**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**February 8, 2024**

**Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, February 8, 2024, 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

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

**Members Not Present:**

Ms. Alyson Bedard, 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 that 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.

***Discussion – Florence Roche Elementary School Phasing Plan for Project Completion***

Mr. David Saindon, Project Executive with LeftField, who was the Owner’s Project Manager for the above project, was present to speak on behalf of the project. He said Ms. Eileena Long joined him, Senior Project Manager from LeftField; Mr. Tripp McElroy, Project Executive from Gilbaine; the contractor, Mr. Jonathan May, Project Manager from Gilbaine; Mr. Steve Michener, Senior Associate, Studio G Architects; and Ms. Marylee Mercy, Associate, Studio G Architects. He said that Mr. Jeff Pilat, Civil Engineer from Samiotes Consulting, and Mr. Mark Haddad, Town Manager were also present.

Mr. Saindon reviewed the project as summarized below:

* The Planning Board had issued two Major Site Plan approvals in 2022:
  + Phase 1 – Approval of the New Track & Site Preparation for the New School
  + Phase 2 – Approval for Construction of the New School, demolition of the Existing School, and the Final Sitework.
    - Phase 2 (A)– The new facility is to be turned over to the school district for occupancy in August of 2024.
    - Phase 2 (B) – The abatement, demolition, parking lots, and site restoration. Anticipated to be done in the 2024 calendar year.

Mr. Saindon explained that Phase 2 (B) was scheduled to begin on June 17th, which was when the existing Florence Roche Elementary School would be turned over to Gilbaine for demolition. He said teachers would be allowed to return to the new facility during the week of August 5th, and the first day of school was on August 28th.

Mr. Saindon said final inspections would be done during the week of July 29th.

* Occupancy Permit for the New School will be Required Prior to Demolition of the Old School and Final Sitework Completion.
* Condition #22 of the Approval Decisions Requires the Submittal of an As-Built Plan and Engineer’s Certification prior to the Issuance of a Permanent Occupancy Permit.

Mr. Bonnett asked how much asbestos was on the site and how they would make sure it was secure. It was explained that the abatement and demo contractor was responsible and that the areas would be fully contained. It was further explained that they would try to take advantage of the empty campus to the fullest extent possible.

Mr. Haddad noted for the record that he wanted it to be clear that the process moving forward was that the building would be completed, the students would be moved into the building, have temporary occupancy of the building, and then complete the rest of the phase of the construction area and then come back to the Planning Board for a final sign-off. Mr. Wilson, on behalf of the Planning Board, replied they were clear on the process.

***Discussion – Minor Site Plan Review Application (added 2/5/2024)***

***195C Main Street, Proposed Craft Brewery and Taproom***

***Request for Parking Waiver***

Mr. Ed Shaffer and Mr. Nirmal Mallavarapu, the applicants, were present.

Mr. Shaffer explained that they had a provisional lease on the property they wanted to use. He said the proposed hours would be Tuesday and Wednesday from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

* The Application was referred to the Planning Board by the Land Use Director and the Building Commissioner due to the lack of Off-Street Parking on the premises. Only the Planning Board may waive the parking requirements of the Zoning Bylaw.

Mr. Tada explained that the applicant was requesting a 30% reduction in the parking space requirement based on competing uses with Bruno’s Pizza and Wink Beauty & Hair Studio. He noted that if the 30% reduction were granted, they would only be required to have eight parking spaces.

Mr. Francisco stated that although he felt the actual business idea was a good one, he was troubled about the negative traffic safety impacts it could cause.

Mr. Bonnett requested that the Town try to elaborate on a better plan for parking in general in the Town Center.

Mr. Francisco stated that he would like to know the opinion of the Police Chief as it pertained to parking and traffic safety.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to table the discussion until the next Planning Board meeting, date specific to February 22, 2024, and to obtain the opinion of the Police Chief, as noted above. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Ms. Black, Mr. Barringer, Mr. Francisco, 6

Mr. Bonnett, Mr. Burke & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Hayes Woods Lane***

***Construction Monitoring Update***

* Paving Date was 11/20/2023
* Temperatures on 11/30/2023, according to NWS (High/Low:)
  + Fitchburg: 47/24º
  + Worcester: 45/26º
  + Lowell: 36/22º
  + Hanscom: 47/20º
* Nitsch Engineering Comments on Testing Results – 1/29/2024

Mr. Tada stated that Mr. Jared Gentilucci from Nitsch Engineering said the overall testing results were good. Mr. Gentilucci also suggested that they review the asphalt binder course on future site visits but would be surprised if there were any issues given the minimal expected traffic volume.

Mr. Burke verified via an online weather data resource (Weather Underground) that the temperatures on the paving date were within the required range.

Mr. Bonnett asked about the road sampling locations.

Frank McPartlan, engineer with Dillis and Roy (developer’s engineer) confirmed that Yankee Engineering & Testing took core samples at two locations which were 350 feet apart, at the beginning and the end of the pavement section that was constructed 11/30/2023. The testing company also collected four nuclear densometer gauge readings at different depths (two each in the subgrade layer and the binder course layer).

The Planning Board collectively agreed that the update was sufficient.

***Discussion – Master Plan Update***

Mr. Wilson stated that the second community forum sessions for the Master Plan Update were held on February 6th. The third, and final, community forum sessions would be held in the springtime.

Mr. Tada stated that he would post the second survey online the following day. He also said that he received a draft inventory and assessment from the Barrett Group, and comments from the Planning Board were requested.

**Recorder’s Note:** Mr. Burke was excused from the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

***Project Updates***

* Groton Hill Music Center
  + There were no updates to share.
* Village at Shepley Hill
  + Slope Restoration Report from Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group Received on 2/2/24 – Post Construction
* 240 Main Street, Kilbourn Place
  + Noise complaint referred to the Board of Health Agent

Mr. Tada said one of the residents who had submitted a noise complaint had the opportunity to meet with the Board of Health, and he said he would keep the Board up to date. He said the Health Agent had informed him that noise complaints typically take a long time to investigate.

* + Permanent Sign Installed – To be confirmed.
* Bank of America ATM, 167 Main Street
  + Lighting Measurements by George Barringer

Mr. Barringer stated that he had visited the site recently and took measurements with a light meter. He noted it was a clear night, and for the most part, the lighting was much better and would meet the Planning Board’s regulations.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee

There were no updates to share.

* Community Preservation Committee
* Final Applications are due on 2/22/24
* Conductorlab Oversight Committee

Mr. Tada stated that the Conductorlab Oversight Committee had held a meeting on January 29, 2024, and they would hold another meeting in the near future where they would approve the first invoice from the Town’s peer review consultant. He added that the peer review was ongoing and that he would keep the Board updated.

* Firearm Sale Regulation Study Committee

Mr. Tada said the committee had met twice and noted that the initial goal of the committee was to produce potential recommendations for zoning amendment(s) for the Spring Town Meeting. He said the committee discussed and had decided they would not have enough time to bring forward a zoning amendment for the Spring Town Meeting. He said they would have needed to submit a placeholder warrant article this week in order to get it on the Warrant, and they were not at a point where they could do that, but perhaps it could be addressed at the Fall Town Meeting.

***General Business***

* ZBA Updates
  + Heritage Landing 40B – A Public Hearing was held on 2/7/24, where they discussed traffic study and peer review comments.
  + Existing Problems with Traffic and Safety even without the Proposed Project. Traffic Study Complete and Developers Comments Received.
  + The next Public Hearing is Scheduled for 3/6/24

Mr. Bonnett raised the question as to whether the developer could pay for a portion of the traffic mitigation.

* Meeting Minutes
* January 11, 2024

**MOTION:** Mr. Bonnettmade a motion to approve the minutes from the January 11, 2024, meeting with a minor grammatical amendment. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Bonnett, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* February 22nd
* March 14th
* **March 28th – In-Person Meeting at Town Hall**
* March 26th – Spring Town Meeting

***Adjournment***

At approximately 9:16 p.m. Mr. Francisco made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Bonnett, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 3/14/2024*