sense of what the program would be. Ms. Shelp replied that things changed so quickly and the uses for a Senior Center did as well.

Mr. Burke made a motion to recommend the endorsement for the Article for the Town Meeting. Ms. Perkins seconded the motion.

Vote: 4 – 1 (Giger opposed) – Motion Carried

Discussion

ANR Plan

Richard Lewis, Old Dunstable Road & Bridge Street – WITHDRAWN BY THE APPLICANT

Discussion

Master Plan Implementation Committee

Chairman Wilson asked if there was additional progress other than the recruiting efforts. Mr. Tada replied there was not but that there was a recruitment announcement was on the website and it would also appear in the Groton Herald on the following Sunday. He said that there had been one official expression of interest from Anna Elliot.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chairman Wilson asked if any more complaints had been received about weekend construction at the NESSP Temple. Mr. Tada replied there had been two more complaints from the same abutters.

Mr. Burke commented that he thought there had been some discussion about putting up a gate. Mr. Tada replied they had offered to put up a gate and that was something that could potentially be enforced and he would follow-up.

Mr. Giger stated the words “on Saturday’s” should be added to the motion on page three.

Mr. Svarczkopf noted a typographic error in his comment on page five.

Ms. Perkins made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the July 27, 2017, meeting as amended. Mr. Svarczkopf seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – Motion Carried

Planning Board Meeting Schedule

2nd & 4th Thursday of the Month:

- September 14, 2017
- September 28, 2017
- October 12, 2017
- October 23 – Fall Town Meeting
- October 26, 2017

Board Member Comments

Mr. Svarczkopf asked Mr. Tada to follow-up with the Temple with regard to the esthetics of the retention basin and make sure it was appropriate to what had been approved as well as whether or not an as-built plan was required.

Mr. Tada commented that Mr. Steve Palmer had obtained enough signatures for a citizen's petition to re-zone the property to a business use. He stated that the Selectmen received a request from Mr. Palmer to place it on the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. He further stated that Mr. Haddad, the Town Manager had asked the Planning Board to conduct the necessary public hearing to consider that zoning change. Mr. Tada said that the public hearing would be held October 12, 2017.

Mr. Tada, referencing 788 Boston Road, said that the project team, through their engineer, had submitted a request to the Stormwater Committee for consideration of an alternative to their proposed tree filter box as an approved equal from a stormwater best management practices standpoint and that it was deemed acceptable by Nitsch Engineering.

Mr. Tada stated that he scheduled a meeting with the Design Review Committee with regard to the Friends of Prescott School's request for a proposed change of use and the date would be September 21st at 7:00 p.m. He said that the Commission on Accessibility would provide a memo for the public hearing but that they had some concerns with handicapped parking which did speak to making some changes to the exterior of the building.

Mr. Giger commented that he would not want to see any commercial signage on the outside of the Prescott School. Mr. Tada replied that he did not believe they were proposing any signage.

Mr. Tada stated that the recording secretary position for the Planning Board had been filled on a temporary basis. He further stated that the secretary did not live locally and would transcribe the minutes from the video recording which was available on the Groton Channel's website.

Chairman Wilson announced that there would be a Planning Board meeting on November 9th and November 30th.

Chairman Wilson announced that there would be a Planning Board meeting on December 14th only and if they need to they would add an additional meeting to the December schedule.

Adjournment

Ms. Perkins made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Burke seconded the motion. The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Gedziun
Recording Secretary