**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**Thursday, June 22, 2023**

**Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, June 22, 2023, at approximately

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Ms. Scott Wilson, Chair

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

Mr. Phil Francisco, Board Member

**Not Present:**

Ms. Alyson Bedard, Clerk

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law and the Wiretap Law, Mr. Wilson stated the virtual meeting was being recorded, and all votes must be taken via roll call. Mr. Wilson also introduced the Planning Board members in attendance.

***Public Hearing – Special Permit and Site Plan Review in the Town Center Overlay District (TCOD) 11 Lowell Road (a.k.a. Waters House) Renovations***

***Groton Lowell Road, LLC.***

* Applications for Special Permit (TCOD) and Major Site Plan Review
* Applicant is John Amaral; also Nicole Kirouac of Maugel Architects, and Greg Roy of Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group.
* Proposal is to renovate the existing Waters House and convert it into six rental units.
* Exterior building modifications have been approved by the Historic Districts Commission (HDC).
* Recommendations provided by the Design Review Committee (DRC).
* Revised site plan per DRC recommendations, 6/22/23.

Mr. Amaral said they were proposing to create six separate apartments; four two-bedroom units, and two one-bedroom units. The size of the apartments would range from approximately 600 to 1,200 square feet. He said they were doing everything they could to maintain historic details. He added that they intended to incorporate the property with the Groton Inn’s operations.

Mr. Amaral said they were requesting special permit approval for both year-round rentals for the six apartments and to also be able to rent out the units for extended stays as part of the Groton Inn. He mentioned that the HDC had already issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed changes to the Waters House. Mr. Amaral also said they had a very productive meeting with the DRC on June 13, 2023, and the proposed site plans have been revised to incorporate all of the DRC’s recommended changes.

Ms. Nicole Kirouac of Maugel Architects addressed the Board and said the exterior building modifications had been approved by the HDC. She said the proposed work is a combination of restoration and renovation of the Waters House. Proposed work on the house includes:

* Remove fire escapes that were not original to the structure.
* Add functional balconies and windows.
* Replace all existing windows with new windows that are functional, safe, and designed to mimic the historic look of the existing windows.
* Add sconce lighting on the building (Dark Sky compliant).
* Retain the existing roof which appears to be in good shape.
* Change the exterior paint color to a light gray.

Ms. Kirouac said they are looking into site lighting for the parking area and walkways, at the recommendation of the DRC.

Mr. Barringer requested that the color temperature of all exterior lighting be 3,000 K or less. Ms. Kirouac said they would adhere to this request and would provide the lighting cut sheets.

Mr. Greg Roy, Vice-President, of Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group, presented the updated site plan which was revised per the DRC’s recommendations. Revisions include:

* Reduce the driveway width to 24 feet.
* Eliminate two parking spaces nearest Lowell Road to accommodate a future sidewalk extension (Complete Streets project).
* Add wheel stops in the parking spaces.
* Provide a walkway from the Waters House to the Groton Inn property.
* Add a concrete pad on the north side of the building for HVAC condensers (electric).

Mr. Roy noted that the proposed site alterations do not require any stormwater modifications.

Mr. Burke asked if there were any plans to renovate the barn located behind the Waters House. Mr. Amaral responded that they are working on plans for the barn, and they will submit a separate application in the future.

Mr. Bonnett asked if there were sprinklers in the Waters House, and if there would be any accessible units. Ms. Kirouac said they would be upgrading the existing sprinklers to meet the latest fire safety code. Mr. Amaral explained that the total number of proposed units (6) is below the threshold for providing accessible units, per state building code.

Mr. Bonnett also asked about snow storage areas and he requested that the site plans be revised to show contour line elevations (labels). Mr. Roy said the area around the barn provides sufficient snow storage.

Ms. Black summarized the DRC review process and explained the recommendations which have been incorporated into the revised site plan.

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

Mr. Patrick Parker-Roach, 113 Main Street, addressed the Board and said he had confidence in the applicant and had no issues or reservations about the proposed project.

Mr. Amaral commented that he was hopeful the Planning Board could take a vote to approve their request.

Mr. Wilson asked members of the Board if were comfortable enough with the information provided to take a vote at the current time.

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

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

Yea: Mr. Barringer, Mr. Burke, Mr. Bonnett, 6

Ms. Black, Mr. Francisco, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.

MOTION: Ms. Black made a motion to approve the Special Permit under the Town Center Overlay District for 11 Lowell Road (Waters House Renovation) subject to the following conditions. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

1. Incorporate all recommendations of the Design Review Committee
2. Provide a revised site plan showing the following:
   1. Existing and proposed contour elevations
   2. Grading for the walkways
   3. Driveway width of 24 feet maintained along the entire length of the driveway
   4. Detail on the corner rounding at Lowell Road
   5. Site lighting
3. Provide a lighting plan and specifications subject to Planning Board approval.
4. The Fire Department shall verify all fire safety improvements and emergency access.

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

Yea: Mr. Barringer, Mr. Burke, Mr. Bonnett, 6

Ms. Black, Mr. Francisco, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.

MOTION: Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the Major Site Plan Review for the property located at 11 Lowell Road, subject to the same conditions listed in the above approval for the Special Permit. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Barringer, Mr. Burke, Mr. Bonnett, 6

Ms. Black, Mr. Francisco, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.

**Recorder’s Note: At approximately 8:06 p.m. Mr. Barringer was excused from the meeting.**

***Public Hearing (Continuation) – Preliminary Subdivision Plan***

***63 Gratuity Road, Assessor’s Parcel 216-47***

***Routhier & Roper Gratuity Road, LLC.***

* The applicant submitted a request to continue the hearing to July 13th.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burkemade a motion to continue the public hearing, date specific, to the July 13, 2023, Planning Board meeting. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Francisco, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Covenant for Hayes Woods Lane Subdivision***

* Request to Accept the Covenant and Endorse the Definitive Subdivision Plans
* Covenant has been Vetted by Town Counsel
* Definitive Subdivision Plans (Mylar) in Town Hall for Signature
* Requested a New Copy of Sheet C6.0 due to missing labels.

**MOTION:**Mr. Burke made a motion to accept the Covenant for the Hayes Woods subdivision and upon its execution and recording, the applicant is to be provided with endorsed plans. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Francisco, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Master Plan Update – Community Engagement Plan***

***Barrett Planning Group***

* Mr. Tada reviewed the draft engagement plan schedule from Judi Barrett.

Ms. Leslie Lathrop, a resident, read aloud the following statement into the record, as summarized below:

“The Four Corners neighborhood would like to be treated as a village in the upcoming Master Plan. Over the years, our neighborhood has had much voice put upon us without the same consideration that historic villages had been afforded. Past Master Plans have had working groups that specifically included works from the historic villages but not what the Master Plan would call an emerging village, which was Four Corners. This section of the town contributed heavily on a financial basis, yet we have almost no town services.”

Mr. Wilson replied that the Planning Board would take it under advisement.

Ms. Alice Smith, a resident, addressed the Board and said she appreciated the Board’s consideration of becoming collaborative partners with the residents of Four Corners Association.

Mr. Bruce Johnson, a resident, addressed the Board and said he agreed with the two previous comments.

***Reorganization & Appointments***

To be addressed when there was a full complement of the Board in attendance.

* Mr. Burke volunteered to remain as the Planning Board’s representative to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission.
* Design Review Committee – Ms. Black volunteered to remain a member of that committee. Mr. Tada said he would reach out to the other member(s) of the committee to see if they wanted to remain members of the Design Review Committee.

***Project Updates***

* **Academy Hill**
  + Received paving inspection reports from Nitsch Engineering.
* **Monarch Path**
  + There was nothing new to report.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee

There were no updates to share.

* Community Preservation Committee

There were no updates to share.

***General Business***

* ZBA Updates
  + Next hearing for Groton Farms & Heritage Landing on June 28th.
* Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2023

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2023, meeting, as presented. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

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

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

& Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 1 – 0. (Abstained – Mr. Francisco)**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* July 13th
* July 27th

***Adjournment***

At approximately 9:06 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. Francisco, Ms. Black 5

Mr. Bonnett, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 8/24/2023*