

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 13, 2010 - 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

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

Chairman Sherrard called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF meeting of March 23, 2010.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of March 23, 2010 as amended.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Fitzgerald noted a study done by the NFL involving injuries on artificial turf versus grass, which showed that there were 88% more ankle and leg injuries over a 6-year period, and expressed concern over a proposal in the CIP to install artificial turf at Fitch High School. He noted that he spoke with Wes Greenleaf who is trying to obtain the study from the NFL.

Staff noted a memorandum in tonight's packet from the Conservation Commission to the Town Council relating to the Spicer property and requested that the Commission add this item to the agenda.

MOTION: To add "Potential DEP OSWLA Grant Application Birch Plain Creek (Spicer) Thomas Road" as item number four (4) under New Business

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

Jim Furlong, 57 Fishtown Lane, addressed the Commission with his concerns relating to preserving open space through development standards.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Woods Walk - Request for Bond Reduction

Staff noted that this is a reduction to 10% (\$53,000).

MOTION: To reduce the bond to \$53,000 for Woods Walk Subdivision

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Great Brook, Phase I - Acceptance of Public Improvements

Staff noted that the Town is still holding a 10% bond and will hold it for one year from acceptance of public improvements.

MOTION: To accept the public improvements for Great Brook, Phase I Subdivision

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

V. SITE PLANS

1. Central Hall, 18-22 West Main Street, 36 West Main Street, 2 & 3 Gravel Street – Request for one year extension for start of construction

The applicant was not present.

Staff stated that they have just begun working on check print reviews and on the easement documents. This site plan was originally approved on July 8, 2008 and the applicant is asking for a third one-year extension. Commissioner Steinfeld raised concerns relating to Mystic Streetscape coordination.

MOTION: To table Central Hall, 18-22 West Main Street, 36 West Main Street, 2 & 3 Gravel Street to the next regular meeting

Motion made by Steinfeld, seconded by Roper. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Four Paws Veterinary Clinic, Cow Hill Rd

Ken Petrini, DiCesare Bentley Engineers, spoke to the Commission regarding the location and plans for the site. He asked the Commission for a modification to the frontage sidewalk and landscaping requirements. He detailed the utility plan, specifically stating their plan to store the roof water for use in landscape irrigation.

Dr. Lawrence Montiero, applicant, addressed the Commission explaining the proposed use of the facility.

Staff and the Commission discussed sidewalk issues, landscaping, phased parking, utility easements, and the modification requests.

The applicant and the Commission discussed the cistern and medical waste.

Commissioner Roper raised concerns over granting the sidewalk waiver.

Commissioner Munn noted that Dr. Montiero is his pet's veterinarian, but feels that he can be objective on this matter.

Chairman Sherrard and Mr. Petrini discussed the sight line on Cow Hill Road. They also discussed the basement as it relates to flooding.

MOTION: To approve a waiver to Section 7.5-5.C requiring a frontage sidewalk along Cow Hill Road and a waiver to Section 7.5-4

requiring the frontage sidewalk to be connected to the onsite building by an internal walkway based on the following:

1. The site will not generate any significant pedestrian traffic to the site and/or between the site and those adjacent to it.
2. The installation of the frontage sidewalk would necessitate the removal of at least 4 mature trees.
3. There is an existing sidewalk network already developed on the east side of Cow Hill Road that adequately services the pedestrian needs of this neighborhood.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed 4-1 (Roper opposed).

MOTION: To approve Four Paws Veterinary Clinic Site Plan, 151 & 159 Cow Hill Road, with the following modifications:

1. The Access and Utility Easement(s) for Lots 2 and 3 shall be recorded with the site plan.
2. A note shall be provided on the plan stating “Any change in the approved use of the basement shall require an additional parking requirement review by the Zoning Official and approvals, as necessary, from the appropriate Town of Groton agencies”.
3. A guard rail shall be provided around the perimeter of the parking lot where the change in elevation (drop-off) is greater than 4-feet.
4. The design for the footing drains into the splash pad shall be approved by the Office of Planning and Development Services and shown on the final plans.
5. A note shall be added to the landscape sheet stating:
“Approval of the modification of Section 7.4-5B is based upon retention of the existing wooded areas of the site as defined by the limits of clearing depicted on the approved plans.”
6. Technical items raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Planning Commission notes that the site has been substantially buffered from the existing adjacent residential structures with evergreen

plantings. The site also has an existing natural area along the residentially zoned property to the north and the design is consistent with the intent of the buffer requirements of Section 7.4-4 of the Zoning Regulations.

The Planning Commission notes that the site is densely wooded with mature trees with an extensive existing canopy and this canopy fulfills the intent of the perimeter parking lot shade tree requirements of Section 7.4-5.B. of the Zoning Regulations.

The Planning Commission notes that the phasing of 6 of the required parking spaces is consistent with Section 7.2-16 of the Zoning Regulations and a note has been placed on the plan that requires the spaces to be built within 6 months if determined by the Zoning Official that the need exists for these spaces.

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

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Land Use Regulation Update Project

MOTION: To table "Land Use Regulation Update Project" to the next regular meeting

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

2. Staff reply to Joellen Anderson correspondence of 3/20/2010 was presented.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Commissioner Roper noted that there would be a meeting of the Mystic Cooperative Task Force on April 19, 2010. He also noted that the Mystic Mobility Study group was meeting this evening.

2. New Applications - None

3. Request from the Groton Open Space Association (GOSA) for letter of support of GOSA grant application to the State DEP for land acquisition: 245-255 Hazelnut Hill Road

Sydney Van Zandt, Vice President of GOSA, spoke to the Commission regarding bike trails and other topics.

Sue Sutherland, 32 Neptune Drive, noted that she is a GOSA director as well as an alternate member of the Zoning Commission, but that she is speaking tonight on her own behalf as a private citizen. Ms. Sutherland described generally the sites historical value and natural attributes.

MOTION: To table "Request from the Groton Open Space Association (GOSA) for letter of support" to the next regular meeting

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

4. Potential DEP OSWLA Grant Application Birch Plain Creek (Spicer) Thomas Road

Staff explained the three parcels, handed out a packet of related information and stated that the application deadline is May 3, 2010. Staff commented that Project LEARN has supported this acquisition. Staff and the Commission discussed the potential of the school system using this property.

MOTION: The Town of Groton Planning Commission endorses the submission of a Town-sponsored grant application to the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection under the "Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition" grant program (OSWLA), for the purchase of two tracts of land located in the Town of Groton and one tract located within the City of Groton, all as specifically identified herein, for purposes consistent with the OSWLA grant program requirements:

Tract #1: 155 Thomas Road, Parcel Identification Number 169813033078, comprised of approximately 26.76 acres; and

Tract #2: 0 Thomas Road, Parcel Identification Number 168816937659, comprised of approximately 2.32 acres; and

Tract #3: 0 Thomas Road, Parcel Identification Number 168820918875, comprised of 0.07 acres, and further,

That the Town of Groton Planning Commission endorses the use of funds acquired by the Town for the general purpose of land conservation, in order to prepare this grant application and to otherwise accomplish the acquisition of the above referenced tracts, and further,

That the Town of Groton Planning Commission expressly acknowledges that the above referenced "tract #3" is located within the City of Groton and while preservation of tract #3 appears to be fully consistent with the City of Groton's 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development, the State DEP may or may not require additional endorsements with respect to tract #3.

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

MOTION: To add "Open Space Watershed Lands Grant Program Changes" as item number five (5) under New Business

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

5. Open Space Watershed Lands Grant Program Changes

Staff explained the grant application requirement changes. The Commission asked Staff to draft a communication to the DEP Commissioner and her staff, thanking them for their consideration.

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Sherrard noted that the quarterly meeting of the Committee of Chairpersons is April 19, 2010 and invited any interested Commissioners to attend.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff commented that they have begun looking into the removal of landscaping at Precious Memories Preschool on Allyn Street and will report at the next regular meeting on the status and other details.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:27 p.m. made by Sherrard, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously.

Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Katie Doolittle
Office Assistant II