**TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD**

**March 27, 2025**

**Meeting Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., in the Town Hall.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Scott Wilson, Chair

Mr. Phil Francisco, Clerk

Mr. Russell Burke, Board Member

Mr. Paul Hathaway, Board Member

Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member

Mr. George Barringer, Board Member

**Members Not Present:**

Ms. Lorayne Black, Vice-Chair

**Also Present:**

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

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 – Special Permit Applications for Shared Driveway, 10 Worthen Drive, Assessors Map 221, Parcels 14, 14.2, & 14.3 (J. Gilson)***

Mr. Wilson opened the public hearing.

Mr. Greg Roy, P.E., Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group, was present to speak on behalf of the applicant.

* Applicant’s Name: Jodie Gilson
* Proposed shared driveway utilizing the existing, unpaved access drive on 10 Worthen Drive (Parcel 221-14) to provide access to Parcels 221-14.2 and 221-14.3.
* Length of the driveway is approximately 950+ feet.
* Requires two wetland crossings. A Notice of Intent (NOI) application has been filed with the Conservation Commission.
  + Mr. Roy stated that the Conservation Commission had asked them to do a few things, and they were addressing the items. He noted that one of the items included a request that the driveway be paved, on the basis that it would be better for the adjacent wetlands with respect to surface runoff and sedimentation.
* Requires Stormwater Management Permit (Application filed with the Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee (ERSWAC)
* Awaiting comments from Nitsch Engineering (Peer Review for the Planning Board and ERSWAC) and the Groton Fire Department (RE: Emergency Vehicle Access)
* Refer to Zoning Bylaw, §218-8.1F, and Planning Board Regulations Ch. 381, Part 4

Mr. Hathaway asked about the ground surface between the driveway and the greenhouses to the west. Mr. Roy said it was unpaved, mostly dirt.

Mr. Barringer noted that the proposed driveway is over 900 feet long and asked if turnouts could be added along the driveway to allow two-way passage. Mr. Roy said he would add turnouts.

Mr. Barringer also observed that it was difficult to see the wetland areas depicted on the site plan, especially to the west of Lot 1. Mr. Roy said he would revise the plan so that the wetland are more clearly shown and labeled.

Mr. Bonnett asked about the wetlands impacts and the ratio of the proposed wetland replication to wetland alteration. Mr. Roy said the proposed ratio of wetland replication to alteration meets the Conservation Commission’s requirement of 3:1.

Mr. Bonnett also asked if the offsite pond to the west of the driveway entrance receives drainage from the driveway. Mr. Roy confirmed it does.

Mr. Burke stated that lot #1 appeared to be venturing onto the wetlands. He said, referring to the zoning bylaw, stated that “A shared driveway shall not be adequate access except that by a Special Permit from the Planning Board. A shared driveway may be authorized to provide access to parking spaces on no more than three lots, provided that vehicular access to the buildable portion of each lot is possible from the street providing legal frontage to the lot without reliance on the shared driveway.”

He asked if it is possible to access the lots directly from the road.

Mr. Roy responded that access from Worthen Drive / Dale Lane would require additional alteration of wetlands and would need to be permitted as a Limited Project by the Conservation Commission.

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

Ms. Kristen Von Campe, 29 Worthen Drive, asked why the proposed houses are situated so far back in the lots?

Mr. Roy said it was due to the presence of the wetlands closer to Worthen Drive / Dale Lane.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burke made a motion to continue the public hearing to April 10, 2025. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 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 a request to continue the public hearing to April 20, 2025.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burkemade a motion to continue the public hearing to April 10, 2025. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.**

Mr. Burke suggested scheduling a Planning Board site walk to review the area of the property boundary between 63 Gratuity Road and Hazel Grove Park.

Ms. Judy Anderson, a resident, suggested coordinating the site walk with the Conservation Commission.

***Public Hearing (Continuation) – Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment***

***Floodplain Overlay District***

* Received comments from Brian Falk, Town Counsel, 3/18/25
* There were no further comments made by Katie Paight, from the MA Department of Conservation & Recreation, Flood Hazard Management Program

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

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Burkemade a motion to recommend the approval of the proposed Floodplain Overlay District amendment, as presented. Mr. Francisco seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan, 352 & 356 Nashua Road, Lot Line Adjustments, Assessors’ Map 227, Parcels 117.1 & 117.2 (J. Casella)***

Attorney Bob Collins was present on behalf of the applicant.

* Applicant: Jim Casella
* Proposal to carve off the rear portions of the two existing house lots, to be added to the abutting Conservation Commission Parcel (Casella Preserve)

**MOTION:** Mr. Barringer made a motion to endorse the ANR (Approval Not Required) Plan, as presented. Mr. Hathaway seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

***Discussion – Pre-Submission Review for Casella Acres Subdivision***

* The Board received a request from Attorney Collins to discuss the procedural next steps for the Casella Acres Subdivision proposal, 3/21/25
* The Board received a copy of a Conventional Yield Plan, 3/27/25

Attorney Collins explained that he had asked Mr. Stan Dillis of Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group to produce a different plan that looked more conventional. He said he now has a proposed yield plan that would fit the six lots within the area that has been conceptually approved by Natural Heritage. He added that the conventional layout would have a single cul-de-sac, and all six lots would meet the zoning requirements.

Attorney Collins asked if the Board would allow him to submit a definitive plan and special permit, or if the Board would prefer that he resubmit the plan as preliminary.

Mr. Burke pointed out on the revised conventional yield plan that three of the proposed lots have 150-foot diameter circles intersecting with the Natural Heritage restricted area.

Attorney Collins stated that the Natural Heritage area may include septic systems and other site improvements associated with the house.

Mr. Barringer asked about the likelihood of encroachment if the houses and lawns are constructed near the Natural Heritage restricted area.

Attorney Collins stated the developer’s preference is to get approval for a flexible development plan which would situate the houses further away from the restricted area, thus reducing the chances of encroachment.

Mr. Francisco requested that Attorney Collins provide additional information from the Natural Heritage program. The Planning Board collectively stated that they did not mind if Attorney Collins submitted a definitive plan and special permit application.

***Discussion – Master Plan Presentation for Spring Town Meeting***

* Mr. Tada reviewed the draft presentation for Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Francisco stated that he felt adding more graphics and less text would be beneficial for the public to grasp more quickly.

***Project Updates***

* Groton Hill Music Center – There were no updates.
* Village at Shepley Hill – There were no updates.
* Kilbourn Place, 240 Main Street – There were no updates.
* Village Meadows (Bluebird Lane) – There were no updates.
* Groton Farms, 500 Main Street – There were no updates.
* Monarch Path Subdivision
  + Site inspection conducted on 3/18/25 by Rones Lubin, Nitsch Engineering

***Committee Updates***

* Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Barringer stated that the committee held a meeting on 3/18/25 to identify projects for the next construction grant application. He said the three projects identified were a path on Lovers Lane to the Country Club, a sidewalk on Sandy Pond Road (connecting the affordable units), and an improved connection from the end of Temple Drive to the Nashua River Rail Trail. He said priority would be given to the Lovers Lane project. He added that the spring application deadline was 5/1/25.

* Community Preservation Committee – There were no updates.
* Conductorlab Oversight Committee – There were no updates.
* ZBA Updates – There were no updates.
* Sign Committee
  + Received a sign permit application, 54 Hill Road (Hay Patch Farm). Date TBD.

***General Business***

* Meeting Minutes
  + Minutes from the December 19, 2024, meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Hathaway made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2024, meeting, as presented. Mr. Barringer seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.**

***Planning Board Meeting Schedule***

* April 10, 2025 (In-person)
* April 17, 2025 (If needed)
* April 26, 2025 – Spring Town Meeting

***Adjournment***

**MOTION:** At approximately 8:48 p.m., Mr. Barringer made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 – 0 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted:

Trish Gedziun

Recording Secretary

*Approved 6/12/2025*