

TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD
Thursday, February 7, 2019
Meeting Minutes

***Meeting was not recorded.**

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

Members Present:

Mr. George Barringer, Chair
Mr. Russell Burke, Vice Chair
Mr. Timothy M. Svarczkopf, Clerk
Mr. Scott Wilson, Member
Ms. Carolyn Perkins, Member
Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Member
Mr. Gus Widmayer, Member

Also Present:

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Public Hearing – Special Permit, Flexible Development, 66 North Street (Croteau)

Mr. Barringer opened the public hearing and the Public Hearing Notice was read into the record.

Mr. Donald Black, representing the applicants, addressed the Board and stated that the request was to renew the permit which was originally issued in 2011.

Mr. Black stated that the proposed project consisted of seven condominium units (four detached units, and one triplex). He pointed out that one of the units in the triplex would be an affordable unit.

Mr. Black commented that he would also have to renew permits with the Conservation Commission as well as the Earth Removal-Stormwater Advisory Committee.

Mr. Widmayer asked if Mr. Black was working with an engineering firm. Mr. Black said he was representing the project on behalf of the Croteau family based on the previously approved plans.

Mr. Svarczkopf asked if the drainage plan should be updated, in light of the current flooding situation on Olivia Way (Reedy Meadow Estates).

Ms. Nilsson Ripps said the Earth Removal-Stormwater Advisory Committee would review the drainage plan in more detail.

Mr. Burke noted that the stormwater standards haven't changed substantially since 2011.

Mr. Wilson made a motion to close the public hearing. Ms. Perkins seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7 – 0 - MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Wilson made a motion to reissue the special permit with the additional stipulations that the plans be updated to reflect there were no changes and that the project also requires Conservation and Stormwater approvals. Mr. Svarczkopf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7 – 0 - MOTION CARRIED

Discussion - Proposed Signage, Rollstone Bank & Trust, 788 Boston Road

Mr. Damon Irby, from Capital Sign Group, was present to discuss the proposed signage. Mr. Irby stated the proposal was for three building signs, one drive-thru ATM sign, one drive-thru teller Open/Closed sign and two drive-thru Clearance Height signs.

Mr. Irby commented that the original sign permit approved three building signs but the drive-thru ATM/teller signs were not included in the original plan.

Mr. Svarczkopf asked if the ATM drive-thru signs would be lit. Mr. Irby replied they would be internally lit by LED.

Ms. Perkins mentioned that the signs at the Middlesex Bank were similar.

Mr. Channing Lambert stated that the ATM sign helps guide customers into the correct lane.

Ms. Perkins asked what the external lights would consist of. Mr. Irby replied they would be the same overhead light fixtures as installed on the two other existing buildings.

Mr. Burke pointed out that he felt the unique and special circumstance on the property was the "Open/Closed" sign on the teller drive-thru lane.

Mr. Svarczkopf said there were legitimate safety reasons for the drive-thru signage, but he was concerned about the Board setting a precedent relative to the standards for such signage.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to approve the signage for Rollstone Bank & Trust due to the unique and special circumstances on the property and that the color temperature of the external overhead lights be no greater than 2,700 kelvins. Mr. Widmayer seconded the motion.

**VOTE: 5 – 0 – 2 (Abstained – Burke & Barringer)
MOTION CARRIED**

Discussion – Proposed Zoning Amendment for off-site/off-street Parking

Mr. Burke commented that the Board needed to decide on a maximum vehicle weight. The Board reviewed a sample list of approximate vehicle weights.

Mr. Svarczkopf proposed a maximum vehicle weight of 7,500 pounds (curb weight).

Mr. Burke indicated the proposed language would be provided to Town Counsel for review as well as for the Warrant Article preparation. He noted that the Warrant Articles were due by February 22, 2019.

Ms. Perkins made a motion to recommend the proposed off-site/off-street parking zoning amendment, with the addition of a 7,500 pound curb weight limit.

**VOTE: 6-0-1 (Abstained – Widmayer)
MOTION CARRIED**

Discussion – Regulation of Small Wireless Facilities (5G Wireless Network)

Mr. Barringer provided some background for the members of the public.

Mr. Burke pointed out that small wireless facilities were smaller and more numerous.

Mr. Kevin Kelly, from Groton Electric Light Department (GELD), addressed the Board and stated that lawyers were currently looking into the matter. He further stated GELD did not want antennas above the lines or boxes below the lines.

Mr. Kelly commented the investor-owned utilities allow telecommunications companies to do whatever the federal government says and then pass the cost on to the customers.

Mr. Burke asked how the small wireless facilities were connected. Mr. Kelly replied they were connected via fiber optics.

Mr. Kelly commented that he would prefer the small wireless facilities only be allowed on anchor poles and secondary poles. He anticipates many such facilities being installed along Rte. 119 toward Boston.

Mr. Svarczkopf commented that safety was a valid concern and the risks needed to be mitigated.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps asked what the Town could regulate. Mr. Burke commented that the Town would have 60 days to review a proposal as well as the conditions surrounding it.

Mr. Kelly stated that the small wireless facilities line would cut through the Groton Electric Light Department utility spaces.

Mr. Widmayer asked what the spacing between the anchor and secondary poles would be. He also asked about the areas with underground lines. It was suggested that the small wireless facilities would be installed on buildings, in the absence of poles.

Mr. Svarczkopf noted his safety concerns and also mentioned he felt the exposed wires would look bad. He also asked what color they would be.

Mr. Wilson observed that the Telecommunications Act was a gift to the industry.

Mr. Kelly stated the Massachusetts Municipal Law Association was working on model regulatory language.

Committee Updates

- Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Barringer noted that the Complete Streets Committee would meet soon.

Mr. Burke asked about the sidewalks on Lowell Road/Rte. 40. Mr. Barringer replied the Complete Streets Committee would be discussing that project but it was not on the original priority list; it is likely they will replace the proposed West Street Bridge project (over the Rail Trail) with the Lowell Road sidewalks project.

General Business

- **Reedy Meadow Estates – Update on Olivia Way**

Mr. Lambert stated the flooding had subsided after January 24, 2019.

Mr. Barringer thought the silt sacks had been removed. He also noted that the next Stormwater Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 19, 2019.

- **Bertozzi Farm Estates – Update on Amelia Way**

Mr. Tada noted that Grand Coast Capital Group had hired an engineer to propose a repair for the leaking pipes. He also noted the plan was to turn the road over to the Town in the spring or fall.

- **Academy Hill – Update on Cherry Tree Lane**

Mr. Tada stated that Habitech was working on the final phase of Cherry Tree Lane. He also stated Habitech would be seeking approval of a performance bond based on an estimate from Nitsch Engineering.

- **Housing Production Plan Update**

Mr. Tada commented that the grant application had been submitted to the MRPC. Grant awards will be announced in early March.

- **Housing Production Plan Update**

Mr. Barringer mentioned a complaint from an abutter to the NESSP Temple regarding the security lighting around the building. He suggested the members try to go by the Temple during evening hours to see what the lights on the building look like. The lights along the driveway and parking areas are shut off at 10:00 PM.

Housekeeping

- **Zoning Amendments**

Attorney Bob Collins provided a letter suggesting three zoning bylaw amendments of the “housekeeping” variety.

The first suggestion is to correct a typographical error in which the architectural design technique known as “massing” is incorrectly shown as “massive” in Section 218-18.C(1)(d)[3].

The second suggestion is to change the special permit effective period from two years to three years, to be consistent with the recently amended state statute, MGL Ch. 40A (Zoning Act).

The third suggestion is to update the name of Section 218-27.B from “Subsidized Elderly Housing” to “Age Restricted Housing”.

Mr. Burke stated that he would like to look further into the second item, specifically whether the state law obligates towns to follow suit in their local bylaws, or if it allows towns to decide.

Mr. Svarczkopf mentioned he thought it would be a good idea to think about amending the special permit lifespan as there had been two recent renewals before the board.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps commented that site conditions, especially existing structures, could deteriorate significantly in three winters.

The Board agreed to move ahead with items one and three for the 2019 Spring Town Meeting, while shelving item two pending further discussion.

- **Meeting Minutes – January 10, 2019 and January 24, 2019**

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 10, 2019, meeting. Ms. Perkins seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – 0 – 1 (Abstained – Wilson)
MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 24, 2019, meeting.

VOTE: 4 – 0 – 3 (Abstained – Wilson, Svarczkopf & Nilsson Ripps)
MOTION CARRIED

Other Business

Ms. Perkins announced that this would be her last Planning Board meeting. She will be submitting her letter of resignation to the Town Clerk.

Mr. Barringer, Mr. Burke and the other Planning Board members expressed their sincere appreciation to Ms. Carolyn Perkins for her years of commitment serving on the Board.

VOTE: 7 – 0 - MOTION CARRIED

Planning Board Meeting Schedule

2nd & 4th Thursday of the Month:

- February 21st
- March 14th & 28th

Adjournment

Ms. Perkins made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Trish Gedziun
Recording Secretary

Approved 2/21/2019