

MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
JUNE 24, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Roper, Sherrard, Steinfeld, Munn (7:05)  
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Kane (7:08)  
Staff present: Davis, Glemboski, Murphy, Gilot

Chairman Sherrard opened the meeting with roll call at 7:00 p.m. and seated Fitzgerald for Munn.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF meeting of June 10, 2008

Sherrard excused himself to attend another meeting and appointed Pritchard as Acting Chairman during his absence.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of June 10, 2008 as amended.

Motion made by Steinfeld, seconded by Roper.

Munn arrived at 7:05 p.m. Acting Chairman Pritchard seated Fitzgerald for Sherrard.

Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Groton Highpoint Subdivision, 245 Hazelnut Hill Road (31 lots)

The Commission set a public hearing date of August 12, 2008.

2. Mystic Landing Subdivision, Judson Avenue

MOTION: To release a performance bond in the amount of \$68,239.00 for the Mystic Landing Subdivision, Judson Avenue.

Motion made by Munn, seconded by Roper. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Mount Kineo Subdivision, New London Road

MOTION: To release a maintenance bond in the amount of \$3,206.00 for the Mount Kineo Subdivision, New London Road.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously.

V. SITE PLANS

1. Groton Senior Center, 102 Newtown Road

Greg Hanover, Project Manager, Town of Groton Engineering, introduced the architects, Tom Arcari and Martin Knox of Quisenberry-Arcari Architects, and Ryan Scrittorale of TO Design. Mr. Hanover presented the proposed renovation/addition project for the Groton Senior Center.

Mr. Arcari detailed the project for the expansion of the existing senior center. The existing senior center will remain at the center of the one story expansion. The entry and curb cut will stay the same. The existing parking and drive area will be reconfigured. The entry route was described. Improvements include a drop-off area at the front of the building, additional parking, more handicapped parking spaces, and a dedicated bus parking area. Site lighting, drainage, street trees and site plantings were detailed.

Sherrard returned to the meeting at 7:25 p.m. (not a voting member for this site plan).

Staff explained the internal changes in drainage, pedestrian connections, trash and recycling. Access for emergency vehicles will be provided with mountable curbs due to the radius of the entry access. Some trees will remain and some of the gardens will be relocated on the site. Access to the building from the handicapped parking spaces and movement throughout the site was reviewed. Pedestrian access is provided to the detention basin, which may be used for outdoor activities. The Commission suggested that the Town should provide some documentation of the award-winning design of the original building. The existing picnic shelter will be removed. Parking can be further expanded in the future on the western edge and to the northwest. The parking spaces provided for both buildings are 234. The senior center has 60 existing parking spaces, and 114 proposed. The hockey rink will be relocated. The construction phasing was detailed.

**MOTION:** To approve a site plan modification for Groton Senior Center, 102 Newtown Road, with the following modifications:

1. A drawing marked in red and dated 06/24/08 shall be incorporated into final plans showing the new emergency vehicle access with mountable curbing. This access shall be an all-weather surface and shall be maintained free of ice and snow at all times. No bollards or other impediments such as chains, fencing or planters shall be allowed to obstruct the area.
2. Technical items of staff shall be addressed.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING

The Commission took a short recess and the meeting resumed at 8:04 p.m.

Sherrard was reseated as Chairman.

1. North Woods Subdivision, 1299 North Road

Chairman Sherrard reviewed the public hearing procedures.

Staff addressed some of the outstanding items for the proposed North Woods Subdivision. The Parks & Recreation Department has not issued a final decision on the open space or the access to the open space. There are no outstanding issues for the water department, the electric department has only technical items for individual lot requirements, the Fire Marshal still has issues with the fire access and recommends sprinkler systems although sprinkler systems not required by any code, and Public Works and the Zoning Official have no issues. The applicant is still waiting for Inland Wetlands approval. CONNDOT has no outstanding issues with the proposed plan but an encroachment permit will be required for construction. Staff explained the waiver requests for underground utilities and a waiver for the issuance of building permits for the final two lots before the public improvements are completed. All five lots will be served from one shared driveway. At a minimum, staff suggests widening the driveway and changing the detail for the driveway base. Also, draft language should be provided for the shared driveway agreement and for acknowledgement and acceptance by future homeowners of a future road through the easement area so that no future homeowners would be able to prevent the access road to the Haley property.

Staff presented a graphic of the surrounding properties by ownership and detailed all of the properties and potential accesses along Route 117 and Lambtown Road. The 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) shows a future road connection from Lambtown Road to Route 117 in the vicinity of the subject parcel. In addition to the map, staff provided an excerpt from the 2002 POCD and a table describing the subject parcel and other lands addressed in the analysis.

Discussion ensued on the access, frontage, roads, rights of way, the future road connection shown in the POCD, the responsibility of the Commission and the implications of their decision.

Jim Bernardo, Land Surveying LLC, addressed some of the outstanding concerns. Mr. Bernardo said they will provide a turnaround for the fire apparatus, and details will be on the plan. The applicants withdrew the request for the waiver of the underground utilities. Mr. Bernardo said that he attended the Inland Wetlands Agency's site walk recently. The Inland Wetlands Agency will ask that the road alignment be adjusted.

Staff suggested the applicant work with staff before the next meeting to come up with a plan that would address the POCD recommendations. The public hearing will remain open until July 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Bernardo agreed to work with staff and thanked them for their help.

Staff advised the Commission that they will have until the July 8<sup>th</sup> meeting to close the public hearing, or an extension will be required from the applicant to keep the public hearing open beyond the meeting.

**MOTION:** To continue the public hearing for North Woods Subdivision, 1299 North Road, to the next meeting on July 8, 2008.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

VII. SUBDIVISIONS

1. North Woods Subdivision, 1299 North Road

The public hearing was continued to July 8, 2008.

VIII. SITE PLANS

1. Pizzetta "Local Motion" Event, 7 Water Street

Staff briefly explained the request for using the parking lot of the Pizzetta restaurant for a one day event. The Planning staff and Zoning Official felt the Commission should review this project.

Christopher Owens, owner of Pizzetta, detailed the proposal for a one day event on July 26<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 8 p.m., to showcase some of the local businesses in Mystic. The food and liquor served would be an extension of the restaurant's permits. The twelve parking spaces that accommodate the restaurant will be used. The Mystic Art Association will not be open that day, so all that parking is available. The dental office, which shares the building with Pizzetta, will also be closed, so their 4 parking spaces are available. The pizza business will be open. The restaurant's public restrooms and the public bathrooms will be available for the patrons. Staff detailed his recommendations and the police comments. The regulations allow temporary uses.

**MOTION:** To approve the site plan application for Pizzetta "Local Motion" Event, for July 26, 2008 from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at 7 Water Street, with the following modifications:

- 1) That all requirements of public safety personnel are met, and that all structures, uses, equipment and materials are accessible.
- 2) That public bathroom facilities onsite be clearly labeled on the plan, including those within the restaurant and/or additional portolets.
- 3) Unloading of band equipment at the driveway entrance shall be coordinated in such a manner as to avoid unnecessary truck parking along Water Street.
- 4) Provide for convenient placement of trash and recyclable receptacles on site.
- 5) Technical items of staff shall be addressed.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

The Commission took a short recess and the meeting resumed at 9:26 p.m.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

1. Groton Multifamily LLC (Ledges East), 375 Drozdyk Drive

Gary Craig, the representative for Groton Multifamily LLC, explained that the material has been removed and the site has been graded and seeded. The final plans

need to be recorded. Staff said they've removed more material than the special permit required, so this may have taken the applicants more time than he or the Commission would have liked. The adjacent property (The Ledges II) has been sold.

**MOTION:** To grant a one year extension for start of construction to Groton Multifamily LLC (Ledges East), 375 Drozdyk Drive, to August 9, 2009.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

The Chairman said that he expects that the mylars would be filed by October 1, 2008. The applicant acknowledges that this was their intent.

2. Fitch High School Modification (Drop Off Lot only), 101 Groton Long Point Road

Greg Hanover, Town of Groton, Supervisor of Technical Services, explained the proposed parking lot modification at Fitch High School. The area originally designed as a drop-off area has been redesigned as a 20 car parking lot, utilizing the existing islands. The landscaping within the islands, lighting, trees and impervious area were reviewed. Staff said the parking requirements are met and the design is similar to the original.

**MOTION:** To approve a site plan modification for Fitch High School, 101 Groton Long Point Road, with the following modifications:

1. Technical items of staff shall be addressed.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

3. Zoning Commission referral for July 2, 2008 public hearing

Zoning Regulation Amendment to Sections 6.12 Water Resource Protection District, 6.12-3 Non-Permitted/Regulated Uses to allow Day Spas to be included in regulated uses. (Chad Wright, Applicant)

Staff distributed the language for the proposed text amendment, and the existing zoning regulations for day spas. Staff read referral responses to the Commission. The SCCOG Regional Reference Committee recommended against the proposed amendment. Staff detailed the history of the 1993 and 1994 changes to the regulations and the former Tees Plus amendment proposal. The Commission concurred that they recommend denial.

**MOTION:** To recommend against the zoning text amendment for a day spa in the WRPD unless public water and sewer are available.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

X. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Roper reported on Mystic's shared bike program, "Mystic Community Bikes". The kickoff will be from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on July 10<sup>th</sup> at the train station depot. Patrons will be required to leave a deposit rather than a rental fee.

Kane said the Phase II School Design Committee still has not made a decision on the middle schools. JCJ Architecture is providing information to the committee.

Kane discussed the Commission's recent approval of the removal of the Groton Shopping Plaza planter island and an incident (a vehicle on the sidewalk) he encountered at the location of the former planter. He noted staff's concern with the applicant's proposal.

2. Zoning Commission referral for July 2, 2008 public hearing

Special Permit #305, 90 Poheganut Drive (Benchmark Assisted Living LLC, Applicant)

Staff explained the referral for a 48 unit residential life care community (assisted living facility). The use is allowed by special permit.

MOTION: To recommend approval of Special Permit #305, 90 Poheganut Drive (Benchmark Assisted Living LLC, Applicant).

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed 3-1-1, 1 against (Sherrard), 1 abstention (Munn). Sherrard said he strongly supports the need for this type facility within the Town but has concerns with its location within an approved industrial park.

3. Zoning Board of Appeals referral for July 9, 2008 public hearing

ZBA#08-08 - 479 Gold Star Highway, Grossman's Seafood/Applicant

Staff explained the referral and noted the owner has a lease with CONNDOT.

MOTION: The Commission recommended in favor of the referral.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously.

XI. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Sherrard had asked for an overview of the summer meetings for the purpose of scheduling. Staff said that at this point there is not a need for the second July Planning Commission meeting, in their opinion.

XII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff said the Central Hall site plan application was submitted to the Planning Department.

An RFQ was recently put out for a CIP project from 3 years ago for the downtown gateway streetscape design concept for improvements on Route 1, from

Kings Highway to Ronald Road, including the Kings Highway/Route 1 intersection and renovations to the median.

Staff said they are working with the State to resolve the outstanding issues for the proposed Marine Science Magnet High School on Thomas Road.

Staff attended the State DOT regional public information meeting held at the Annex last week regarding the proposed signalization at exit 89 off I-95. Three lights are proposed; one at each ramp and a third at Sandy Hollow Road. Improvements extend from the Gold Star Bridge to Exit 93 in North Stonington.

Staff discussed the reuse of the Noank School building as the interim senior center. Staff attended a Noank Zoning Commission meeting last week. Noank's attorney agreed with staff that the recreational use is a use by right, which was disputed by many in the neighborhood. A public hearing will be scheduled on the site plan.

### XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:27 p.m. made by Roper, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously.

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Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary  
Planning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot  
Office Assistant II