



Town of Groton Massachusetts Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Agenda and Minutes

August 8, 2018 –O’Neil Special Permit, Board Re-Organization

Present

Cynthia Maxwell, Chairman

Bruce Easom, Member

Jen Spencer, Associate Member

Deb Winsor, Associate Member, via teleconference

Dan McLaughlin, Associate Member

Not Present

Mark Mulligan, Member

Jay Prager, Member

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Meeting Minutes

O’Neil Special Permit– 497 Main St., Unit F, #11-18

Chairman Maxwell convened the hearing by reading the Legal Notice.

Several abutters and interested parties were present.

Ms. O’Neil submitted a packet containing information about the operation. She said she wants to open a clinic in Mill Run Plaza with her daughter, who is also a vet. She said she wanted to buy in to the practice she is working at in Townsend but it is not feasible financially and the owner is fully supportive of her efforts to open her own practice. She said she is well trained in ultrasound diagnostics and surgical services, and wants to provide individualized care for all pets. She addressed some of the concerns of having dogs in a condo situation, noting also that the neighbor in unit E was concerned about her clients meeting the dogs. She said she has addressed that as well and has reached a resolution separating the entrances. She said she will define the walkway, etc., noting that the plan has been somewhat changed so nothing borders the abutter’s wall as further protection against sound, etc.

Chairman Maxwell asked about surgeries that might require overnight stays.

Ms. O'Neil said they would have to go to Westford as they have no over night care.

Chairman Maxwell asked about hours.

Ms. O'Neil said their long days are Monday and Thursday, noting that otherwise they close at 6 and noon or 1 on Saturdays.

Member Easom asked about maintenance of the relief area.

Ms. O'Neil said a person will be hired for full time cleaning and they will have relief bags. She said they could hose down the area regularly as well.

Member Spencer asked whether it would be the same size as the current practice she is in.

Ms. O'Neil said it will be smaller, noting that she wants a lower volume with she can spend more time with each client.

Member Spencer asked about noise.

Mother and daughter said that was not the concern of the neighbor, noting that they moved away from the shared wall to further prevent noise from pets.

Discussion ensued regarding mitigation of noises and smells.

Ms. O'Neil said they don't want to hear barking and will be doing a lot of insulation.

Member Easom asked whether the condominiums are on town water.

Ms. O'Neil said yes.

Michelle Collette, ADA coordinator, said she wants to enter documents into the record because they received two or three complaints about handicap access due to poor sidewalks and the location of parking spaces. She said all issues are the responsibility of the Mill Run Plaza condo association and they have been responsive in agreeing to the transition plan.

Member Easom asked for a date re: the transition plan.

Ms. Collette said the most critical things need to be done by December 31, 2018, noting that the date of the plan is July 9, 2018, for reference. She said the other items are long-term remedies and need to be completed by 12/31/19.

Dr. Claire Thomas, new vet in town, asked whether there would be any fiscal feasibility study done by any boards in town. She said she questions whether there is a need for four vets.

Member Easom said the free market is alive and well in Groton.

Ms. O'Neil said she will be bringing many of her own clients and doesn't want to compete.

Member Easom suggested that the economic development committee might be helpful, noting that that is not ZBA purview.

Catherine Stapinski, representative and resident of Groton Residential Gardens said her only concern is the day care center and potential interactions with kids and walking dogs.

Pat Stapinski asked where the dog relief area is and how big.

Discussion ensued regarding where dogs can relieve themselves and where they can be walked.

Ms. O'Neil said that there would be a fenced in area for the dogs to relieve themselves.

Member Spencer asked what happens if there is a complaint.

Ms. O'Neil said they would be dealt with. She said they are on the very end building and far away from food, etc. She stressed that there would be no unleashed or unboxed visits and those by appointment only.

Member Easom suggested conditioning that if there are many violations the permit could be withdrawn, following additional public hearings.

Ms. Collette said the BI is also the Zoning Enforcement Officer and he would receive the first round of complaints. She said the BOH would handle any waste issues and there is a very good animal control officer.

Member Easom made a motion to issue a special permit to O'Neil for a vet clinic located at 497 Main St, unit F, with the following conditions:

- 1) transition plan must be implemented;
- 2) no outside kennels;
- 3) dog relief area be to the north.

The motion was not seconded.

A new motion was made to issue permit without 1) and to include that relief area be maintained to sanitary conditions per the BOH.

The new motion was seconded by Member Eason and passed with all voting aye via roll call vote.

Board Re-Organization

Member Easom nominated Member Maxwell to be chairman until July 1, 2019. The motion was seconded and passed with all voting aye via roll call vote.

Chairman Maxwell nominated Member Easom to be clerk. The motion was seconded and passed via roll call vote with all voting aye.

Other business

Minutes and Bills

Member Maxwell made a motion to approve the minutes from 5/30/18. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Of note: The BI appeal will be scheduled for October 3, 2018 at 7 PM.

Member Easom made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Approved 10/3/18.