**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**Thursday, May 26, 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, May 26, 2022, at approximately

7:00 p.m. All votes were to be taken by roll call because the meeting was virtual.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Nilsson Ripps, Vice-Chair

Ms. Alyson Bedard, Clerk

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member *(not eligible to vote following re-election on May 24th until officially sworn in by the Town Clerk)*

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

**Members not Present:**

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Per the Massachusetts Attorney General’s guidance regarding the Massachusetts Wiretap Statute, Mr. Wilson stated the meeting was virtual and being recorded and all votes must be taken via roll call. Further, Mr. Wilson introduced the Planning Board members who were participating in the meeting.

***Public Hearing (Cont.) Major Site Plan Review – Florence Roche Elementary School, Phase 2***

***342 Main Street (Florence Roche Elementary School Building Committee)***

Ms. Meryl Nistler, Sr. Project Manager, Studio G Architects, addressed the Board and said they were present to go over the Peer Review.

Mr. Steve Michener, Associate, Studio G Architects, noted the following items:

* Stamped architectural drawings received from Studio G Architects, dated April 14, 2022.
* Regarding light levels, the peer review indicated there were some areas with lower foot-candles than what the zoning minimum required. He said the Planning Board had requested to adjust the color temperature to 3,000K vs. 4,000K. He further said there would be less lumen output from each light fixture which meant two to three light fixtures would need to be added to provide the same illumination levels that were proposed in the original photometric plan.
* Revised photometric plan with cuts sheets to include five 30-foot poles with 3,000K fixtures

Mr. Barringer said he was not overly concerned with small gaps in light coverage.

Mr. Wilson recognized the need to balance the costs and benefits of adding light fixtures.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps requested confirmation that the major pedestrian pathways and stairs would be sufficiently illuminated. Mr. Michener said the plan would provide safe lighting for pedestrians.

Ms. Black noted that the existing school is not well lit, and she appreciated the improved lighting that would be installed for the new school. She asked about the lighting to the rear of the new school.

Ms. Bedard observed that the easternmost handicap parking space appeared to be in a dark spot. Mr. Michener said they would take a look and make adjustments, if needed, to provide sufficient light there.

The Planning Board members were in agreement that they could grant the waiver to allow for 30-foot poles and to allow for small pockets of the site to receive less light than specified in the regulations.

Mr. John Sopka, 344 Boston Road, asked if motion sensors were being considered for the lights. Mr. Michener replied that the site lighting would be controlled by automatic timers programmed according to the school’s schedule. Mr. Barringer suggested that lights controlled by motion sensors could be more irritating to the abutting residents.

Mr. Jeffrey Pilat, Project Manager, Samiotes Consultants, noted the following:

* Nitsch Engineering had no opposition to the request for a waiver replace vertical granite curbing with Cape Cod berm which would be along the emergency access road and was a cost-effective option.

The Planning Board members were in agreement that they could grant the waiver for the curbing along the emergency access road.

* Northern parking lot – sidewalk extension, repaving & remarking of the accessible parking spaces.

The Planning Board collectively decided in favor of granting the waiver not to extend the sidewalk, noting that it would require elimination of the existing landscape island with two mature shade trees.

* Existing accessible parking signs at the north parking lot would all be replaced with new ADA-compliant parking signage.
* The “Do not Enter” sign would face west.

Ms. Black asked if there would be water spigots outside of the new building to facilitate watering of plants. Mr. Michener said there would be six or more spigots, including one at the Outdoor Learning Center. Ms. Kellie Connelly, TerraInk, pointed out that there is a one year warranty on all landscaping plant material and a two year warranty on the wetland buffer zone plantings.

Ms. Nilsson Ripps asked if the school staff would be provided with training and/or maintenance manuals to properly care for the landscaping. Ms. Fay Raynor of the School Committee said she would reach out to the Groton Garden Club to gauge their interest in helping to maintain the plantings.

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

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to close the public hearing and to direct Mr. Tada to prepare a draft decision of approval for the next meeting. Ms. Bedard seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Burke, Ms. Bedard, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, 5

 Ms. Black, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED 5 – 0 – 0.**

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

***Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)***

Ms. Karen Chapman, Planning & Development Director, and Ms. Kayla Kress, GIS & IT Analyst, both from the MRPC were present to provide an update.

Ms. Chapman said she had spoken with Ms. Chris Kluchman, Deputy Director, Community Services Division at the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and she indicated that final guidelines from DHCD were expected to be out in June or July. She said DHCD is also working on a tool that would help with the GIS analysis and the unit capacity calculations, as well as model bylaws. She said the action plan and the request for determination of compliance would both be available online.

Ms. Kress addressed the Board and reviewed the preliminary maps for potential multi-family zoning areas. She said one of the requirements of a Multi-Family Zoning District was to have adequate water and wastewater infrastructure so the first thing they looked at was the Sewer Districts and then backed

out privately owned parcels with any restrictions on residential uses and eliminated publicly owned parcels dedicated to public use. She said the multi-family zoning district would have to be at least 50 acres not inclusive of undevelopable land. She said the first area identified includes the former Deluxe Corp properties and other adjacent parcels. Ms. Kress added one of the benefits of choosing the site was because it was next to the Rail Trail. She also noted, however, that the Board should be aware that there were some wetlands and potential vernal pools in the area that would have to be excluded from the land area calculation.

Ms. Kress said the other potential area was around the Four Corners that consisted of approximately 105 acres. She said it included the property owned by National Grid.

Mr. Burke was of the opinion that an overlay district is a more desirable option than an underlying zoning change.

The Board members agreed to wait for DHCD to issue final guidelines and model bylaws, before proceeding any further.

***Discussion – Master Plan Update***

Mr. Tada stated he provided the Board with copies of the RFP that was prepared in 2009/2010 that resulted in the 2011 Master Plan.

***Project Updates***

* Rollstone Bank, 788 Boston Road – Parking Signs

Mr. Tada explained that there was an overall signage permit that the Planning Board had reviewed and approved as part of the review project. He said both Dunkin and Rollstone Bank came back to the Planning Board on multiple occasions for modifications to the sign permit. He further said the bank had requested additional directional signage and a sign on the drive-thru ATM. He said the front entrance of the bank was along the main driveway through the plaza and there were five parking spaces in front of the building that he thought were intended to be for the bank, adding there was one handicapped space on the corner. He said the bank wanted to find a way to discourage Dunkin customers from parking in front of the bank. Mr. Tada said the bank had asked permission to place some signs on the bollards that surround the front parking area that said something to the effect of “parking for Rollstone Bank customers only.”

Mr. Burke asked if the bank was part of a condominium association or a tenant. Mr. Tada replied he did not know but would have a follow-up conversation with a representative of the bank.

Mr. Tada read aloud from a “chat” from Mr. John Stopka, a resident, as follows:

“Can the Master Plan materials could be made available to the public on the website?”

“How about the Rollstone Bank banner advertising summer concerts at the Smith Pavilion?”

***Committee Updates***

* Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Burke said all of the applications were approved at Town Meeting and a “kick-off” meeting had been held with the new project representatives to review protocols and the public procurement process.

* Complete Streets Committee

There were no updates.

***General Business***

* Meeting Minutes of April 28, 2022

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 28, 2022, Planning Board meeting as amended with one grammatical edit. Ms. Nilsson Ripps seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Burke, Ms. Bedard, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, 5

 Ms. Black, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED 5 – 0 – 0.**

* Special Meeting Minutes of April 29, 2022

**MOTION:** Ms. Bedard made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 29, 2022, Special Planning Board meeting as presented. Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Burke, Ms. Bedard, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, 4

 & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED 4 – 0 – 1. (Abstained – Ms. Black)**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* June 9, 2022, & June 23, 2022

***Adjournment***

At approximately 8:48 p.m. Mr. Burke made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Burke, Ms. Bedard, Ms. Nilsson Ripps, 5

 Ms. Black, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED 5 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 6/9/2022*