**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**Thursday, November 9, 2023**

**Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, November 9, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Lorayne Black, Vice Chair

Mr. Phil Francisco, Clerk

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member (Joined the meeting at approximately 7:12 p.m.)

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Ms. Alyson Bedard, 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 and the Open Meeting Law, Mr. Wilson stated that the meeting was virtual and recorded, and all votes must be taken via roll call. Further, he introduced the Planning Board members in attendance.

***Discussion – Request for Release of Performance Bond***

***Hummingbird Lane, Rocky Hill Subdivision***

Mr. Tada said Attorney Bob Collins had requested the bond release for Hummingbird Lane on behalf of the developer, Dave Moulton.

* Mr. Tada reviewed the letter and field report from Nitsch Engineering on 11/8/23, which indicated five punch-list items that needed to be completed prior to the project being deemed in compliance.

1. Install Catch Basin (CB) 5.
2. Install Leaching Catch Basin. (Southwest of Unit 22)
3. Confirm Drainage Structures have been Cleaned out.
4. Complete Survey Monumentation of Boundary Lines.
5. Correct CPP Pipe Sizes on As-Built Plan.

Mr. Tada explained that he forwarded the punch-list to the developer through Attorney Collins.

Mr. Burke suggested that they postpone any action regarding the request and advise the applicant to notify the Board as to how they planned to address the concerns, noting they may be able to provide a partial release. Mr. Tada stated that he would relay the Planning Board’s comments to Attorney Collins.

***Discussion – Master Plan Update***

***Lauren Lind, Barrett Planning Group***

Mr. Wilson explained that Ms. Lind would not be able to join the meeting as she was ill, but noted the item would be placed on a future agenda.

***Discussion – Townwide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory***

***Charlotte Weigel, Sustainability Commission***

Mr. Francisco, member of the Sustainability Commission, explained that in the late fall of the previous year, they began undertaking a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions inventory, which was one of the first steps to take if a community wants to measure or know if it is reaching the targets that the Commonwealth had set to get to net zero by 2050. He added that the GHG Emissions Inventory sets a baseline, and they presented it to the Select Board approximately two months ago. The Select Board suggested that the Sustainability Commission have the same discussion with other boards.

Ms. Charlotte Weigel, Vice-Chair of the Sustainability Commission, shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Board as summarized below: (GHG – Greenhouse Gas)

* A townwide GHG inventory measures major emissions from activities attributed to a specified geographic area in a specified year. The area is Groton, and the year was 2018.
* Why measure townwide GHG emissions?
  + Informs assistance with residential and commercial emissions reductions.
  + Reveals individual actions that collectively have the greatest impact.
  + Helps prioritize municipal emission reductions.
  + Inventories differ town-to-town.
* What are the benefits of reducing community GHG emissions?
* Aligns town with Massachusetts law requiring net zero emissions by 20501
* Reduced operational costs – residential, commercial, and municipal.
* Improved community resiliency.
* Mitigates climate change and its downstream impacts.
* Public health benefits.
* Promotes local green job growth

Ms. Weigel explained the specific method that they used was a community greenhouse gas inventory tool that the Metropolitan Area Planning Counsel developed. (MAPC)2 She said the greenhouse gases being measured were carbon dioxide (CO2), Methane (CH4), and Nitrous oxide (N2O). She also said it included municipal, residential, commercial, industrial, and manufacturing activities.

Ms. Weigel pointed out that refrigerants and other industrial GHGs, indirect emissions, and emissions from agriculture and forestry were not included.

Town-wide GHG Inventory Results:

Total town-wide emissions in 2019: 139,450 metric tons CO2 equivalents.

Municipal: ~3K MT CO2e\* = 2.3%

Community: ~136K MT CO2e = 97.7%

What is the significance of 139K MT CO2e?

16 million gallons of gasoline consumed OR 169K acres of US forest sequestering carbon4

Ms. Weigel noted that there were signs of progress, noting the following:

1. The number of energy efficiency incentives (primarily air-sourced heat pumps) had increased year – over – year.
2. The number of hybrid and electric vehicles in Groton increased at a rate higher than the state from 2020 – 20237
3. > 1/3 of town land is open space contributing to carbon sequestration\* – protected acreage continues to increase.
4. Food waste composting contributed to a decrease in trash waste disposal from 2019-2021.

Ms. Weigel said the next steps included:

1. Present inventory to stakeholder groups in town: Select Board, Planning Board, Capital Planning, Community, GELD, GDRHS Environmental Club, GDRSD School Committee, Groton School, Lawrence Academy.
   * Solicit ongoing feedback on concerns and where groups see win-win opportunities for decarbonization and cost savings
2. Near-term follow-up meeting to discuss the next steps, which may include:
   * Steps to town-wide decarbonization planning
   * Overview of municipal climate action plans
   * Grant opportunities

Mr. Francisco stated that there was room for improvement on the residential building side as Groton was as much as 15% to 20% higher than their neighboring towns in terms of residential building emissions. He said Groton was also higher than Westford on the commercial/industrial side, which was surprising.

Ms. Weigel said that approximately 23,000 metric tons (2/3 of the commercial emissions) came from one entity, Hollingsworth & Vose (H & V) in West Groton, which has its own power plant.

Ms. Weigel said she would work with the IT Department to make the presentation available on the Town’s website.

***Project Updates***

* Academy Hill

Mr. Tada explained that the roads had been accepted at Fall Town Meeting, and the Town had to go through the legal process of taking the roads. He added that there were still a few items that were unrelated to the roadway infrastructure, which included some requirements for the Conservation Commission and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regarding the endangered species permit. Mr. Tada said the Town was holding money in a tripartite agreement.

* Groton Hill Music Center
* Village at Shepley Hill

There were no new updates to share.

* 240 Main Street, Kilbourn Place
  + Noise Mitigation

Mr. Tada explained that there had been some ongoing complaints about the noise from the HVAC units on the roof of the building. He said that the landowner, Gus Widmayer, had been in touch with the neighbors and the HVAC company in an attempt to mitigate the issue.

* + Landscaping Update

Ms. Black reviewed the site plan with proposed landscaping for 240 Main Street. She noted that she had recently visited the site and was not sure if the planted trees were the size as indicated in the approved site plan. She suggested that they wait and see how the plantings fared during the winter months.

Ms. Bedard suggested that the Planning Board send a letter of expectation to the owner regarding the landscaping. Ms. Black replied she would draft a letter from the Board.

* Bank of America ATM, 167 Main Street

There were no new updates to share.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Barringer shared that a meeting had been held on November 6th and noted that the committee had received a letter from a resident on Boston Road who suggested improvements for pedestrians along the road, in particular, crosswalks. Mr. Barringer pointed out that the road and sidewalks were under state control.

Mr. Tada added that the Complete Streets Committee members committed to taking another look at the Complete Streets prioritization plan.

* Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Tada said that a meeting had been held on October 30th to review preliminary proposals for FY25 CPA funding.

* Conductorlab Oversight Committee

Mr. Tada stated that the Town had received financial assistance from Honeywell for the purpose of hiring a peer review consultant that would work with the Conductorlab Oversight Committee to review the draft Permanent Solution Statement (PSS) report prepared by Honeywell’s environmental remediation consultant.

* Firearm Sale Regulation Study Committee

Mr. Wilson stated that Police Chief Mike Luth had been added to the committee roster.

***General Business***

* ZBA Updates
  + Groton Farms 40B – Comprehensive Permit approval with conditions had been filed with the Town Clerk on November 6th.
  + Heritage Landing 40B – The last public hearing was held on November 8th, and the next hearing would be held on November 29th with an anticipated discussion on the traffic impact study.

Ms. Bedard stated that there was a lot of discussion by the residents regarding the traffic impact and the general neighborhood impacts of the Heritage Landing project.

* Meeting Minutes
* September 28, 2023

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringermade a motion to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2023, meeting with a grammatical amendment. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

Ms. Bedard, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* November 30, 2023
* December 14, 2023
* January 11, 2024
* January 25, 2024

***Adjournment***

At approximately 8:43 p.m. Mr. Barringer made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bedard seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Francisco, and Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 12/14/2023*