

TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD

February 13, 2020
Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, February 13, 2020, 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
Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Clerk
Mr. George Barringer, Board Member
Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member
Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Members not Present:

Mr. Scott Wilson, Vice Chair
Mr. Timothy M. Svarczkopf, Board Member

Also Present:

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Public Hearing

Proposed Zoning Amendment, §218-25 Site Plan Review

Mr. Burke said the genesis of the amendment was with regard to some confusion they had a few years ago when they revised the Site Plan Review to streamline it and to make it such that some of the more minor projects did not have to appear before the Planning Board.

Mr. Burke said they were adding language to clarify one of the thresholds for major site plan reviews which was “a change in use over 1,000 square feet would trigger a major site plan review.”

Mr. Burke asked if there were members of the public present who had questions or comments. There were none.

Mr. Burke commented as part of the zoning amendment process the Planning Board was holding a public hearing and after closing the public hearing the Board would vote to make a recommendation for Town Meeting.

Mr. Barringer made a motion to close the public hearing for the Proposed Zoning Amendment for §218-25 Site Plan Review. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5- 0 - 0

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Barringer made a motion to recommend the proposed Zoning Amendment §218-25 Site Plan Review to Town Meeting. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5- 0 - 0
MOTION CARRIED

Public Hearing
Proposed Zoning Amendment, Recodification of Chapter 218 Zoning

Mr. Burke stated instead of having over 30 separate sections there were 10 sections.

1. Table of Contents
2. Administration
3. Definitions
4. Zoning Districts
5. Use Regulations
6. Intensity Regulations
7. Overlay Districts
8. General Regulations
9. Special Residential Regulations
10. Special Regulations

Mr. Burke pointed out that none of the underlying provisions of any of the sections had been changed with the exception of one or two caveats. He said there were a couple of provisions in the existing zoning that had expired; a provision under *Accessory Apartments for Amnesty*, and the *Temporary Marijuana Moratorium*.

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

Ms. Judy Anderson, a Groton resident, commented that any numbers greater than ten should use the digits rather than being spelled out.

Mr. Barringer made a motion to close the public hearing. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 - 0 - 0
MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Barringer made a motion to recommend the proposed zoning amendment for the recodification of Chapter 218, Zoning to the Town Meeting. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 - 0 - 0

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Bonnett and the other Planning Board members thanked Mr. Burke for his work in preparing the recodification.

Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan – (added 2/17/2020)
295 and 315 Cherry Tree Lane, Lots 3 and 4
Academy Hill Subdivision

Mr. George Gallagher from Habitech Communities was present to speak in favor of the application.

Mr. Burke confirmed that the frontage would remain the same and the lot areas would change in a de minimis fashion. He said the Planning Board was not officially approving anything, but they were endorsing the fact that the ANR did not constitute a subdivision and that the requisite amount of frontage was present and not being changed.

Mr. Barringer added that the frontage was located on an accessible roadway.

Mr. Barringer made a motion to endorse the plan of land located at 295 and 293 Cherry Tree Lane, Lots 3 and 4, in the Academy Hill Subdivision for an Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan, drawn by Rose Land Survey, dated December 9, 2019. Ms. Nilsson Ripps seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0 – 0

MOTION CARRIED

Discussion – (added 2/13/2020)
Request to Release Peer Review Account Funds - 120 Boston Road (PC Myette)

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to release the remaining funds in the account for Peer Review for 120 Boston Road to Mr. Peter Myette. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 – 0 – 1 (Abstained – Black)

MOTION CARRIED

Discussion – (added 2/13/2020)
Oriole Drive Bond Estimate – Sewer Connection to Hummingbird Lane

Mr. Tada stated that the developer was in discussions with the Sewer Commission regarding connecting Oriole Drive to the sewer and in order to do that the sewer infrastructure would run along Oriole Drive and it would all be included in the Oriole Drive Performance Bond which was under the Planning Board's jurisdiction. He noted, however, there was a piece of the sewer that would cross an easement from the end of Oriole Drive over to Hummingbird Lane and would cross private house lots as well as the Hummingbird Lane Condominium Association which was also private property. Mr. Tada said the

developer had asked, through his attorney, that the private property not be included in the scope of the bond estimate.

Mr. Tada stated that Mr. Tom Orcutt who was the Water Superintendent and also served on the Sewer Commission felt that the construction bond should include all of the sewer infrastructure to ensure it was completed. Mr. Bonnett commented he agreed.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to include the entire sewer line in the cost estimate. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 – 0 – 1 (Abstained – Black)

MOTION CARRIED

Discussion – Other Potential Zoning Amendments

- Expand the Scope of Accessory Dwelling Unit Provisions

Mr. Burke stated the Planning Board would propose that attached accessory apartments should be by right and detached accessory apartments should be by special permit.

Mr. Burke asked the Planning Board members who they thought should have the authority to grant the special permits.

The Board collectively agreed that they felt the Planning Board would be the appropriate authority due to the site plan considerations associated with detached apartments.

Proposed Edits

- Attached Accessory Units, Clause E – Change the word “external” to “a separate staircase as required to access an accessory unit.”
- Detached Accessory Units – “if a separate staircase is required to access an accessory apartment it must not change the general appearance of a single-family home.”
- Allow Open Space Flexible Development by Right

Mr. Burke commented there was a lot of work to be done regarding Open Space Flexible Developments by right and the Planning Board would not have time to complete that work prior to the Spring Town Meeting.

Discussion – Letter of Support to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for FY21 Housing Coordinator Funding

Mr. Burke stated that the Housing Coordinator position was funded by the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funds.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to send a letter of support to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for the fiscal year 2021 Housing Coordinator funding. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0 – 0

MOTION CARRIED

Discussion – Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning Grant Updates

Mr. Tada noted that the consultants from Weston & Sampson were in the process of drafting the report.

Mr. Burke excused himself from the meeting at approximately 8:35 p.m. and Mr. Barringer assumed the role of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Committee Updates

- Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Barringer commented the Committee had met at the end of January and they were going to put a placeholder Article on the Town Meeting Warrant to perform the engineering on the next set of improvements they planned to submit for the spring round of funding. Further, Mr. Barringer said the engineer had informed him that there was funding leftover in the engineering account from the first round.

Mr. Barringer said if the Article moved forward at Town Meeting, they would submit for four projects. He said it was noteworthy to mention that one of the projects was the West Main Street/West Groton sidewalk project which would continue the sidewalk from West Groton Village to the new senior center. The three other projects are: sidewalk extension on Lowell Road/Route 40 from Main Street, Rail Trail connection to Whistle Post Lane, and sidewalk extension from the affordable units on Sandy Pond Road to the Shaw's Market at Four Corners.

General Business

- ZBA Updates

Mr. Tada commented that the ZBA was currently hearing an appeal of a former Building Commissioner's determination regarding Selectman Josh Degen and his landscaping business which he operates out of his house on Martins Pond Road. According to the determination, Mr. Degen is authorized to operate his landscaping business as an agricultural exemption. Mr. Tada further stated part of the landscaping operation was on the neighboring property which had been sold and the new owners were not very happy with a portion of that business occurring on their property.

- Green Community Program Update

Mr. Tada stated that the Town of Groton, working with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, submitted an application at the end of last year to be designated as a Green Community and a few weeks ago it was announced that Groton was, in fact, designated as a Green Community. He said as part of the designation the Town of Groton had been awarded approximately \$140,000 to be put toward some of the energy efficiency improvement projects that were identified in the Energy Reduction Plan that was submitted with the application.

- Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 23, 2020

Mr. Bonnett made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 23, 2020 meeting, as presented. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 – 0 – 0
MOTION CARRIED

Planning Board Meeting Schedule

- February 27, 2020 (To be cancelled due to lack of a quorum)
- March 12, 2020
- March 26, 2020
- April 9, 2020
- April 23, 2020
- April 27, 2020 – Spring Town Meeting

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Trish Gedziun

Approved 3/12/2020