**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**July 25, 2024**

**Meeting Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, July 25, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Lorayne Black, Vice-Chair

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

Mr. Paul Hathaway, Board Member

**Members Not Present:**

Mr. Phil Francisco, Board Member

**Participating via Zoom**

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Mr. Wilson said that as Mr. Barringer was participating remotely, all votes would be taken via a roll call vote. Mr. Wilson also stated the public hearing notices would not be read into the record, but they were available at the Land Use Office in the Town Hall.

***Public Hearing – Modification of the Definitive Plan for Monarch Path Subdivision***

Mr. Alan Roscoe, Engineer from TFMoran Inc., was present to speak on behalf of the applicant, Ebrahim Masalehdan. He said the subdivision was initially approved in 2007 and was substantially completed, but the applicant needed to provide documentation that the stormwater management devices and structures that had been built were adequate. The As-Built Plan prepared in 2023 showed some deviations from the original approved plans, including the elimination of Detention Basin #5 at the end of the cul-de-sac road.

Mr. Roscoe said they updated their stormwater drainage analysis without Detention Pond #5 and found out that they were able to get a “zero net increase in flow” and still met all of the Massachusetts Stormwater criteria, with just a few minor adjustments to the existing system. He said they were also proposing to eliminate the drainage easements associated with Detention Pond #5.

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

Ms. Valerie Spencer, 21 Old Carriage Path, stated that Detention Basin #3 was “kind of” in her backyard. She said they had been dealing with water issues since even before she owned the property. She did not feel the plan should be modified as it may make the water issues worse.

Ms. Martha Robillard, 17 Old Carriage Path, said they lived through the 100-year flood event in 2010, during which her house became an island.

Mr. Tom Delaney, DPW Director, stated that everything seemed to be operating as it should, and he had not seen any large areas of water collecting in any of the detention basins.

Mr. Burke asked Mr. Delaney if the roads within the subdivision had been accepted yet. Mr. Delaney replied they were waiting to see how the proposed modification was approved.

Mr. Wilson stated the following documents would be on record as being presented at the public hearing:

* Revised Plans & Stormwater Drains Report
* Accounting for the Unbuilt Detention Basin at the end of the Cul-de-Sac.
* First Review Letter from Nitsch Engineering dated 7/22/24.
* Response to Comments from TF Morgan with additional Revisions to Plants & Drains Report dated 7/23/24.
* Second Review Letter from Nitsch Engineering dated 7/25/24

Mr. Tada stated that he had received the most recent letter from Nitsch Engineering at 5:30 p.m. that same day. He said the letter addressed the three comments from the original letter that TF Moran had responded to. He further said Nitsch Engineering’s letter included a recommendation that stated they were comfortable with the stormwater management system as designed, it complied with regulations, and they had no objections to the Planning Board approving the modifications.

**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. Burke, Mr. Barringer, Mr. Bonnett, 6

Ms. Black, Mr. Hathaway, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 6– 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the requested modification to the Definitive Plan for Monarch Path based on the recommendation of Nitsch Engineering, dated 7/25/24. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

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

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

Ms. Black, Mr. Hathaway, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 6– 0 – 0.**

***Public Hearing (Continuation)***

***Preliminary Subdivision Plan and Special Permit for Flexible Development “Casella Acres,”***

***Wyman Road, Assessors’ Parcel 229-58***

Mr. Tada explained that he had received a letter from the applicant requesting a continuance.

**MOTION:** Ms. Black made a motion to accept the request to continue the hearing for Casella Acres Preliminary Subdivision Plan to August 22, 2024 and to accept the withdrawal without prejudice of the application for a Special Permit for Flexible Development. Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

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

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

Ms. Black, Mr. Hathaway, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 6– 0 – 0.**

***Public Hearing (Continuation)***

***Proposed Zoning Amendment for Firearms Retail Establishments***

Mr. Wilson explained that the Planning Board was waiting for preliminary comments to come from the Attorney General’s Office.

**MOTION:** Ms. Black made a motion to continue the public hearing to the next meeting on August 22, 2024, meeting. Mr. Hathaway seconded the motion.

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

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

Ms. Black, Mr. Hathaway, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 6– 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Master Plan Update***

Ms. Jill Slankas, Principal Planner, Barrett Planning Group, addressed the Board and said she wanted

to review the status of the draft Implementation Plan, which included the goals and actions that were being developed. She also said they were working on a draft GIS StoryMap.

Ms. Fiona Gain, Barrett Planning Group, reviewed the GIS StoryMap. She asked the Board to think about how much information they felt should be in each element.

Mr. Burke suggested that including a name in the GIS StoryMap survey responses should be optional. He also suggested including a legend with the maps.

Ms. Black suggested including photographs.

Ms. Slankas said she would incorporate the suggested changes and suggestions and would come back to the next meeting for final approval of the GIS Story Map and a one-page flyer with a QR code to be available on election day.

***Discussion – Potential Committee to Oversee the Extension of the Squannacook Rail Trail in West Groton – Bruce Easom (added on 7/23/24)***

Mr. Bruce Easom, Mr. Paul Funch, and Mr. John Strauss were present for the discussion.

Mr. Easom explained that they were interested in extending the Squannacook Rail Trail in West Groton from the existing terminus in Bertozzi Conservation Area to Cutler Field. He said they were going to go to the Select Board and request that they create a town committee that could work to accomplish the extension. He said prior to that, they wanted to get feedback from other committees and boards. He also clarified that the Squannacook Greenways non-profit group, which worked to establish the existing sections of the rail trail, would continue its work to extend the trail in Townsend.

Mr. Bonnett asked what the proposed trail would be made of and how long it would be. Mr. Funch replied that it would be made from crushed rock (like the existing trail surface) and would be approximately 1.8 miles long.

Mr. Easom said construction costs would have to be further discussed.

The Planning Board collectively expressed their support for the proposed trail extension.

***Discussion – Pre-submission Review, 9 West Main Street, Assessors’ Parcel 101-15, S. Patel (added on 7/24/24)***

Mr. Sachin Patel addressed the Planning Board and said he was interested in opening a liquor store at 9 West Main Street. He asked the Planning Board if they had any guidance for him.

Mr. Burke replied that the licensing for such a store would come from the Select Board and that the Planning Board’s role was more concerned with site plan issues such as parking and circulation.

Ms. Black echoed the concern about parking and said it is unsafe to park on the road.

Mr. Barringer mentioned some of the history of the parcel, and he pointed out that the parking lot across Townsend Road is owned by the Town (Carol Wheeler Memorial Park). Mr. Patel said he would be meeting with the Park Commission about getting permission to use the Town lot.

Mr. Hathaway said the use of the property is important because it is located at the entrance to Groton from the Shirley side.

Mr. Patel and the board discussed the limitations of the existing septic system. It would help to know the precise locations of the septic tank and leaching field.

***Project Updates***

* Groton Hill Music Center – There were no new updates.
* Hayes Woods Lane – Release of Covenant document needs to be notarized. Mr. Burke will stop by Town Hall to have it notarized.
* Village at Shepley Hill – Mr. Burke suggested that Mr. Tada contact the developer regarding maintenance of the sedimentation controls.
* 240 Main Street, Kilbourn Place – There were no new updates.
* 40B Projects
  + 500 Main Street – Demolition had begun.
  + Heritage Landing – The appeals period has expired. No appeals were filed.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee – Construction on the sidewalk project to start the following week.
* Community Preservation Committee – The state match would be a little bit less than anticipated because of the dwindling Registry of Deeds revenue.
* Also CPC – The Town Manager requested a modification to the baseball diamond project. He asked for approval to see if part of the funding could be spent on a complete set of specs.
* Conductorlab Oversight Committee – There were no new updates.

***General Business***

Ms. Black commented that there was a section of new paving on Farmers Row, from Peabody Street going north towards Pleasant Street, where the curbing along the existing sidewalk was eliminated by the new paving. She felt it was a very dangerous situation for pedestrians to have the sidewalks flush with the road surface with no lines or separation to keep vehicles off.

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* August 22, 2024 (via Zoom)
* September 12, 2024 (via Zoom)
* September 26, 2024 (via Zoom)

***Adjournment***

At approximately 9:16 p.m. Mr. Burke made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hathaway seconded the motion.

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

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

Ms. Black, Mr. Hathaway, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 6– 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 9/26/2024*