**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**Thursday, January 27, 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, January 27, 2022, at approximately 7:00 p.m. All votes to be taken by roll call because the meeting was virtual.

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

**Members Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Alyson Bedard, Clerk

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

**Members not Present:**

Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Vice Chair - Excused

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

***Public Hearing (Continued) – Special Permit & Site Plan Modification for Medical Office use in Village Center Business District – 240 Main Street***

***(Kilbourn Place LLC – Gus Widmayer, Manager)***

Attorney Bob Collins, representing the applicant, addressed the Board and said the Board had provided him with a list of revisions and Mr. Stan Dillis had made the revisions to the plan.

Attorney Collins stated there were initially two handicapped-accessible parking spaces in the plan and that number had been increased to eight spaces. He said the handicapped-accessible spaces were also moved from the middle row of spaces to the row closest to the building.

Attorney Collins noted that planters were added to the front façade of the building that would prevent vehicles from driving into the building while adding a pleasant esthetic value. He said signage was also added to make it clear that the road that led to the parking on the side and the rear was not to be used for the general public and striping was added to delineate the pedestrian space along the front façade of the building as well as the rear and sides of the building.

Attorney Collins stated the current use allowed for 44 parking spaces.

Attorney Collins said there was a concrete pad for the emergency generator by the dumpster and they felt the existing generator was of sufficient size to serve the needs of the facility.

Attorney Collins added he had consulted with Ms. Michelle Collette who was the ADA Coordinator, and the Board had a letter from her regarding the percentages of handicapped parking. He said Ms. Collette suggested that there could be a dedicated pick-up/drop-off spot very close to the front entrance.

Mr. Burke suggested that the handicapped access doors should be in the center of the facility. Attorney Collins replied that all the entrances in the front of the building were suitable for someone using a wheelchair. He said the entrance to the far right of the building would have an automatic door opener.

Mr. Burke said he would like to see more documentation with respect to the historic use of like practices as it pertained to parking. Attorney Collins replied he would look for further information.

Mr. Barringer stated as he understood it from the previous meeting the facility was described as a radiology facility and only a radiology facility. He said he was very taken aback when he was informed that it was inclusive of laboratory space and an entire medical facility with a total of forty of fifty physicians and staff members. He said he did not feel there was enough parking to meet the needs of the facility and he took issue with there being only one ADA door. He said he would like an accurate count as to how many people would be in the building when fully operational. Mr. Barringer said he felt the public hearing should be continued until the Board received the information.

Mr. Bonnett clarified that ADA compliant doors included having automatic doors. Mr. Burke replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Black added that the ADA doors should be covered and the only proposed existing door that had an automatic door was not covered.

Ms. Bedard said she felt it would be problematic not to have ADA compliant entrances with automatic doors.

Mr. Bob Drake of Emerson Hospital explained he was not opposed to installing automatic door openers. He said the Department of Public Health had defined regulations, such as pre- and post-procedure rooms. He further said they designed the space so patients could move internally without having to go outside to get the laboratory and radiology spaces. He added the physicians were not likely to be in the office at the same time. He further said that he would be happy to provide the Board with an estimated number of total employees.

Ms. Black asked Attorney Collins to confirm that mulch was the only thing that would be visible from Main Street.

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

There were none.

However, Mr. Tada pointed out that the Planning Board had received a written comment from an abutter, Ms. Alison Eydenberg, who questioned whether the proposed use was appropriate. Mr. Wilson commented it was important to note that the Planning Board did not have any authority as to what type of tenants should be in a development such as the one being discussed.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to continue the public hearing to the next meeting, date specific of February 10, 2022, at 7:10 p.m. Ms. Bedard seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, Ms. Bedard, 6

Mr. Burke, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 6 – 0 – 0.**

***Public Hearing (Continuation) – Special Permit – Custom Cabinetry Shop***

***Town Center Overlay District – 36 Court*** ***Street (Halsey Platt)***

Mr. Wilson explained that the Planning Board had received a revised site plan with stormwater management details.

Mr. Stan Dillis of Ducharme & Dillis Civil Design Group addressed the Board the drainage system would be a sub-surface infiltration system located behind the existing house and all of the runoff would be recharged into the system and would blend in with the grading along the roadway.

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

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, Ms. Bedard, 6

Mr. Burke, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 6 – 0 – 0.**

Mr. Wilson requested Mr. Tada to draft a decision of approval for review at the next Planning Board meeting to include the item of adding the fence, the requirement to go before the Conservation Commission, which was already scheduled, and to comply with the conditions of a stormwater management permit.

***Discussion – Hayes Woods – Permit Compliance Status***

Attorney Collins stated that due to a series of misunderstandings the Board received a notice of non-compliance from the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. He said after the Board approved the special permit and the appeal period having lapsed, the site was purchased, and the limits of disturbance were delineated on lots three through seven. Attorney Collins said tree removal occurred over three days and one of the abutters complained about it. He said the removal of trees stopped as soon as they heard about the complaint, and they had a meeting with the Review Biologist and would meet again the following morning.

Mr. Dillis added the trees were approved to be removed but the final step of getting the final permit from the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program but noted he would provide everything needed by February 1, 2022.

Ms. Deb Collum, a resident, addressed the Board and stated she felt the issue was more than a mere misunderstanding and said it was clear that there were several requirements that had to be met prior to beginning the work.

Ms. Diane Mahan, a resident, addressed the Board and stated she spoke with the developer and could not believe the number of trees to be taken down.

***Discussion – Potential Zoning Amendments for Spring Town Meeting***

* Buffer Zone around Marijuana Establishments

There was no discussion.

* Definition of Age-Restricted Housing

Mr. Burke expressed concern regarding amending the age-restricted housing. He said the multi-family section of the zoning was in dire need of a comprehensive re-write and he was not comfortable with a piecemealed fix that was particularly directed at a specific development rather than a comprehensive look at the entire section. Mr. Burke suggested that they take the time to review the section and not address it at Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Burke was excused from the meeting at approximately 8:27 p.m.

***Discussion – Letters of Support for Tails Committee Grant Applications***

Mr. Paul Funch, Chair of the Groton Trails Committee, addressed the Board and said the proposed was an accessible trail that connected with the current John Tinker Trail to include an observation area where there would be benches as well as multiple rest areas, and signs that described the importance of the river and the efforts that Marion Stoddard had made over the years. He said they were also proposing that the size of the parking area be doubled.

Mr. Funch said he was going to request monies from the Capital Improvement Committee and the Mass Recreation Trails Program for the accessible trails, rest areas, and parking. He said the entire project would cost approximately $70,000 with the trail component being approximately $40,000.

Mr. Funch said he was present to request a letter of support from the Planning Board to submit with his grant applications.

Mr. Bonnett asked how long the proposed trail would be. Mr. Funch replied that it would be approximately ¼ mile long.

**MOTION:** Ms. Bedard made a motion to request that Mr. Tada draft a letter of support of the Trails Committee Grant applications. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, 5

Ms. Bedard, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Annual Report to the Planning Board***

Mr. Tada reviewed the Annual Report with the Planning Board that indicated the number of applications the Board reviewed, the zoning amendments passed, noting that the Board sometimes had to meet remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**MOTION**: Mr. Barringer made a motion to accept the Annual Report. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, 5

Ms. Bedard, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Project Updates***

* Village at Shepley Hill

Mr. Tada explained the previous April the Planning Board approved a definitive subdivision plan and major residential special permit for the Village at Shepley Hill, the proposed age-restricted condominiums located on the southwest corner of Longley Road and Sandhill Road. He said the project was on hold due to an appeal for multiple wetland crossings. He added the appeal was resolved and the project was moving forward. Mr. Tada said a pre-construction meeting on the site occurred earlier in the week where the Conservation Administrator, a representative from the Stormwater Advisory Committee, and a representative from Nitsch Engineering were present.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Tada stated that the Town Manager signed the Mass DOT contract forms and almost had enough money to pay Nitsch Engineering to design the project. He said once they got the go-ahead from Mass DOT regarding the contract they would move forward with the design.

Mr. Tada said they would likely try to bid the construction of the two Complete Streets sidewalk projects in the same “package” with the sidewalk that was awarded the grant under the ARPA funds that would go from Main Street to the Indian Hill Music Center.

* Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Tada commented that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) held its public hearing for all the draft applications received the previous Monday.

***General Business***

* Heritage Landing at Cow Pond Brook Road (ZBA Update)

Mr. Tada said the developer had submitted an official request for approval from the state agency for subsidization of a 40 B project. He said there would be a comment period during which the town could submit comments to the state and there would also be a site walk that would be open to town Boards on February 1st.

* Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2022, meeting as presented. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, 5

Ms. Bedard, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule (Via Zoom)***

* February 10, 2022
* February 24, 2022
* March 10, 2022
* March 24, 2022

***Adjournment***

**MOTION:** At approximately 9:20 p.m. Ms. Bedard made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, 5

Ms. Bedard, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 5 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary