**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**February 27, 2025**

**Meeting Minutes**

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

Ms. Lorayne Black, Vice-Chair

Mr. Phil Francisco, Clerk

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Mr. Paul Hathaway, Board Member

**Members Not Present:**

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Per the Massachusetts Attorney General’s guidance regarding the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and Wiretap Law, Mr. Wilson stated that the meeting was virtual and being recorded, and all votes must be taken via roll call.

Mr. Wilson introduced the Planning Board members who were present in the remote meeting. Mr. Wilson stated that 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 – Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment, Floodplain Overlay District***

Mr. Wilson opened the public hearing.

Mr. Tada explained the following:

* Proposed Revision to Section 218-7.1 Floodplain District Regulations to comply with the new Requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
* FEMA Requirements include updating the reference to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), which will take effect on July 8, 2025, and incorporating the applicable provisions of the Massachusetts Model Floodplain Bylaw.

Mr. Tada stated that items included in the proposed amendment included:

* New buildings are not allowed to be constructed within the 100-year Floodplain, which is a carry-over from the existing bylaw.
* The Building Commissioner is designated as the local Floodplain Coordinator.

Mr. Tada said the new Floodplain Maps were available on FEMA’s website but not yet on the Town of Groton’s website. He also said Town Counsel was reviewing the proposed amendments.

Mr. Burke asked who the Special Permit Granting Authority would be. Mr. Tada replied that the Planning Board was the Special Permit Granting Authority in the other Overlay Districts in the by-law. Mr. Burke suggested that the Special Permit Granting Authority should be specified in the document.

Mr. Hathaway asked how the town would notify property owners. Mr. Tada replied that he would check with Bob Garside, the Building Commissioner, and would relay the information to the Planning Board.

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

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to continue the public hearing to March 13, 2025. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Master Plan Update, Approval of the Final Revisions***

Mr. Tony Duong from the Barrett Planning Group was present, as was Mr. Brian Creamer from Nitsch Engineering.

Mr. Duong reviewed the final revisions of the Master Plan with the members of the Planning Board. The Board collectively agreed that the document had been significantly improved through the revision process, in terms of both the content and the visual appeal. The Board members were pleased with the final version.

Mr. Tada said that the Warrant Article was worded “to see if Town Meeting would endorse the plan” that the Planning Board had adopted.

**MOTION:** Mr. Francisco made a motion to adopt the Master Plan, as presented. Mr. Hathaway seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

Mr. Tada presented a draft of the Article entitled “Endorse Comprehensive Master Plan.”

Mr. Wilson commented that he felt the verbiage should be changed to “Prepared by the Groton Planning Board with the assistance of the Barrett Planning Group.”

***Public Hearing (Continuation) – Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment, MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District***

* Waiting for the GIS mapping and Compliance Model verification from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC).
* Comments from Jeffrey Brem, owner of property within the proposed district

Regarding the comments from Jeffrey Brem, Mr. Burke stated that Mr. Brem owned four parcels, 98, 99, 99.1, and 101, that were located south of the Deluxe property on Main Street, one of which was located on Taylor Street (101), which was not included in the proposed MBTA zoning because it had frontage on Taylor Street, and was in the Residential-Agricultural zoning district. Mr. Burke stated that they wanted to keep the MBTA zoning within the confines of the General Business District, which was the least restrictive zoning district in Groton. He added that they felt it provided a buffer for the residents on Taylor Street.

Mr. Burke stated that Mr. Brem owned the three other parcels, 98, 99, and 99.1, and his concern was “if I owned these properties, it would be nice if I had the other property.” Mr. Burke said one of the problems with that was that they had already advertised both the text amendment and the map amendment, so if they were to include 101, it would have to be re-advertised because the scope of the Article would be expanded. He added that it may also raise the potential for some opposition from the people who lived on Taylor Street.

Mr. Burke said he felt that Mr. Tada should contact Mr. Brem for alternate considerations regarding the lots.

**MOTION:** Mr. Francisco made a motion to continue the public hearing to March 13, 2025, to allow feedback from the MRPC. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 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)***

* The applicant submitted revised plans and responses to comments on February 25, 2025, along with a request to continue the public hearing to the March 13, 2025, meeting of the Planning Board.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to continue the public hearing to the March 13, 2025. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Public Hearing (Continuation) – Issue Special Permit for Wellness Studio Use, 134 Main Street, Basement Unit, Assessors’ Parcel 113-9.1 (Y. Kumar)***

Mr. Tada reviewed the draft Special Permit approval decision, with the added condition to provide a revised floor plan that includes changing rooms.

Mr. Francisco commented that he found it odd that the lockers were located so far away from the changing rooms. He also commented that, after watching the video of the meeting, he felt the applicant was evasive and did not provide clear answers to some of the questions posed by the Planning Board. He added that he did not feel the Board needed to take another vote, but that was his observation.

**MOTION:** Mr. Francisco made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion that the Planning Board had received the plan as specified in Condition #4, that the applicant had satisfied the requirement, and that the Board sign the Decision as presented. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Letter of Support for the Sustainability Commission’s Climate Resolution***

* Review the draft letter of support for the Climate Resolution Warrant Article (Spring Town Meeting), requested by Ken Horton of the Sustainability Commission.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to authorize Scott Wilson, Chair of the Planning Board, to write a letter in support of the Sustainability Commission’s Climate Resolution, as presented. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

Yea: Ms. Black, Mr. Francisco, 4

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: Mr. Hathaway 1

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 1 – 0.**

***Discussion – Issue Special Permits for Hammerhead Lot and Shared Driveway,***

***101 Longley Road, Assessors' Parcel 225-28 (C. Curtis)***

**MOTION:** Mr. Hathaway made a motion to approve the Special Permits for the Hammerhead Lot and Shared Driveway, located at 101 Longley Road, Assessors’ Parcel 225-28, as presented. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

**Recorder’s Note:** At approximately 8:34 p.m., Mr. Burke was excused from the meeting.

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

* Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Clean-up
* Public Hearing was scheduled for March 13, 2025

Mr. Tada said he would request a final review from Town Counsel.

***Project Updates***

* Monarch Path Subdivision
  + Requested Placeholder on Spring Town Meeting Warrant for Road Acceptance. Mr. Tada stated that he was still awaiting the “As-Built” plan.

***Committee Updates***

There were no updates to share.

***General Business***

* Meeting Minutes
  + December 5, 2024

**MOTION:** Mr. Francisco made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2024, meeting, as presented. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

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

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

& Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* March 13, 2025 (Zoom)
* March 27, 2025 (In-Person)
* April 10, 2025 (Zoom)
* April 17, 2025 (TBD)
* April 26, 2025 – Spring Town Meeting

***Adjournment***

**MOTION:** At approximately 8:55 p.m., Ms. Black made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Burke, & Mr. Wilson

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 6/12/2025*