

TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD

**Thursday, April 9, 2020
Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, April 9, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was broadcasted via Zoom and was available to view on the Groton Channel pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order Concerning the Open Meeting Law.

Members Present:

Mr. Russell Burke, Chair
Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Clerk
Mr. George Barringer, Board Member
Mr. Timothy M. Svarczkopf, Board Member
Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member
Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Members not Present:

Mr. Scott Wilson, Vice Chair

Also Present:

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Webinar Presentation and Discussion

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Program

Hazard Mitigation and Climate Change Adaptation

NOTE: Webinar & Survey are available on the Town of Groton Planning Board's Website

Mr. Burke stated they would play a recorded webinar prepared by Weston & Sampson, the Town's consultants regarding the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Program. The recording will be followed by a discussion regarding the information shared.

Ms. Adria Boynton, Resiliency Specialist, Weston & Sampson, narrated the pre-recorded webinar.

Ms. Boynton encouraged people to take an online survey that was available until April 23rd by going to the Planning Board's web page and then double click on the hyperlink entitled tinyurl.com/GrotonMVPSurvey. She noted the public's comments would be included in the final deliverable document.

Mr. Bonnett asked if there was an assessment of the two dams and if anyone was doing maintenance on them. He also asked about wetlands restoration and replacing undersized culverts. Mr. Tada replied the maintenance of the dams was within the purview of the Department of Public Works. Mr. Svarczkopf mentioned there were a number of small-scale rain gardens and bioretention areas installed for various project around town.

Ms. Boynton stated the MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) Program's Action Grants could be used to fund studies and assessments of dams, culverts, and other infrastructure, and the MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EEA) had been hosting webinars over the last week because they were anticipating the Request for Responses (RFR) for the next round of Action Grants to be released at the end of the month and one of the regional coordinators for the MVP Program stressed that they were very supportive of applications for infrastructure assessments.

Mr. Svarczkopf read a question submitted by Ms. Beth Faxon, via the Zoom chat function. Ms. Faxon asked if infectious diseases such as the current coronavirus pandemic had been factored in. Vector-borne diseases were considered, but the MVP community resilience building workshop was held in mid-January, before the pandemic became a major issue.

Ms. Black observed that access to the Internet is important now, more than ever.

Mr. Burke thanked Ms. Boynton for providing the webinar. Ms. Boynton replied all public feedback would be important in finalizing the report and she was looking forward to seeing what the public had to share.

Discussion – Update on Spring Town Meeting Warrant and Schedule

Mr. Burke said the Town Manager sent out a memo to all boards and departments stating they would like to keep the number of people participating in the Spring Town Meeting to a minimum and asked if there were any Articles being proposed that were essential and if there were others that could be deferred until the Fall Town Meeting. He said he and Mr. Tada responded that they would like to see the recodification of the zoning moved forward but felt the other Articles could be postponed: the clean-up of the site plan review, and the two accessory dwelling unit (attached and detached) amendments.

Committee Updates

- Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Svarczkopf stated he had not been able to attend many meetings as of late due to his travel schedule which obviously had changed about three weeks prior. He said there would

be an online meeting that he would be able to participate in coming up soon but there were some emails that suggested an alternate or another person should be appointed to the committee. He added Monday nights would continue to be a problem for him to attend the meetings in person, however, if the meetings continued to be online he could definitely attend.

Mr. Burke stated the Planning Board had been advised by Town Counsel that they could not appoint an alternate to the Community Preservation Committee. He suggested Mr. Svarczkopf remain on the committee for time being and it could be addressed at the time the board reorganizes ahead of the next fiscal year.

- Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Barringer commented that the Complete Streets Committee had not met since late January. He said he saw no reason why the Complete Streets Engineering Warrant Article could not wait until the Fall Town Meeting.

General Business

- ZBA Updates

Mr. Tada commented the ZBA met the previous evening but he did not have any updates to give to the Planning Board at the time.

- Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 12, 2020

Mr. Barringer made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 12, 2020, meeting, as presented. Ms. Nilsson Ripps seconded the motion.

A Roll Call vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea:	Mr. Barringer, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, Ms. Black, Mr. Bonnett, Mr. Svarczkopf, and Mr. Burke	6
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Nay:		0
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VOTE: 6 – 0 – 0
MOTION CARRIED

Other Comments

Mr. Burke stated despite the COVID-19 virus they were still receiving invoices to be paid and as it was logistically impossible for them to get a quorum of the Planning Board to sign the invoices. He further stated the Town Accountant suggested a single member be appointed to sign off on them on behalf on the entire Planning Board. Mr. Barringer volunteered for this task.

Mr. Svarczkopf made a motion to authorize Mr. George Barringer to approve and sign off on all invoices submitted to the Planning Board. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

A Roll Call vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Mr. Svarczkopf, Ms. Black, Mr. Bonnett, 6
Ms. Nilsson Ripps, Mr. Barringer, and Mr. Burke

Nay: 0

VOTE: 6 – 0 – 0
MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Tada commented there were three invoices that needed approval and explained them as follows:

- Weston & Sampson (\$2,200) - He noted the money would come out of the grant that the Town Groton had already been awarded from the state.
- Groton Herald (\$243.00) – Mr. Burke suggested Mr. Tada document the payment as part of their local contribution to the MVP planning process.
- Groton Herald (2 charges @ \$475.75 each)

Planning Board Meeting Schedule

- A May date to be determined, possibly May 14.
- May 18, 2020 – Spring Town Meeting

Adjournment

Mr. Svarczkopf made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Nilsson Ripps seconded the motion.

A Roll Call vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Mr. Svarczkopf, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, Mr. Bonnett, 6
Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, and Mr. Burke

Nay: 0

VOTE: 6 – 0 – 0
MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Trish Gedziun