**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**Thursday, September 22, 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Virtual Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, September 22, 2022, at approximately 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Ms. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Alyson Bedard, Clerk

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

**Board Members not Present:**

Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Vice-Chair

Mr. George Barringer, 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. Burke stated the meeting was virtual and recorded, and all votes must be taken via roll call. Further, the people who were participating in the meeting introduced themselves.

***Public Hearing – Special Permit***

***Adult-Use Recreational Marijuana Retail Establishment (UC Retail, LLC)***

***489 Main Street, Unit A (Assessors’ Parcel 216-1.5)***

Mr. Wilson opened the public hearing.

Mr. Mike Spengler, CEO of United Cultivation LLC and UC Retail LLC, presented the application for a Special Permit to operate an adult-use recreational marijuana retail establishment in Unit A of the former Main Street Bank building in Mill Run Plaza, 489 Main Street.

* The Site Plan Review Permit was issued on 8/4/2022.
* The security plans were reviewed and approved by the Police Chief.
* The floor plan for Unit A includes approximately 2,188 square feet.
* Customer flow through the store will be controlled, beginning with security check-in at the front entrance. There will be no waiting lines outside. Based on their experience with their store in Ashby, they anticipate a maximum volume of 15 customers per hour.

Mr. Spengler mentioned that they would be providing updated site plan information in the next week, per the Site Plan Review Permit.

Ms. Black asked where the employees would enter/exit. Mr. Spengler replied that the employees would use the secured main entrance.

Mr. Bonnett asked for more detail about the parking demand for the store and the availability of shared parking spaces in Mill Run Plaza. Mr. Spengler said there would be a maximum of five employees at a time, and he anticipated a maximum of 15 customers per hour. In comparison, the former Main Street Bank had up to 40 employees in the building. Only two of the parking spaces in Mill Run Plaza are reserved (for the Oral Surgery practice); otherwise, all of the parking spaces are shared.

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

Mr. Chris Petroff, 227 Riverbend Drive, said he has a child with impulse control issues, and having such an establishment close by was concerning to him. Mr. Spengler replied that they were limited as to how they could market and advertise their products.

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

**MOTION:**  Mr. Burke made a motion to continue the public hearing to October 13, 2022. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Bonnett, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Draft Permit for Major Site Plan Review***

***Group Home (Seven Hills Extended Care at Groton, Inc.)***

***West Street & hillside Avenue (Assessors’ Parcel 109-52)***

* Proposed fence along the parking area will be eliminated.

Mr. Tada reviewed the findings and noted the following:

* Four trees, twelve-inch caliper or larger, are proposed to be removed to make way for the group residence and parking/drop-off area. Several other trees will be protected in place.
* The applicant received a Limited Stormwater Management Permit, #2022-06, pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 198.
* The proposed group home and parking area will have a residential look.
* Regarding the stormwater design, there would be a slight increase in the run-off that would be captured by the existing and proposed drainage infrastructure for the site and there would be a slight reduction in the stormwater run-off that is contributed by the project heading in the direction of the Nashua River Rail Trail.
* There should be minimal traffic volume generated by the group home. Pedestrian access within the Seven Hills property will be improved by the proposed walkways.
* There will be no new trash/recycling devices.
* The landscaping plan provides screening from headlights along the southern edge of the parking area.
* This project will not increase the impact of a light intrusion. The group home will utilize full cutoff residential lighting in the parking area and near each egress point of the building.
* The architectural style will resemble a residence, in harmony with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Mr. Tada explained that the applicant had requested three waivers:

1. **Section 218-2.5.G(2)(e)** requires a traffic impact and safety assessment prepared by a traffic engineer. A waiver is requested due to the minimal increase in traffic created by the project. The proposed group home will be for children with disabilities, therefore the additional trips generated would be for pickup/drop-off of residents during the day and visitors of the residents.
2. **Section 218-25.G(2)(h)** requires a photometric lighting plan. The waiver is requested due to the minimal, residential-style lighting proposed. There will be two, 7-foot-tall post lights in the parking area and wall-mounted lights at the entrance/egress locations. Cut sheets of the proposed light fixtures were provided.
3. **Section 218-25.G(2)(m)** requires a physical or digital three-dimensional site model. The proposed group home is a single-story, 5,200-square-foot residential-style building. The applicant provided architectural renderings of the proposed building.

Mr. Tada also explained that the site plan permit included all of the boilerplate conditions for site plan review as well as:

The Board collectively decided to delete the below condition since the fence would no longer be there.

1. ~~The Applicant shall install curb stops in the parking area and/or ensure the proposed fence around the perimeter of the parking area is sufficiently set back from vehicles.~~
2. Snowbanks and stockpiles shall not exceed a height of three (3) feet at any time. Excess snow shall be removed from the site within 72 hours of the conclusion of the storm event.

Mr. Tada reviewed the minutes from the September 8, 2022, Planning Board meeting which included the Public Hearing for a Major Site Plan Review.

Ms. Anne Krajewski, 42 Fairview Avenue, addressed the Board and stated she was in full support of the group home. She asked how long the construction might last. Mr. Wilson replied that he did not know but he would get the information and let her know.

**MOTION:** Ms. Bedard made a motion to approve the Site Plan Permit 2022-17 for the Seven Hills Extended Care facility at Groton, Inc. with the addition of the aforementioned excerpts from the September 8, 2022, Planning Board meeting minutes. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Ms. Black, Ms. Bedard, 4

Mr. Bonnett, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 1. (Abstained – Mr. Burke)**

***Discussion – Groton Hill Music Center***

***Noise Complaints & Other Updates***

***122 Old Ayer Road (Assessors’ Parcel 222-55)***

Mr. Tada explained that he contacted Groton Hill Music about some complaints from abutters about a disruptive noise emanating from the music center. Mr. Gary Shepherd, the Project Manager, indicated that they had their sound engineers on-site and they also asked their HVAC contractor to take a look at the issue. He said the HVAC contractor ordered a “sound-deadening blanket” but there was a five to six-week lead time. He added they had not definitively found out where the noise was coming from, but they would continue to look into it.

***Discussion – Multi-Family Housing for MBTA Communities – Next Steps***

* Action Plan Submittal Deadline: 1/31/2023

The Planning Board agreed to ask the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) for assistance with the submittal.

***Discussion – Master Plan Update***

* Fall Town Meeting Warrant Article for Funding

Mr. Tada stated that the Select Board had held the public hearing on the Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles and the Article pertaining to the final $50,000 of funding for the Master Plan would be Article #8 and would be bundled with the Consent Agenda (Articles 1 – 8).

***Planning Board Reorganization***

The Planning Board reorganization could not be done because the full Board was not present.

***Project Updates***

* Village at Shepley Hill

Mr. Wilson explained that Mr. Tada, Ms. Black, Mr. Burke, and himself had visited the site the previous week and the scale of work and the care with which they were doing it was quite impressive.

Mr. Tada stated that the Board of Health approved the Common Septic System Permit, and they were close to getting the water supply wells approved by the MA Department of Environmental Protection.

Mr. Tada also noted that the development did not include an affordable housing component, but the developer agreed to make a contribution of $150,000 to the Affordable Housing Trust upon completion of all permitting.

* Groton Farms 40B Project, 500 Main Street
  + Project Eligibility/Site Approval Letter from MassHousing

Mr. Tada said the Project Eligibility/Site Approval letter from MassHousing had been issued on September 15, 2022. He said the developer, Mr. John Amaral, indicated that he would submit the Comprehensive Permit application to the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals) in November. He added that the town had submitted an application to the Massachusetts Housing Partnership for technical assistance.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee
  + Survey Work Completed for Sidewalk Projects
* Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Burke noted that there was nothing new to report.

***General Business***

* Meeting Minutes
* August 18, 2022

**MOTION:** Ms. Black made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2022, meeting. Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Ms. Black, Mr. Burke, 4

Mr. Bonnett, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

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

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* October 13, 2022
* October 22, 2022 – Fall Town Meeting
* October 27, 2022

***Adjournment***

At approximately 8:45 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. Black, Ms. Bedard, 5

Mr. Bonnett, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 11/10/2022*