**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**December 5, 2024**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Town Hall, 173 Main Street, 1st-Floor Meeting Room**

A regular (in-person) meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, December 5, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

A pre-meeting discussion was held with the Cub Scouts from Pack 12 in Groton.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Lorayne Black, Vice-Chair

Mr. Phil Francisco, Clerk

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

Mr. Russ Burke, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

Mr. Paul Hathaway, Board Member

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

***Public Hearing (Continuation) – Site Plan Review, Gray Building Renovations***

***Lawrence Academy, Assessors’ Parcel 116-10***

Attorney Bob Collins represented the applicant remotely.

Attorney Collins stated that he had provided the Planning Board with an updated site plan rendering, a photometric plan, interior light fixtures cut sheets, and a lighting narrative. He also said the landscaping plan suggested that 10 low-growing evergreens be planted by the loading dock, but he would ask that the plan be revised and brought back to the Planning Board for review.

Ms. Black commented that she did not think the short shrubbery would provide enough screening.

The Planning Board requested that Mr. Tada create a draft decision regarding the approval of the site plan with the stipulation that the Planning Board approve a revised landscaping plan.

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to close the public hearing and to prepare a draft approval decision for review. Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7 – 0 – 0.**

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

* The applicant is awaiting feedback regarding access to Lot 4 through the endangered species habitat area (Conventional Yield Plan)

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to continue the public hearing to the December 19, 2024, Planning Board meeting. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7 – 0 – 0.**

***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)***

* Received letter from Attorney Melissa Robbins, who requested that the public hearing be continued to the December 19, 2024, Planning Board meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to continue the public hearing, date specific, to the December 19, 2024, meeting. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Master Plan Update***

* The public comment period for the draft final report will close on Monday, December 9, 2024.
* Mr. Francisco shared some of his thoughts on the Master Plan and suggested that the Board have a future discussion. He also suggested that the Planning Board and the Select Board should meet more frequently to better understand the expectations regarding the Master Plan.

Mr. John Sopka, a resident, addressed the Board and stated that he felt the multi-family zoning needed to be revised and it had not been acted on for years.

Mr. Tada commented that the Barrett Planning Group would attend the December 19th meeting.

***Discussion – Field Change Request, Bluebird Lane, Village Meadows Subdivision***

***(added 12/3/2024)***

Mr. Tada explained that he had received a field change request letter and sketch plan for Rain Garden #1 from Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group on December 2, 2024.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to approve the request for a field change, as shown on the plan prepared by Dillis & Roy, dated December 2, 2024. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Potential Zoning Amendments for 2025 Spring Town Meeting***

***(added 12/3/2024)***

* MBTA Communities Multi-Family Zoning – Updated draft zoning amendment article from Russ Burke, received on December 5, 2024.

Mr. Burke provided a preview of the draft multi-family zoning amendment pursuant to the MBTA Communities Law. Mr. Burke stated that the multi-family zoning could be an Overlay District which retains the existing, underlying zoning.

Mr. Tada stated that once Mr. Burke made a few more revisions to the document, he would send it to Town Counsel for review.

* Floodplain Overlay District – based on model bylaw from MA DCR, required within six months of notice of publication of revised FEMA flood maps (notice of publication of flood maps anticipated in January 2025).

Mr. Tada stated that the floodplain zoning amendment was something that the town is required to do as part of the federal flood insurance program. He said the new FEMA flood maps would be published in January 2025, and after that, there was a six-month time period during which all municipalities had to update their floodplain zoning to incorporate a reference to the new flood maps and to incorporate the guidelines and recommendations of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation. Mr. Tada said the zoning amendment would be presented at Spring Town Meeting.

**Discussion – Pre-submission Review for Wellness Studio, Boynton Meadows, 134 Main Street, Basement Unit (added 12/3/2024)**

* Zoning Bylaw, Schedule of Use Table, §218-5.2.

Mr. David Valletta of KMPD Capital, LLC was present to represent the applicant. He said they had an agreement with a buyer, Mr. Yogesh Kumar, who was the owner of Rest Recovery New England and wished to locate his business at 134 Main Street.

Mr. Kumar addressed the Board and said his business would include saunas, cold plunges, oxygen chambers, massage chairs, and red light therapy with the intent to refresh your body and mind.

Mr. Wilson asked what the square footage of the location was. Mr. Kumar replied it was approximately 3,100 square feet.

Ms. Black asked if there was a second entrance/egress other than the stairs. Mr. Valletta replied that there was.

Ms. Black asked if there was an elevator on the premises. Mr. Valletta replied that there was no elevator on the premises; however, he noted that it was handicap accessible via a ramp.

Mr. Kumar stated that the average time a client would be on the premises was approximately one hour, with two to three customers per hour.

Mr. Francisco asked if Mr. Kumar had to plan for any environmental controls given the types of equipment that would be located on the premises. Mr. Kumar replied there was not a need for environmental controls, as the equipment would be self-contained.

Mr. Wilson asked how many parking spaces were available to them. Mr. Kumar replied that there were two parking spaces on the premises and the remainder would be on-street parking.

Mr. Bonnett asked if there were any Board of Health issues associated with the application. Mr. Tada suggested that he felt the applicant should gain input from the Land/Use Committee, the Board of Health, and as many departments as needed.

Mr. Tada commented that he felt the applicant needed to obtain a special use permit because it was located in a multi-tenant commercial-use development that was a new use as it was previously approved to be used for a restaurant that never came to fruition.

Mr. Tada explained what the applicant needed to do for the next steps, and Mr. Kumar said he would return with the necessary documents and information.

***Project Updates***

* Groton Hill Music Center
  + A building permit application was submitted to install a 10-foot screening fence to mitigate the impact of headlights on Peabody Street neighbors.
  + Sketch Plan, fence specifications, and sample photos.

Mr. Tada stated that the fence was not on the original site plan.

Ms. Black said he felt Mr. Tada should ask Groton Hill Music Center for an alternative to a chain-link fence, perhaps arborvitaes or evergreens. However, it was noted that it would be the music center’s decision.

* Village at Shepley Hill – There were no new updates.
* Kilbourn Place, 240 Main Street
  + Working on a parking plan revision.
* Village Meadows (Bluebird Lane) – Discussed earlier.
* Groton Farms, 500 Main Street – There were no new updates.
* Monarch Path Subdivision – There were no new updates.
* Waters House, 11 Lowell Road (added 12/3/2024)
  + As-Built Plan, Received on 12/2/2024

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee
  + The Lowell Road and West Main Street sidewalk project is almost 100% completed.
* Community Preservation Committee
  + Full draft application due on 1/16/25
* Conductorlab Oversight Committee – There were no new updates.
* ZBA Updates – There were no new updates.
* Sign Committee – There were no new updates.

***General Business***

* Meeting Minutes – October 10, 2024

**MOTION:** Mr. Hathaway made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2024, meeting, as amended. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 –1. (Abstained: Mr. Barringer)**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* December 19, 2024
* January 9, 2025
* January 23, 2025

***Adjournment***

At approximately 9:30 p.m., Mr. Barringer made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 7 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 2/27/2025*