

TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD

November 13, 2019

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Planning Board was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the second-floor meeting room at Town Hall, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450

Members Present:

Mr. Russell Burke, Chair
Mr. Scott Wilson, Vice Chair
Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Clerk
Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member
Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Members not Present:

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member
Mr. Timothy M. Svarczkopf, Board Member

Also Present:

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Discussion – NESSP Temple – Request for Minor Plan Modification

Mr. William Murray of Places Associates, Inc., addressed the Board and shared that he had already met with, and received approval from, the Conservation Commission and the Earth Removal-Stormwater Advisory Committee.

Mr. Murray pointed out that a stormwater treatment unit in the middle detention basin did not get installed, noting the original design was by a different engineer and was a three-part treatment that used something called a “jellyfish” and was state-of-the-art for stormwater treatment back in 2012. He said it was overkill for what they were proposing to do and he proposed using a modern CDS unit which was a single unit. Mr. Murray indicated that Mr. Jared Gentilucci from Nitsch Engineering had signed off on the proposed change.

Mr. Murray noted, if the Planning Board approved the proposed unit, it would be installed sometime after Thanksgiving.

Mr. Burke asked if there were members of the Planning Board who had questions or comments.

Mr. Bonnett asked how the unit would be maintained. Mr. Murray replied they already had a CDS unit on the back drainage basin and they were maintained by vacuum cleaning.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to approve the minor plan modification for the NESSP Temple, with the stipulation that the maintenance be consistent with what was currently on the site, and be included in the Stormwater Operations & Maintenance Plan. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 – 0 – 1 (Abstained – Black)

MOTION CARRIED

Discussion – Master Plan Implementation Committee Final Report

Ms. Carolyn Perkins, Chair of the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC), commented the MPIC members felt strongly that an implementation committee needed to be set up immediately after the next Master Plan update is finalized, and that a means of reporting the progress of implementation be established.

Ms. Anna Eliot, member, Master Plan Implementation Committee, said she enjoyed working on the Master Plan. She also said that one of the items the existing Master Plan did not address (because it did not exist when the last Master Plan was implemented) was Indian Hill and the opportunities that it brought to the Town. Ms. Eliot commented she was very disappointed that the Select Board disbanded the Economic Development Committee because there was an entire section of the Master Plan devoted to Economic Development. She said she would ask that the Planning Board initiate an Economic Development Committee as a sub-committee of the Planning Board.

Ms. Perkins stated the Committee also suggested that there was a connection between the Master Plan, the Capital Plan, and the town's Operating Budget. She further stated it was very important to have a tracking system that showed the work being done on an on-going basis.

Ms. Judy Anderson, member, Master Plan Implementation Committee, commented that moving forward she felt it was very important to have continuity of expectations for the members.

Discussion – Request for Release Covenant – Rocky Hill Subdivision

Attorney Bob Collins, representing the applicant, stated he was present to request a Release of Covenant for the Rocky Hill Subdivision.

Attorney Collins said the Planning Board held a cash bond on the over 55 portion of the development and there was a separate covenant for Oriole Drive.

Attorney Collins stated that all of the roads covered by the 2006 covenant were either accepted as town ways or covered by surety agreements, so he felt the Planning Board should release the covenant.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to release the covenant from 2006 on Quail Ridge Road, Cardinal Lane, Robin Hill Road, and Mockingbird Hill Road. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 – 0 – 1 (Abstained – Black)
MOTION CARRIED

Public Hearing (Continued)
Flexible Development Subdivision - Definitive Plan and Special Permit
372 Townsend Road (R.D. Kanniard Homes)

Mr. Burke stated that the applicant had agreed to re-present the proposal as Ms. Lorayne Black was a new Planning Board member and as such, needed to hear the full presentation prior to voting on it.

(Note: Originally presented at the 9/12/19 Planning Board meeting by Mr. Stan Dillis of Ducharme & Dillis Civil Design Group, Inc.)

Mr. Stan Dillis, Ducharme & Dillis, commented that one of the things they added was some extra protection to the retention basin in the event it would ever overflow but noted it was designed for a 100-year storm.

Mr. Dillis stated everything was reviewed and signed off on by Nitsch Engineering.

Mr. Dillis said the Conservation Commission commented that the access to the open space was a little convoluted and they had since reconfigured it so it was a straight access from the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Dillis commented at the last meeting there were some concerns voiced from abutters regarding access to the open space. He said to address those concerns a strip of land was created that would become part of the open space and would be deeded to the Town of Groton.

Mr. Burke pointed out that the Historic District Commission submitted a letter which stated there may be some potential of previous Native American activity on the site and requested that an archeological assessment be performed on the site prior to the commencement of construction. Mr. Dillis replied that had been done. Mr. Burke asked Mr. Tada to contact the Historic District Commission to confirm what their position was on the matter.

Mr. Burke said the Conservation Commission had made some comments which were successfully addressed by the applicant.

Mr. Dillis commented the waivers requested were as follows:

1. To allow Cape Cod berm along the road.
2. To allow appropriate sight distance of 105' on a section of the proposed road.
3. That there be a 20-foot road width.
4. To allow for PVC pipe instead of reinforced concrete.
5. To remove sidewalk requirements.
6. To remove the requirement of a 50-foot buffer strip around the perimeter of the property in the flexible development regulations.
7. To allow underground recharge from roadway surfaces (waiver from Stormwater Regulations, Section 352-11.C(10)).

Mr. Burke asked if there were members of the Board who had questions or comments.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps stated her concern was if an unsafe pedestrian condition would be created by decreasing the width of the road and removing the sidewalks. Mr. Dillis replied it was his opinion that school buses should not stop on Townsend Road but should pull into the subdivision to pick-up/drop-off children.

Mr. Burke asked if the road layout had been vetted by the Fire Department. Mr. Dillis replied it was.

Mr. Burke asked Mr. Tada to check with the school department concerning where the school bus stopped in that area.

Mr. Burke requested that Mr. Dillis provide the Planning Board with a more detailed planting schedule. Mr. Dillis replied he would provide a more robust planting detail.

Mr. Bonnet asked about the plan for the borrow area. Mr. Dillis replied they would loam and seed the borrow area.

Ms. Black and Ms. Nilsson Ripps raised questions about the low number of proposed rain garden plantings, and the type of substrate in the rain gardens. Mr. Dillis said he would propose more plantings and provide more detail about the rain garden installation. Ms. Black also suggested replacing the proposed Flowering Dogwood with a species better-suited for use in a rain garden.

Mr. Burke asked if there were any members of the public who had questions or comments.

Ms. Mairi Saball, 358 Townsend Road, an abutter, addressed the Board and stated one of her concerns was that the road wasn't wide enough and it could have an impact on safety. She also shared other concerns which included the possibility of Native American activity,

endangered species on the land, and there was an intrinsic property value to the abutters of having the open space directly behind their properties.

Mr. Burke asked if the applicant agreed to an extension of the Definitive Plan. Mr. Dillis replied he agreed.

Ms. Black made a motion to continue the public hearing, date specific, to the December 5, 2019, Planning Board meeting. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0

MOTION CARRIED

Discussion – Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant

Mr. Tada shared that on Monday, November 18th at 2:00 p.m. two of the consultants from Weston & Sampson would meet with himself, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Haddad, Town Manager to review the schedule for the project. He added all Planning Board members were welcome to attend the meeting.

Discussion – Potential Zoning Amendments for the 2020 Spring Town Meeting

Mr. Burke reported the first item was to clarify the language in §218-25 with regard to the thresholds for Site Plan Review. There has been some confusion as to whether changes in use of a structure, which affect over 1,000 square feet, were triggers for major site plan reviews.

Mr. Burke said the next item had to do with §218-6 Non-Conformance. He said the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) requested clarification on whether a proposal to demo/rebuild a pre-existing non-conforming structure, automatically triggers a review by the ZBA. Mr. Tada added the item came about because the ZBA felt some of the cases which the Building Inspector was referring to them did not need to be referred to them.

Mr. Burke suggested the Board take some time to research the item and come back to it.

Mr. Burke continued by noting the next item was Housing – ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) two-family special permit. Mr. Tada commented that Ms. Fran Stanley, Housing Coordinator, suggested the item as a result of a couple of meetings she had with the Affordable Housing Trust in which they discussed ways of promoting the development of a type of additional housing stock that is currently in demand. The demand is not being met by the typical new construction of single-family homes.

Mr. Burke replied a meeting would be scheduled to discuss it, noting he was open to attached Accessory Dwelling Units “by right” but keeping detached Accessory Dwelling Units by Special Permit.

Mr. Burke stated the last item was regarding a helicopter landing bylaw. Mr. Tada commented the item was brought up by the Select Board after a helicopter landed at the middle school and caused some angst amongst the parents and neighbors. The Planning Board felt the existing zoning for helicopter landing facilities (“heliports”) was sufficient.

Committee Updates

There were no committee updates.

General Business

- ZBA Updates

Mr. Tada commented there were three upcoming Zoning Board of Appeals hearings that may be of some interest to the Planning Board. He said on November 20th one of the items on the agenda was regarding 279 Main Street for a Special Permit to alter a non-conforming structure.

Mr. Tada also said another item on the agenda for the same date was a request for a Special Permit for the alteration of a non-conforming structure at 67 Gay Road.

Mr. Tada stated on Wednesday, December 4th, the Zoning Board of Appeals would hold a public hearing for a Special Permit for property located at 366 Lost Lake Drive.

- Approval of Meeting Minutes - September 12, 2019

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 12, 2019 meeting, as presented. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 – 0 – 1 (Abstained – Wilson)

MOTION CARRIED

- Approval of Meeting Minutes - September 26, 2019

Mr. Wilson made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 26, 2019 meeting, as presented. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0

MOTION CARRIED

- Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 10, 2019

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 10, 2019 meeting, as presented. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0
MOTION CARRIED

- Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 24, 2019

Mr. Wilson made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 24, 2019 meeting, as presented. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0
MOTION CARRIED

Planning Board Meeting Schedule

- December 5th

Adjournment

Mr. Wilson made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Trish Gedziun