**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**Thursday, February 24, 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, February 24, 2022, at approximately 7:08 p.m. All votes were to be taken by roll call because the meeting was virtual.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Alyson Bedard, Clerk

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

**Members not Present:**

Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Vice-Chair

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Mr. Wilson stated the meeting was being recorded and each member participating introduced themselves.

***Public Hearing – Proposed Zoning Amendment – Marijuana Establishments Buffer Zone***

***Submitted by the Select Board (Mr. Mark Haddad, Town Manager)***

Mr. Wilson opened the public hearing.

Mr. Mark Haddad, Town Manager, addressed the Board and said the Select Board had recently entered into two Host Community Agreements with two companies to establish retail Marijuana facilities in Groton. He further said one of the locations was at the Mill Run Plaza and the existing bylaw stated there could not be such an establishment within 500-feet, property line-to-property line, of certain other uses; one of them being a licensed daycare facility. He said the Cannabis Control Commission’s regulations require a separation of 500-feet door-to-door, and the purpose of the zoning amendment was to have the existing Marijuana bylaw be the same as the state’s regulations.

Mr. Wilson asked if members of the public had questions or comments.

Mr. John Sopka asked about retail locations. Mr. Tada replied the discussion was focused on retail.

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

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

Yea: Ms. Black, Ms. Bedard, Mr. Burke, 6

Mr. Bonnett, Mr. Barringer, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 6 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed zoning amendment to allow the 500-feet of separation to be measured door-to-door instead of property line-to-property line. Ms. Black seconded the motion

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

Yea: Ms. Black, Ms. Bedard, Mr. Burke, 6

Mr. Bonnett, Mr. Barringer, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 6 – 0 – 0.**

Mr. Bonnett made the suggestion that the Planning Board review the parking standards for retail marijuana establishments at some point, to ensure adequate parking. Mr. Burke noted that the bylaw does not have specific parking standards for retail marijuana use; therefore, the Planning Board has the discretion to require adequate parking on a case-by-case basis.

***Public Hearing (Continued)***

***Special Permit & Site Plan Modifications for Medical Office Use in the Village Center Business (VCB)*** ***District – 240 Main Street (Kilbourn Place LLC – Gus Widmayer, Manager)***

Attorney Bob Collins, representing the applicant, Mr. Gus Widmayer, addressed the Board and said the significant outstanding issue was the planters shown along the front façade of the plan. He said he had to go to the Historic District Commission to seek its approval. He further said the Conservation Commission was not amenable to the planters.

Attorney Collins said Mr. Tada had developed language in the draft special permit decision that required him to consult with the Historic District Commission pertaining to things that could be installed to minimize the potential of vehicle intrusion to the front façade of the building. He said bollards could be installed instead of the large planters.

Mr. Wilson asked if members of the public had questions or comments.

Ms. Alison Eydenberg, 254 Main Street, said (via Zoom Chat) she had attended the Historic District Commission meeting and the issues with the planters were regarding the size, appearance, and spacing.

Ms. Eydenberg also said: “short-sighted to count spaces and use now during Covid, specifically with the lab requiring appointments versus typical pre-Covid walk-in. It also seems random that the metrics we are using are just counting cars. Isn’t there more accurate data available? Shouldn’t we demand something more reliable than us counting?”

Mr. Burke said he was satisfied with the parking. Mr. Barringer said he felt the parking was tight, but he was satisfied with it.

Condition #1 was amended as follows:

The Applicant shall install safety measures to protect the building entrances and pedestrian access from vehicular intrusions, in consultation with the Historic District Commission, and subject to approval by the Building Inspector “and Planning Board.”

Condition #6 was added as follows:

In the event that the parking, as proposed, is insufficient, at the sole discretion of the Planning Board, the Applicant shall be required to provide a mitigation plan to correct the insufficiency to the satisfaction of the Planning Board.

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

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

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

Mr. Burke, Mr. Bonnett, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 6 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the waiver for the reduction in parking spaces. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, Mr. Bonnett, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 6 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the modification to the special permit 221-30 and site plan modification 2019-17, as amended. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, Mr. Bonnett, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 6 – 0 – 0.**

**Recorder’s Note: Mr. Barringer was excused from the meeting at approximately 8:08 p.m.**

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

* Definition of age-restricted housing – Citizen’s Petition

Mr. Tada indicated that Mr. Jeff Brem submitted a Citizen’s Petition that proposed to change the definition of age-restricted housing in the bylaw. He explained the petition was vetted by Attorney Brian Falk (Town Counsel) and he would verify with the Town Clerk the following Monday to ascertain whether the petition was certified. He said a public hearing would be scheduled after he received confirmation from the Town Clerk.

* Section 218-5.5 – Special Use Considerations

Mr. Burke reviewed his suggestions regarding the language under Special Use Considerations. Mr. Tada stated that a public hearing regarding the language change would be held on March 24, 2022.

***Discussion – Multi-Family Zoning for MBTA Communities***

Mr. Tada explained that on March 28th the Select Board would hold a briefing regarding the draft guidelines for Multi-Family Zoning for MBTA Communities which would meet the town’s first compliance. He noted if the Board wanted to submit comments regarding the draft guidelines, they were due by March 31st. He said the next step would involve the Town Manager submitting the Community Information Form which was due on May 2nd and the town had a deadline of December 31st to either submit a request for compliance if the zoning were in place or to submit an action plan with a detailed proposal and timeline by December 31, 2024.

Mr. Tada said Tuesday, March 1st was the first application deadline for technical assistance from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission.

Ms. Fran Stanley, Housing Coordinator, via Zoom, commented that there was a webinar given by the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association and it provided a very detailed review of the draft guidelines.

***Project Updates***

* Hayes Woods

Mr. Burke said he had driven by the site and the section furthermost away from Hill Street was where the majority of the clearing had been done. He said the plan did indicate that some trees needed to be removed.

Mr. Tada said Mr. Stan Dillis, P.E. of Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group had confirmed that the limits of the clearing were flagged, the flagging was still in place, and the Planning Board had a site walk scheduled for February 26th but would likely be rescheduled due to inclement weather.

Mr. Tada said the developer of Hayes Woods would not continue with the land clearing until all of the necessary permits were in place. The site walk was rescheduled to Saturday, March 5th at 9:00 a.m.

* Groton Hill Music Center (a.k.a. Music Center at Indian Hill)

The Board collectively decided that a good possible date for a site walk/meeting was March 16th. To be followed up.

* Bank of America

Mr. Tada commented that he would be contacting Bank of America to request that they come back to the Planning Board regarding the lighting on Main Street.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Tada said they were awaiting the final notice in order to proceed with the sidewalk projects.

* Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Barringer said the public hearings were complete and final applications were due that day. He said the Town Manager and the School Building Committee requested additional money because bids for the school track had come in $1 million more than what they had originally budgeted for.

***General Business***

* Meeting Minutes – January 27, 2022

**MOTION:** Ms. Bedard made a motion to approve the minutes from January 27, 2022, as presented. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Ms. Black, Ms. Bedard, Mr. Burke, 5

Mr. Bonnett, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 5 – 0 – 0.**

* Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2022

**MOTION:** Ms. Black made a motion to approve the minutes from February 10, 2022, as presented. Ms. Bedard seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Ms. Black, Ms. Bedard, Mr. Burke, 4

Mr. Bonnett, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 4 – 0 – 1. (Abstained – Mr. Bonnett)**

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

* March 10, 2022 & March 24, 2022
* April 14, 2022 & April 28, 2022
* April 30, 2022 – Spring Town Meeting

***Adjournment***

**MOTION:** At approximately 9:27 p.m. Mr. Burke made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bedard seconded the motion.

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

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

Ms. Bedard, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**The motion carried 5 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 4/14/2022*