**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**November 14, 2024**

**Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room**

**Meeting Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Phil Francisco, Clerk

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

Mr. Russ Burke, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

Mr. Paul Hathaway, Board Member

**Participating via Zoom:** Ms. Lorayne Black, Vice-Chair

**Not Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair (Excused)

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Mr. Burke chaired the meeting in Mr. Wilson’s absence. He noted that as Ms. Black was participating via telephone, all votes would be taken by a roll call vote.

***Discussion – Master Plan Update***

* The Final Draft Report had been posted on the town’s website for public review.
* Comment period to close on 12/9/2024.
* Special meeting to be held on 11/19/2024 (via Zoom) to present the Final Draft.

***Public Hearing – Site Plan Review, Gray Building Renovations, Lawrence Academy, Assessors’ Parcel 116-10***

Attorney Bob Collins was present to speak on behalf of the application. He reviewed the following:

* The proposal was to renovate the Fred C. Gray Building, including the removal of the existing dining hall wing.
* Flansburgh Architects prepared the Site Plans - 9/17/2024.
* RFS Engineering prepared the Stormwater Report - 9/20/2024.
* The Stormwater Management Permit was issued on 10/29/2024.
* Lighting would be Dark Sky compliant.

Ms. Black pointed out that the walkway between Spaulding Hall and the Gray Building would be adjacent to the proposed loading area for the dining hall. She asked if they could add vegetative screening around the loading area.

Mr. Collins said he would ask Lawrence Academy about adding screening to the loading area.

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

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to continue the public hearing to the next Planning Board meeting on December 5, 2024. Mr. Bonnett seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Francisco, and Mr. Barringer

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Public Hearing Continuation – Preliminary Subdivision Plan – “Casella Acres,” Wyman Road, Assessors’ Parcel 229-58 (J. Casella)***

* Revised plans from Dillis & Roy – 10/24/2024
  + Conventional Yield Plan with driveways.
  + Flexible Development Plan
* Letter from Dills & Roy responding to Peer Review comments.
* Follow-up letter from Nitsch Engineering

Mr. Burke stated that he still had an issue with the Conventional Yield Plan because lot 4 did not have the appropriate frontage. He said the frontage shown on the plan is illusory because the rare species habitat area will preclude the construction of a driveway.

Mr. Francisco and Mr. Barringer expressed concern about the configuration of the roadway and driveways on the Flexible Development Plan. Mr. Francisco asked if the locations of the cul-de-sac and driveways could be adjusted.

Mr. Collins said adjusting the roadway and driveways might affect the septic setbacks.

Attorney Collins reviewed the follow-up letter received from Nitsch Engineering. He said he would ask the applicant if he was amenable to moving the driveway approximately 20 feet to mitigate the frontage concern.

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

Mr. Joseph Pagliarulo, an abutter, addressed the Board and said he had some concerns about possible run-off going onto his property. Mr. Barringer replied that the applicant would not be allowed to build something that caused run-off onto other properties or the public way.

Ms. Lisa teDuits, 64 Wyman Road, addressed the Board and said she had some concerns about the placement of the proposed septic system as her well was close to it. Attorney Collins replied that if the applicant applied for a septic plan, they would have to locate the abutters’ wells and septic systems in order to meet the offsets.

Mr. Scott Adams, an abutter, addressed the Board and said he was concerned that the addition of six homes would impede the current owners from getting water from their wells. Mr. Burke replied that it was a matter that was within the Board of Health’s purview.

Attorney Collins stated that he would contact Natural Heritage to see if he could obtain permission to place the driveway on lot 4 by going through the frontage or gerrymandering lot lines.

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to continue the public hearing to the next Planning Board meeting on December 5, 2024. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, Mr. Burke 6

Mr. Francisco, Mr. Hathaway, and Mr. Barringer

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Rocky Hill Affordable Housing***

Attorney Bob Collins was present to speak on behalf of Dave Moulton, the developer of Rocky Hill Subdivision, about a conceptual proposal involving affordable housing. He asked if the Board thought it would be reasonable to build two or three additional duplexes on Sandy Pond Road that would be affordable housing. The new housing units would be located on a parcel that was originally set aside for a septic system for Rocky Hill. However, the homes on Hummingbird Lane and Oriole Drive were incorporated in the Four Corners Sewer District as part of the Town’s MassWorks grant several years ago. Therefore, the need for the septic system has gone away and the parcel is available for an alternate use.

Mr. Collins suggested that this potential project could be combined with a parcel of land on Townsend Road in West Groton (part of the Brooks Lyman estate) which is a beautiful setting. He previously met with the Affordable Housing Trust about the potential for this project to be age-restricted, with 50% of the units being affordable.

Mr. Burke said the proposed concept would help to address the “missing middle” housing need, but he would prefer the affordable units to be spread out and intermixed with the market-rate units.

The Planning Board collectively felt it was a good idea to obtain additional information.

***Public Hearing (continuation) – Definitive Subdivision Plan and Special Permit for Major Residential Development, “Gratuity Brook Farm Estates,” 63 Gratuity Road, Assessors’ Parcel 216-47 (Routhier & Roper Gratuity Road, LLC)***

The applicant submitted a request to continue the public hearing to the next Planning Board meeting on December 5, 2025.

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to continue the public hearing to December 5, 2024. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, Mr. Burke 6

Mr. Francisco, Mr. Hathaway, and Mr. Barringer

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.**

***Project Updates***

* Groton Hill Music Center
  + Use of emergency exit for Groton Road Race

Mr. Bonnett said the Squannacook River Runners are requesting permission to utilize the emergency exit at Groton Hill Music Center for the annual Groton Road Race in May, as they did last time. The Board collectively agreed to authorize the use of the emergency exit for the Groton Road Race by a consensus vote.

* + The demolition permit for the adjacent property, the Prescott House, had been issued. He said they would salvage all materials that they could.
  + Mr. Barringer commented that the lighting was still not adequately controlled.
* Village at Shepley Hill – There were no updates.
* Kilbourn Place, 240 Main Street
  + Mr. Barringer shared his findings regarding the lighting.
* Village Meadows (Bluebird Lane)
  + Mr. Tada stated that a pre-paving site visit had occurred on 10/30/24.
* Groton Farms, 500 Main Street
  + The water line was near completion.
* Monarch Path - There were no updates.

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee
* Construction of sidewalks on West Main Street and Lowell Road was nearing completion.
* Community Preservation Committee
  + Mr. Burke stated that the committee had received approximately 18 preliminary applications. He added that the total amount of the requests superseded what they had available in funding by a few million dollars.
  + Mr. Tada noted that a public hearing would be held on Monday, November 18, 2024.

**Recorder’s Note:** At approximately 8:21 p.m. Mr. Burke was excused from the meeting, and

Mr. Barringer assumed the role of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

* Conductorlab Oversight Committee
  + Received Honeywell’s response to the Peer Review comments on the Draft Permanent Solution Statement (PSS) – 11/8/2024
* ZBA Updates – There were no new updates.
* Sign Committee
  + Mr. Barringer stated that he had attended the last Sign Committee meeting, where the main subject was discussing signage at the cannabis retail store at the Four Corners. He said that while the signs would be lit, he had convinced them to turn the brightness down a bit.

***General Business***

* Meeting Minutes
  + September 12, 2024

**MOTION:** Mr. Bonnett made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2024, meeting, as presented. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Hathaway, and Mr. Barringer

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

* September 26, 2024

**MOTION:** Mr. Bonnett made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2024, meeting, as presented. Mr. Hathaway seconded the motion.

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

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

and Mr. Hathaway

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 1. (Abstained – Mr. Barringer)**

* October 3, 2024

**MOTION:** Mr. Bonnett made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 3, 2024, meeting, as amended. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

**Edit:**Mr. Barringer was added as a Board member who was present.

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

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

Mr. Hathaway, and Mr. Barringer

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* November 19, 2024 – Special Meeting re: Master Plan (Via Zoom)
* December 5, 2024 (Via Zoom)
* December 19, 2024 (Via Zoom)

***Adjournment***

At approximately 8:51 p.m., Mr. Francisco made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hathaway seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Hathaway, and Mr. Barringer

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 1/23/2025*