

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 28, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Acting Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Kane, Pritchard, Steinfeld
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Zod
Absent: Munn, Sherrard, Tarbox
Staff present: Jones, Glemboski, Gilot

Acting Chairman Pritchard appointed Fitzgerald to sit for Sherrard, Zod to sit for Munn, and appointed Steinfeld as Acting Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. June 14, 2016

This item was postponed until the next meeting scheduled for July 12, 2016.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. SUBDIVISIONS - None

V. SITE PLANS

1. Groton Multi-family Apartments, 0 Route 12 & Pleasant Valley Road North (SIT16-09)

Jason Kambitsis, A.R. Building, introduced the team of Geoff Campbell, Architect, Rothschild Doyno Collaborative, Lee Blackwell, Construction Manager, A.R. Building, John Schmitz, BL Companies, and Attorney William Sweeney. Mr. Kambitsis reviewed some the past projects constructed by A.R. Building. The proposal is to build 147 multifamily residential units. He provided an overview of the timeline, site location, and their typical building.

Geoff Campbell, Architect and principal with Rothchild Doyno Collaborative, reviewed architectural samples from their typical building and floor plans for the proposed buildings. He discussed the elevations, lighting, dead storage, elevators, dumpster locations and balconies. Flat roofed sections on either side of the buildings will hide the mechanical units. Compliance with zoning requirements was reviewed. An onsite clubhouse will have an exercise room, sales office and storage. Car barns (garages) and carports will be scattered throughout the site.

John Schmitz, BL Companies, 355 Research Parkway, Meriden, reviewed the site at Route 12, Gungywamp Road and Pleasant Valley Road North. He reviewed the adjacent uses, traffic, zoning requirements, setbacks and parking. Mr. Schmitz detailed the site plan. The site would be accessed by two main driveways, both on Pleasant Valley Road North. There would be three main buildings on the parcel totaling 147 units. Recreation requirements would be provided with a clubhouse, an outdoor fitness area, and recreational areas with picnic tables and grills for outdoor use. Recreational areas have platforms to meet ADA requirements. The parking will be scattered, with internal sidewalks adjacent to buildings and parking. Sidewalks are proposed along Pleasant Valley Road North, and

connect along Gungywamp Road to the sidewalk network on the west side of Route 12 with cross walk and signal.

Mr. Schmitz reviewed the stormwater and drainage design that includes hydrodynamic separators, catch basins with sumps and hooded outlets that discharge into two detention ponds. Ponds will be used during construction for erosion control; the erosion and sediment control plan was discussed.

The queuing of cars on at the traffic light on Route 12 and the blocking of the intersection at Pleasant Valley Road North was discussed. The applicants propose to stripe and paint a box at the intersection with "do not block intersection" signs posted prior to the box in an effort to maintain turning movements and keep the intersection clear. The plan was authorized by the Town Traffic Authority. The applicants will have to make application to the Office of the State Traffic Authority (OSTA), who will review the traffic and drainage at site.

The landscaping at the site was detailed. Street trees will be planted along Pleasant Valley Road North; additional trees will be provided along Route 12 to screen the ponds, and there will be some plantings along the backs of the garages.

The site is served by municipal water and sewer. The applicants propose to extend a new water line from Gungywamp Road to address water pressure issues. As requested by Groton Utilities, they will run a line in the right of way up to Greenwood for a potential future connection, and then up to the site. All buildings will be sprinklered. There is a sewer connection to the north adjacent to Route 12. Electric and telephone are available. They do not anticipate providing gas at this time, but it is available if needed in the future.

Staff reviewed the application. A special permit was granted by Zoning Commission. A wetlands permit was granted for a previously approved project, which will cover this project. All zoning regulations for NMDD and RMF-12 zones have been met. All landscaping, parking and lighting requirements have been met. Recreation requirement of 7% is distributed throughout the site. The applicants do not expect clientele with small children, so there is no playscape planned on the site at this time. Staff suggested the Planning Commission may want the applicant to install a small playscape in one of the recreation areas. Staff reviewed the frontage sidewalks along Pleasant Valley Road North connecting to Route 12 along Gungywamp Road. The applicant requested that the commission eliminate the need for a sidewalk because of the existing sidewalk on the opposite side of Route 12, the proximity to the wetland, and the slope on this side of Route 12. A small area will be dedicated to the Town for construction of a sidewalk on Pleasant Valley Road North. A deed will be provided to the town before the site plan is recorded. Other than one minor technical item from Engineering, the Environmental Planner, Fire Marshal and outside agencies had no comments.

The commission discussed the detention ponds, plantings on the berms near the road and suggested moving some of the plantings to soften the fence line around the ponds. Mr. Schmitz detailed the plantings throughout the site. The applicants and commission discussed potential tenants for the 36 two-bedroom apartments. The commission was concerned that there was no provision for access or connection to the SUBASE. The applicant agreed to grade a small area in the northwest corner to allow easier access to the Base. Stairwells will be located on ends of each building. The open space on the southern end of the site will be cleaned up and invasives removed. The length of the garages and plantings at the back of the garages was discussed.

MOTION: To approve Site Plan (SIT16-09), Groton Multi-Family Apartments (Lighthouse Point, Owner; A.R. Building Co., Inc., Applicant), 0 Route 12 & Pleasant Valley Road North, to allow a 147 unit multi-family residential development in the Nautilus Memorial Design District (NMDD) with the following modifications and findings.

1. Traffic improvements to the intersection of Pleasant Valley Road North and Gungywamp Road shall be incorporated into the project as proposed unless additional modifications and improvements are required by the Office of the State Traffic Administration. Any modification to this plan imposed by another State agency shall require additional review by Town Staff and/or the appropriate Commission.
2. As-Built plans for the site shall be submitted to the Office of Planning and Development Services at the time of request for a Certificate of Site Plan Compliance, in accordance with Section 8.4-3F of the Zoning Regulations.
3. A detailed final plan and associated deed for the dedication of the sidewalk area along Pleasant Valley Road North shall be provided to the Planning Department prior to recording the site plan in land records.
4. The final site plan shall note that the existing stonewalls along the property boundaries shall be preserved.
5. All staff technical items shall be addressed.

Findings

The Commission also finds that the development of a 147-unit multi-family development complies with Section 8.4-5 of the Zoning Regulations in that it is in general conformance with the Plan of Conservation and Development, all buildings and uses are readily accessible for emergency protections, the design provides adequate and suitable site access and vehicular circulation, utilities, landscaping, lighting and stormwater treatment for the proposed use, and does not conflict with the purpose of these regulations.

The Planning Commission notes that it is eliminating the need for a frontage sidewalk along the east side of Route 12 and finds that there is no significant pedestrian movement along this stretch of roadway because of the existing sidewalk network established on the western side of Route 12 and that the topography and wetlands in the area limit the reasonable installation of a sidewalk along the project's Route 12 frontage.

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

VI. OLD BUSINESS - None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2016 Draft Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Discussion

Staff provided a summary of all outside agency and resident comments that they had received regarding the draft POCD. The Commission discussed each of the comments and made recommendations to staff.

The following agencies and residents provided comments.

- Department of Energy and Environmental Protection staff said all are technical;
- Airport Authority
- Dick Fitzgerald

- Syma Ebbin
- Joan Smith
- Sidney van Zandt
- Public Works
- Zoning Commission

Staff provided a draft motion for the public hearing to be held on June 29th. Staff expected the Commission would be able to adopt the Plan tomorrow. Staff will email the PowerPoint presentation to the commissioners. Pritchard will be Acting Chairman for the meeting which starts at 6:30 p.m.

2. Report of Commission – None

3. New Applications - None

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None

IX. REPORT OF STAFF - None

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:14 p.m. was made by Steinfeld, seconded by Zod, so voted unanimously.

Margil Steinfeld, Acting Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot
Office Assistant III