

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 14, 2015 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

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

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Kane, Munn, Steinfeld

Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Tarbox

Absent: Sherrard, Zod

Staff present: Jones, Cullen, Glemboski, Silsby

He appointed Fitzgerald to sit for Sherrard and Steinfeld to sit as Acting Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING MINUTES OF June 23, 2015

MOTION: To adopt the Planning Commission minutes of June 23, 2015

Motion made by Steinfeld, seconded by Kane, so voted 3-0-2 abstentions (Fitzgerald, Munn), as written. Motion carried.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Briar Hill Subdivision (SUB15-05), 0 Briar Hill Road – Set Public Hearing Date

The public hearing was set for August 11, 2015

V. SITE PLANS

1. Groton Utilities Water Filtration Plant Improvements (SIT15-04), 1268 Poquonnock Road (CAM)

Erica Lotz, P.E., of Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, LLC and Rick Stevens, Manager of the Water Division at Groton Utilities, were present for this application.

Stevens gave a brief history of the 1939 building. He referred to state regulations, funding, and creating the best possible design using the latest technology. Input from the Town has been incorporated into the plan.

Lotz stated that permits from the Inland Wetland Agency and the Zoning Board of Appeals have been secured. Feedback from the Planning Commission, regarding the aesthetics of the building, has been addressed. Drawings and photos of the proposed building layout were distributed.

Discussion followed about the metal façade, updating feed equipment, minimizing the impervious area, and improving water treatment. Additional information was given about water storage tanks. The applicant explained his request for a waiver of interior sidewalks.

Staff spoke about the height of the storage tanks, the proposed 35 parking spaces, and Wetland and Zoning Board of Appeals approvals. She gave specifics about the building placement and impacts to the community, with regard to water distribution. Information was given about tidal wetlands and internal islands and sidewalks. No coastal resources will be impacted.

Additional inquiries were made about metal cladding, impervious surfaces, parking spaces, frontage sidewalks, inland wetlands, tidal wetlands and electrical equipment.

A motion was distributed and reviewed.

Inquiries were made about the drainage system, water storage tanks, permeable pavers and sidewalks. Runoff rates will be reduced. A bond and sidewalk agreement was discussed. Bonding is not required for site plans until the issuing of a Certificate of Occupancy, which is standard procedure. Information was given about the tanks.

MOTION: To approve the waiver of the requirement of Section 7.5-5(c) regarding the installation of internal sidewalks for the following reasons:

1. The Commission finds that there will be no significant pedestrian movement internal to the site. This site has no public access and is a secure facility.
2. The granting of the waiver will not be detrimental to public safety, health, or welfare or have a significant adverse effect on adjacent property.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously

MOTION: To approve Groton Utilities Water Filtration Plant, 1268 Poquonnock Road (SIT15-04), with the following modifications:

1. The applicant agrees at the time of recording to execute a sidewalk agreement for the area between their eastern driveway and the Poquonnock River Bridge with the caveat that these tidal wetlands will require State permitting. These permits will be applied for within six months of the approval and the sidewalk built prior to the five years from the date of the approval. If the State will not permit the activity then the applicant will return to the planning commission to extinguish the sidewalk agreement.
2. The dumpster shall remain on the concrete pad with an appropriate waterproof cover and plugs intact to protect the nearby resources from spills.
3. A ten foot wide easement in favor of Yankee Gas/Eversource shall be centered over the installed gas line and said easement filed in the Town of Groton Land Records.
4. Technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Planning Commission finds that under section 7.4-4 and 7.4-5 that a reduction in the landscape and buffer requirements for parking areas is appropriate for this site. The proposal minimizes impervious surfaces to the maximum extent possible which is in direct relationship to the quality of the water in the immediate area of coastal resources. There is approximately 7,000 sf of landscaped perimeter for the immediate area surrounding the project. Additional islands within the parking areas would add to

the impervious surfaces which are in conflict with the spirit and intent of the regulations.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Kane, so voted unanimously

MOTION: To approve the Coastal Area Management application for Groton Utilities Water Filtration Plant, 1268 Poquonnock Road, as it is consistent with all applicable coastal policies contained in CGS 22a-92, and includes all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts and creates no unacceptable adverse impacts.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Fitzgerald, so voted unanimously

2. Doncasters Manufacturing Facility (SIT15-06), 835 Poquonnock Road

Paul Biscuti of Dicesare-Bentley Engineers presented the proposal to construct a new storage building and three small additions to the existing building. The existing detention basins will be modified to improve stormwater treatment. History was given about this property as he explained the reason for expanding. Parking will be expanded to accommodate additional employees. A wetlands permit has been secured.

Staff explained that the additions are minor and the potential for contamination on the site is more of a concern, relative to past history. She noted a detailed protocol for handling contaminated soil and water. Storm water treatment will improve water quality. Information was given about the Long Hill drainage water area and the voluntary impact fee being applied to the impervious surface.

An inquiry was made about atmospheric contamination.

Bruce Ebright, General Manager of the facility, explained about the burning out of wax material, which only occurs if a failure of the acu-burner arises. No fumes should be emitted from the facility.

Staff stated that a note will be placed on the plans about the Long Hill drainage fee that will be assessed for impervious surfaces.

MOTION: To approve SIT15-06 for site plan approval for the Doncasters Manufacturing Facility, 835 Poquonnock Road, subject to the following modifications:

1. A note shall be placed on the plan that states this project is located within the Long Hill Watershed Drainage Study area and a voluntary impact fee in accordance with the Policy for the Assignment of Recoverable Cost shall be submitted prior to filing the final plan in Land Records.
2. All technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously

3. Toll Gate Plaza Modification (SIT15-08), 516-528 Gold Star Highway

Nick Sahin explained his decision to change his previously approved plans due to the high costs involved. The air conditioning units will be relocated and the elevation will change. There will be a total of 8 air conditioning units.

Staff spoke about the changes, as maps were reviewed. Information was given about the new building elevations, drive-through area, landscaping, and the air conditioner units.

MOTION: To approve a site plan modification (SIT15-08) for Tollgate Plaza LLC, 516-528 Gold Star Highway subject to the following modifications:

1. Provide a minimum of 10 shrubs in the area between drive-through lane and building for screening.
2. Technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed.

Motion by Pritchard, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Board of Appeals Referral for Public Hearing on July 22, 2015
 - a. Variance ZBA#15-09, Ladia Residence, 231 Heather Glen Lane, Lot 75

Staff noted the location and setbacks. Discussion followed about the front porch roof and lot coverage requirements. The house was built in 1998.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

- b. Variance ZBA#15-10, Borkman Residence, 2 Lewiston CT

Staff explained the proposal to retrofit the house for handicapped accessibility. Setbacks were reviewed. The house was built in 1942.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

- c. Variance ZBA#15-11, Wilding Residence, 89 Indianfield Road

Staff reviewed the location of the 1959 house, which has 2 front yards. The proposal to enclose the deck was discussed. Setbacks were noted.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

2. Zoning Commission Referral for Public Hearing on August 5, 2015
 - a. Special Permit #345, Cardinal Honda, 531 Route 12

Staff reviewed plans stating that this property is located in the Water Resource Protection District (WRPD). She noted that the owner received a special permit to expand in 1995 but recently purchased a portion of the lot to the south and is now asking to expand what would amount to the remainder of the square footage of up to 50% allowed. The proposal also includes paving an area for more cars to be displayed. She stated that this is a non-permitted use in the WRPD.

An inquiry was made as to why cars are being parked on the grass without a permit.

Staff stated that this change would increase impervious surfaces and stormwater increase will be a concern, as it is located in the WRPD.

Inquiries were made about the expansion and the large amount of cars on site, creating the potential for a fire, which could be a risk by contaminating the watershed. Additional concerns were raised about the higher percentage of use in an area where their automobiles should be limited. Staff noted that the WRPD will be reviewed in the future for uses that can be allowed. Staff added that the owner has a stormceptor, which presently treats the site and will be upgraded. Steinford expressed concerns over the continued expansion.

The Planning Commission is concerned about the potentially negative impact in the WRPD.

3. Report of Commission

An inquiry was made about a civil lawsuit between Mystic River Residential Homes and a neighbor. Staff is aware of issues between the property owners but is not aware of any civil action.

Relating to the focus group doing a market analysis in Groton, Steinford referred to his conversation with the owner of Euro Cars in Groton, who had very positive comments to make about Groton's Planning Department Staff.

Steinford inquired about the blight ordinance and how successful enforcement has been. Staff explained that the complaint based program is going well. In reference to concerns in town, Staff suggested that the enforcement officer be contacted for assistance.

Steinford also inquired about a house on Indian Field Road, to which Staff will report back.

Tarbox inquired about the status of the old Chipperini property on Library Street. An additional concern was raised about a blight issue on Route 12. Staff will look into these concerns and report back.

Kane inquired about property appraisals pertaining to when a subdivision is being divided and determining an appropriate fee in lieu of providing open space. Staff spoke about zoning regulations, noting that the monetary amounts are based on how State statutes are written. Staff will look into this inquiry.

4. New Applications – None.

VII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN – None.

VIII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff received certified mail from an attorney regarding the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), who has placed a land use restriction on 175 Industrial Drive due to hazardous materials found on site. A residential activity restriction and building restriction is in place. The old industrial building is currently owned by Amtrak.

Staff gave an update on Lily Lane. She noted that Groton Utilities owns Lily Lane, which is now open to the public. Information was given about the trail and the concern with users of the private roads in the Mumford Cove and Neptune Road area. She added that Parks and Recreation is aware of this situation and is working with Groton Utilities.

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IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:50 was made by Steinfeld, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously.

Margil Steinfeld, Acting Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin Silsby
Office Assistant II