

MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 27, 2012 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Munn, Pritchard, Sherrard  
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Zod, Kane  
Absent: Roper, Steinford  
Staff present: Davis, Glemboski, Doolittle

Chairman Sherrard called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. He sat Fitzgerald for Steinford and Zod for Roper.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF meeting of March 13, 2012.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of March 13, 2012 as written.

Motion made by Munn, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - none

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Sunset Ridge Resubdivision (formerly the Obrey Resubdivision), Gold Star Highway

The Commission noted that this is scheduled for a hearing at 7:45 this evening.

2. Hillside Acres Subdivision, Fishtown Road – Request for bond release

Staff noted the memo from Public Works saying that the bond could be released.

MOTION: To release the bond for Hillside Acres Subdivision, Fishtown Road

Motion made by Zod, seconded by Munn. Motion passed unanimously.

V. SITE PLANS

1. Wal-Mart Real Estate Business Trust (“Wal-Mart”), 150 Gold Star Highway – Request for 1-year start of construction extension

Staff noted that this site plan was approved on May 24, 2011 and is currently under appeal before the Superior Court. Staff distributed a letter from Robinson & Cole dated March 27, 2012, received this evening.

John Knuff, representing the applicant, addressed the Commission requesting the extension.

MOTION: To grant a one year extension for start of construction to May 24, 2013 for Wal-Mart Real Estate Business Trust (“Wal-Mart”), 150 Gold Star Highway

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Groton Bible Chapel Youth Center, 66 Toll Gate Road

Norm Thibeault, Killingly Engineering Associates, representing the applicant, addressed the Commission describing the site and related site improvements. Traffic flow, new entrances, the proposed youth center and the Water Resource Protection District were discussed. Mr. Thibeault requested and discussed in depth the waivers and modifications they are requesting for the buffers, parking, landscaping and frontage sidewalk.

Mr. Thibeault noted that the drainage calculations and the stormwater plan have been reviewed and approved by Public Works. He discussed the pedestrian walkways and distributed artist renderings of the new youth center.

Staff noted that plans were received yesterday and have not been reviewed by other departments so no draft motion will be provided tonight. Staff discussed the sidewalk waiver in regards to connections, grade changes, tree locations, and the options of requiring the sidewalk in the future.

The Commission briefly questioned Mr. Thibeault on the sidewalk, landscaping, lighting, parking, IWA approval specifications and a bicycle rack.

MOTION: To table Groton Bible Chapel Youth Center, 66 Toll Gate Road to later this evening.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Munn. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Sunset Ridge Resubdivision (formerly the Obrey Resubdivision), Gold Star Highway

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:49 p.m. and Commissioner Pritchard read the legal ad.

Commissioner Munn disclosed that he knows the engineer for this project personally and recused himself. Chairman Sherrard sat Kane for Munn.

Pat Gallagher, Allied Development Partners, representing the applicant, addressed the Commission and noted that they took title to the deed for the lots today.

Mr. Gallagher discussed the newly proposed 4-lot resubdivision and conservation easement as well as driveway frontage and easements. He discussed the open space relating to the conservation easement and requested a waiver for the open space requirement.

Pat Lafayette, Development Solutions, addressed the Commission discussing the shared driveway and conservation easement and open space. He discussed drainage, guard rails and the entrance to the neighboring gravel operation.

Staff handed out comments from the fire marshal. Staff gave the Commission a brief history of this project and discussed the drainage, sidewalk, open space and wells/septic systems.

Staff clarified the difference between open space and a conservation easement.

The Commission questioned Mr. Lafayette and Mr. Gallagher on the driveway widths, the drainage easement, maintenance of the shared driveways, utilities and the conservation easement. The subject of the open space and fee in lieu of was discussed in depth.

**MOTION:** To close the public hearing for the Sunset Ridge Resubdivision

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed unanimously.

The Commission took a recess at 8:46 p.m. and reconvened at 8:54 p.m.

## VII. SITE PLANS

### 2. Groton Bible Chapel Youth Center, 66 Toll Gate Road

Mark Spruance, Groton Bible Chapel, addressed the Commission discussing the sidewalk and waiver requested.

Norm Thibeault discussed the questions and concerns that the Commission had including landscaping, parking, traffic flow, drainage and lighting.

Chairman Sherrard noted for the record that the voting members for this application are Zod, Munn, Pritchard, Sherrard and Fitzgerald with Kane as an alternate. Chairman Sherrard encouraged members to review the site conditions, particularly with respect to the sidewalk waiver request.

**MOTION:** To table Groton Bible Chapel Youth Center, 66 Toll Gate Road to the April 10, 2012 meeting

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Zod. Motion passed unanimously.

## VIII. SUBDIVISIONS

### 1. Sunset Ridge Resubdivision (formerly the Obrey Resubdivision), Gold Star Highway

The Commission discussed the draft motions.

MOTION: To approve a waiver of Section 4.9 of the Subdivision Regulations, which requires the dedication of open space to the Town of Groton or the payment of a fee in lieu of open space for the Sunset Ridge Resubdivision.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Sherrard. Motion denied unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the plan for Sunset Ridge Resubdivision (formerly Obrey Resubdivision), Gold Star Highway, with the following modifications:

1. In accordance with Section 4.9(5), a payment in lieu of open space of \$825, the equivalent of 0.5% of the fair market value of the land prior to the subdivision, shall be made prior to the recording of the plans based on the following:
  - a. The Town of Groton did not require a dedication of land for open space purposes with the previous Obrey Resubdivision approved on December 13, 2005 for seven lots. The subdivision did provide approximately 2.6 acres of non-developable conservation area between the single-family lots and the active gravel operation to the south and east. The proposed Sunset Ridge Resubdivision adds approximately 2.0 acres to this conservation area for a total of 4.6 acres or 37% of the site. Although this area of the site is not dedicated to the Town of Groton as open space, the public safety, health, and welfare of the community have been protected by this conservation easement.
  - b. This property is unique in that it is a resubdivision of land from 7 lots to 4 lots and this uniqueness is specific to this subdivision and is not applicable to other properties undergoing subdivisions or resubdivisions within the Town of Groton.
2. A bond shall be posted for all public improvements, including the monumentation of all lots and the conservation easement, prior to the recording of the subdivision plan in the land records.
3. The final conservation easement document shall be approved by the Town and submitted to the Office of Planning and Development Services prior to recording the subdivision plan in the land records.
4. A note shall be placed on the plan stating, "At the time of recording of the subdivision, the 4.62 acre "hatched" parcel shall be conveyed to Robert, William and Richard Whittle and combined with the N/F Robert, William & Richard Whittle parcel to the south and east."

5. The maintenance agreement for the subdivision shall include the continued maintenance of the right-of-way improvements. The agreement shall also include provisions for snow and ice removal from the main driveway and the trimming and upkeep of the trees adjacent to the main driveway to ensure proper width and maintenance of the main driveway for access by fire and emergency vehicles.
6. Driveways on Lots 1 and 2 shall be modified to increase the ability to access the lots by fire apparatus, as recommended by the Old Mystic Fire Department in a letter dated 3/26/12.
7. All staff technical items shall be addressed.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Zod. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

1. Land Use Regulation Update Project – Tabled to 4/10/2012.

X. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission - none
2. Zoning Board of Appeals referral for March 28, 2012 Public Hearing – ZBA12-03, Perini Carriage House, 168 High Street

Staff briefly reviewed this proposed accessory apartment. The Commission had no comment.

3. Zoning Commission referral for April 4, 2012 Public Hearing – Special Permit #325, Kate’s Cafe, 12 Water Street, Unit D4

Staff briefly reviewed this proposed cafe in Mystic. The Commission had no comment.

4. New Applications - none

XI. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Sherrard noted the information handed out tonight regarding committees for the POCD update.

XII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff handed out state statutes relating to the POCD and MCP updates.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Planning Commission

March 27, 2012

Page 6

Motion to adjourn at 9:50 p.m. made by Pritchard, seconded by Zod, so voted unanimously.

---

Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary  
Planning Commission

Prepared by Katie Doolittle  
Office Assistant II