**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**Thursday, December 1, 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

A regular (virtual) meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, December 1, 2022, at approximately 7:15 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Ms. Alyson Bedard, Clerk

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member (Arrived at approximately 7:35 p.m.)

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

**Members not Present:**

Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Vice-Chair

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Mr. Barringer opened the meeting and announced per the Massachusetts Attorney General’s guidance regarding the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and Wiretap Statute that the meeting was being recorded and all votes must be taken via roll call. Mr. Barringer introduced the Planning Board members.

***Public Hearing – Scenic Roads Permit for Removal of Trees***

***16 & 42 Maple Avenue (Parcel 212-20; Lots 1 & 2)***

Mr. Dan Gladu, owner 42 Maple Avenue (Lot 2) presented his application requesting permission to remove six pine trees within the public right-of-way. Mr. Gladu said he would be building a new home on 42 Maple Avenue. He further said that no other trees would be affected within the right-of-way. He added that the trees were either diseased or damaged and were very close to the road and power lines, as shown in the photographs he provided with the application.

Mr. Tom Delaney, Tree Warden, stated that the town had not received any letters of opposition. Mr. Delaney said the applicant would be required to grind the stumps down to ground level.

Mr. Gladu stated that he had already purchased three maple trees to be planted in the approximate area of the existing pine trees. The new trees would be planted 20 to 30 feet away from the road.

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

**MOTION:** Mr. Bonnett made a motion to approve the request for the Scenic Road Permit for the removal of trees at 16 & 42 Maple Avenue. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

Ms. Bedard, & Mr. Delaney

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0. (Inclusive of Tom Delaney’s vote)**

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

***Action Plan Submittal***

Mr. Tada reviewed the Draft Action Plan for MBTA Communities compliance that must be submitted by 1/31/2023, noting he had forwarded the draft to the Planning Board. No action was taken, but Mr. Tada noted he would work with Mr. Jeffrey Legros at the MRPC (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission) to finalize the Action Plan submittal.

***Discussion – Master Plan Update, Draft Request for Proposals (RFP)***

Mr. Bonnett said he had some comments and suggested edits that he would email to Mr. Tada.

Mr. Tada said he would attempt to emphasize walkability and bikeability in the transportation element, as requested by the Board members.

Mr. John Sopka, 344 Boston Road, asked if the proposed RFP addressed the need for meeting the town’s housing development goals, especially with respect to affordable housing. Mr. Barringer replied that housing was a cornerstone of the Master Plan process.

Mr. Sopka also mentioned the importance of agricultural preservation in Groton, and the work of the Destination Groton Committee. Mr. Barringer stated that the Master Plan update would consider Groton’s status as a “Right To Farm” community, and the plan update process would involve a significant amount of public participation including input from the Destination Groton Committee.

***Discussion – Squannacook Greenways Application for FY24 CPA Funding***

Mr. Peter Cunningham asked the Board for its support of the Squannacook Greenways’ application for Community Preservation Act funding to complete the Groton portion of the Squannacook River Rail Trail. The Planning Board reviewed a draft letter of support addressed to Mr. Bruce Easom, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee, dated December 1, 2022.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the letter to the Community Preservation Committee recommending approval of the project. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Bonnett, & Ms. Bedard

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Housing Coordinator Position (application for FY24 CPA Funding)***

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the letter of support recommending approval of funding for the Housing Coordinator position. Ms. Bedard seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Bonnett, & Ms. Bedard

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Lighting Modifications Update***

***Bank of American ATM, 167 Main Street***

To be discussed at a future meeting.

***Planning Board Reorganization***

Mr. Barringer suggested that the Reorganization of the Planning Board should occur annually at the first meeting in October even if only five members were present. He also suggested that it would be a provisional appointment if the sitting Board members appointed a member who was not present at the meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to vote, subject to consent, that Mr. Scott Wilson remain as Chair of the Planning Board until October 2023. Ms. Bedard seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Bonnett, & Ms. Bedard

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to vote, subject to consent, that Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps remain as Vice-Chair of the Planning Board until October 2023. Ms. Bedard seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Bonnett, & Ms. Bedard

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to vote, subject to consent, that Ms. Alyson Bedard remains as Clerk of the Planning Board until October 2023. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

Ms. Bedard voiced her consent into the record.

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

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

Mr. Bonnett, & Ms. Bedard

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Project Updates***

* Village at Shepley Hill
  + Paving of Subdivision Roadways (Binder Course)
* Groton Hill Music Center
  + Completed Main Concert Hall
  + Full Certificate of Occupancy Issued (Temporary)
  + 6/30/23 – Deadline for As-Built Plan
  + 9/30/23 – Final Deadline

Mr. Barringer said the jersey barriers that were located on Peabody Street needed to be removed as it was a safety issue.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Barringer explained that the West Groton sidewalk extension had been flagged. Mr. Tada noted that he would reach out to Nitsch Engineering for a status report.

* Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Burke commented that an out-of-cycle application for the Squannacook River Rail Trail had been accepted.

***General Business***

Ms. Bedard was excused from the meeting at approximately 8:17 p.m.

* Meeting Minutes from October 27, 2022

**MOTION:** Ms. Black made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 27, 2022, meeting, as presented. Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

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

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

& Mr. Bonnett

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

* Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2023

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 10, 2022, meeting, as presented. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

& Mr. Bonnett

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* December 15, 2022
* January 12 & 26, 2023
* February 9 & 23, 2023

***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, Mr. Barringer, Ms. Black, 4

& Mr. Bonnett

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 12/15/2022*