### **TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

#### **Thursday, November 18, 2021**

**Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, November 18, 2021, at approximately 7:00 p.m. All votes were taken by roll call.

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. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Vice Chair

Ms. Alyson Bedard, Clerk

Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

**Member Not Present:**

Mr. Russell Burke

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

**Discussion- Request for minor modification – sidewalk realignment**

**Cherry Tree Lane, Phase III (Academy Hill Subdivision)**

Mr. Tada informed the Board that there was a request for a minor field change to allow for a sidewalk adjustment in between Arbor Way and Cherry Tree Lane. A utility box is directly in the path of the sidewalk. There is a strip of grass between the roadway and the sidewalk. On the opposite side a sidewalk is not feasible due to the change in topography and the installation of a guard rail.

Bruce Wheeler of Habitech, explained that the electric transformer is located in an inconvenient spot and is requesting for a practical adjustment to go around it.

Mr. Barringer requested specific details pertaining to the sidewalk realignment. Mr. Wheeler explained that the sidewalk will retain its full width (4 feet) and there will be no infringement on the roadway, but it will meet the edge of the curb (Cape Cod berm). The sight lines are good in this location.

**Motion:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to approve the minor field change to relocate the sidewalk as shown on the Rose Land Survey Plan dated November 9, 2021 for Academy Hill Subdivision, Cherry Tree Lane, Phase III. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Ms. Black, Ms. Bedard, Mr. Bonnett, 6 Mr. Barringer, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried. 6-0-0**

**Discussion- Request for exemption- paving deadline**

Mr. Tada explained that based on discussions with George Gallagher of Habitech, there was a request for a waiver of the Planning Board regulation stating that paving shall be completed in any given year by November 15th. Last month, Mr. Gallagher had asked about the paving the requirements and Mr. Tada forgot to inform him of the November 15th deadline. Habitech is planning to pave Cherry Tree Lane (top coat) tomorrow. The repairs to the subgrade have been completed.

Bruce Wheeler of Habitech stated that the finish course of pavement would be laid tomorrow and they have been working on site the last two weeks executing the repairs that Nitsch Engineering noted on review.

Mr. Barringer requested that the engineer be present for the final paving. Mr. Tada stated that Basel Alhadidi of Nitsch Engineering has been conducting the field inspections and would also be present tomorrow to observe the top coat.

Mr. Wheeler confirmed that the paving would be completed in one day.

**Motion:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to approve the waiver for the paving deadline for Cherry Hill Tree Phase III provided that Nitsch Engineering approves the work. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Ms. Black, Ms. Bedard, Mr. Bonnett, 6 Mr. Barringer, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried. 6-0-0**

**Discussion-Planning Board proposed budget for FY23**

Mr. Tada stated that the Town Manager, Mark Haddad, had requested for all departments to submit their proposed budgets for the next fiscal year (FY23). A spreadsheet was displayed for the Board to review. Mr. Tada briefly discussed salaries being a collective bargaining item where the Board cannot provide any input; the MRPC Assessment is based on a set formula; and the Legal Expense line has been $0 for many years due to Town Counsel’s services being part of the Select Board’s budget.

The expenses were described more in depth. Dues & memberships would increase due to AICP certification. The Planning Board’s advertising expense line was discussed as the largest expenditure due to the cost of public hearing legal notices that are published in the Groton Herald or Lowell Sun, as needed. The anticipated costs for Historic Districts Commission (HDC) and Sign Committee legal notices, and the hanging/removal of Main Street Banners, are also included in the budget. The ADA Coordinator, Michelle Collette, provided input on the ADA/SLI amounts. Clothing expenses are specified in the union contract. Mr. Tada stated that he will submit the proposed budget by the deadline on Monday, November 22, 2021.

Mr. Barringer questioned why the Conservation Commission and the ZBA public hearing legal notices are not included. Mr. Tada replied that the Conservation Commission and the ZBA each have their own advertising budgets.

Ms. Bedard questioned if the amount requested for FY22 was expended. Mr. Tada explained that they are still in the middle of FY22 and as of right now they have not exceeded the budget.

Mr. Wilson requested clarification on Column F in the spreadsheet. Mr. Tada replied that the percentage is calculated from the proposed change from FY22 to FY23. For example, if the same amount is carried over to FY23, then the percent change calculates to 0%. Mr. Tada stated that the departments have been directed to propose level funding unless an increase can be justified. The cost of advertising has increased and that will be factored in.

Ms. Bedard asked about the budget impacts of potential projects such as the redevelopment of the Deluxe Property and the new zoning for retail marijuana establishments. Mr. Tada explained that the Deluxe Property redevelopment would go through the ZBA if it is proposed as a 40B project (separate budget) while the retail marijuana projects would go through the Planning Board.

Mr. Tada requested any comments or recommendations regarding the budget to be made directly to him before the required submission date.

**Project Updates**

* Academy Hill

No additional updates.

* Monarch Path

Mr. Tada notified the Board that paving of the top coat and the installation of the sidewalk on Monarch Path was completed the last week of September. The inspection reports from Nitsch Engineering have been forwarded to the Board. The developer will be petitioning the Town to accept the roadway next year. The As-Built Plan will first need to be submitted to the Planning Board and then provided to Nitsch Engineering for review and guidance. The street acceptance would be included as Warrant Article at the Town Meeting. Mr. Tada has forwarded the engineering reports to the DPW Director, Tom Delaney.

**Committee Updates**

* Complete Streets Committee

No update.

* Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Tada state that the Project Summaries were due last month and the CPC held a public hearing to provide initial feedback. The next step is to complete the draft application which is due the second week of January.

**General Business**

* ZBA

Mr. Tada updated that the ZBA approved three items at their last meeting. 1) A special permit was approved for Halsey Platt to commence the construction of an addition to his existing shop. 2) A special permit was approved for 37 Boathouse Road to rebuild an existing garage using the same footprint. 3) The front setback variance was approved for the construction of a new single family house on lot 9.2 located on Common Street.

* Meeting Minutes- November 4, 2021

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2021 meeting as corrected. Ms. Nilsson Ripps seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken; which resulted as follows:

Yea: Ms. Black, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, Mr. Bonnett, 6 Ms. Bedard, Mr. Barringer, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried. 6-0-0**

**Planning Board Meeting Schedule**

* December 16

Mr. Tada informed the Board that it might not be necessary to meet on December 2nd.

Ms. Black questioned when the Design Review Committee was scheduled to meet again. Mr. Tada notified that an application was on the agenda for the December 16th and the materials were provided to the Design Review Committee. The Board mentioned that recommendations are usually provided by the Design Review Committee before the Planning Board public hearing date. Mr. Tada stated that he would reach out to the Design Review Committee members to schedule a meeting before December 16th.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** At approximately 7:47 P.M. Ms. Nilsson Ripps made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken; which resulted as follows:

Yea: Ms. Bedard, Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Nilsson Ripps 6 Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried. 6-0-0**

Respectfully submitted:

Kristine Fox

Per Diem Minute Taker

*Approved 12/16/2021*