

MINUTES  
TOWN OF GROTON  
ZONING COMMISSION  
NOVEMBER 5, 2014 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Sutherland, Bancroft, Hudecek, Sayer  
Alternate members present:  
Absent: Marquardt, Middleton, Smith  
Staff present: Jones, Gilot

Chairperson Sutherland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF Meeting of October 1, 2014

MOTION: To approve the minutes of meeting of October 1, 2014 as amended.

Motion made by Hudecek, seconded by Bancroft. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Special Permit #343 – Tollgate Plaza, 516-528 Gold Star Highway - Continued

Matthew White, Angus McDonald Gary Sharpe & Associates, introduced Nick Sahin, the owner, and presented the special permit application. Mr. White explained the history and location of the site. The special permit is for the expansion of a non-permitted use in the WRPD by the addition of one gas pump. The site is located in the WRPD. While gas stations are prohibited in the WRPD, the use predates the establishment of the district. The regulations allow an increase of up to 50% of the non-permitted use. The existing storm water system also predates the WRPD, and is prohibited. The additional site work includes the conversion of a portion of the site to a drive-thru lane, the addition of a right-turn only out of site, paving modifications, reorienting the convenience store to east, and increasing the number of fuel pumps from two to three.

Mr. White detailed the proposed improvements to the stormwater system, the addition of oil water separators before discharge to existing drywells, and a new pad at the fuel pumps with grooved barriers, based on recommendations by Groton Utilities. The proposal is for one additional pump, and there will be no diesel sold at the site.

Mr. White explained the parking improvements, street access improvements, and the modification of the internal traffic pattern to slow down traffic and discourage the cut-through from Toll Gate Road. A wetlands permit and variances were granted for the proposed project. A copy of the revised traffic plan was distributed. The new plan provides 63 parking spaces, an increase of 2 stalls, and reduces impervious surface from 70.6% to 70%. Twenty percent of the site will remain in a vegetated state. CONNDOT has reviewed the new right turn out of the site. There will be an increase

in floor area due to the addition of three small upstairs offices. The stacking lane, loading area, and drainage were explained. The subject of the special permit is only the expansion of the non-permitted use, which is the addition of one gas pump.

Staff said the mailings were in order. Staff reviewed all items which were distributed to the Commission in the October and November packets. She noted the WRPD was adopted in 1987, and said that the applicant and staff worked closely with Groton Utilities to eliminate the potential for pollution from a fuel spill.

The Chairperson asked for public comments and there were none.

The public hearing was closed at 7:35 p.m.

A motion was made to add "Consideration of Public Hearings" to the agenda after "IV. Public Hearing".

Motion made by Hudecek, seconded by Sayer, and passed unanimously.

#### CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The commission discussed the expansion of the non-permitted use and whether it would be more of a threat to the public drinking water supply than what is currently on site. They noted the addition of the best management practices to protect stormwater quality.

**MOTION:** To approve Special Permit #343, Tollgate Plaza LLC, 516-528 Gold Star Highway to allow the expansion of a non-permitted use in the Water Resource Protection District by 50% by the addition of one fuel pump.

#### Findings

The Commission finds that the 50% expansion of the non-permitted use is in compliance with Section 6.12-6 of the Zoning Regulations in that the expansion does not pose more of a threat to the existing public water supply source than does the existing use and that the expansion plan includes best management practices designed to prevent and controls spills of material that may pose a threat to the public water supply source.

The Commission also finds that the expansion of the non-permitted use complies with Section 8.3-8 of the Zoning Regulations in that the activity is appropriate for the site, it does not alter the essential characteristics of the area, it provides adequate and suitable vehicular circulation for the use, does not conflict with the purposes of these regulations, and will reasonably minimize the potential environmental impacts on adjacent water bodies, including Long Island Sound.

Motion made by Hudecek, seconded by Sayer. Motion passed unanimously.

#### V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Land Use and Zoning Regulation Review and Update

Staff reported that the Town Council has authorized a review of the zoning regulations and a market analysis, with the goal of encouraging economic development. The RFQ will be sent out on Friday. Staff expects the work to be done next year. The Commission asked staff to email them a copy of the RFQ. The Commission would like to be involved in the process, and participate in the selection of the consultant. Staff explained that it is a Town Council project; however, staff will keep the Zoning Commission involved throughout the process.

2. POCD Update

Staff said the Planning Commission is still reviewing the POCD and it should be completed by the end of this year. Staff is putting together an outline for the consultant. The Commission discussed the POCD process and the consultant selection.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Adoption of 2015 Meeting Schedule

MOTION: To adopt the 2015 Meeting Schedule as presented, except changing the starting time to 6:30 p.m. for all regular meetings.

Motion made by Bancroft, seconded by Sayer. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Report of Commission

3. Receipt of New Applications - None

VII. REPORT OF CHAIRPERSON

Commissioner Sayer commented on her recent public hearing with the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance request, and discussed the ZBA's process with regard to public hearings. The Chairman explains the process prior to the start of the hearing. The Commission discussed corner lots and front yards, as defined by the zoning regulations, and the addition of hyperlinks in the electronic version of the zoning regulations.

Staff reported there will not be a hearing in December and that the meeting will be more of a workshop for them to discuss regulation amendments.

VIII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff distributed the following handouts to the Commission:

- A list of common questions received at front counter (to be used for a development guide by Economic Development Commission).
- An invitation to a SECHA Affordable Housing bus tour
- A copy of the press release for the Director's Open House to be held on November 17<sup>th</sup>

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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Motion to adjourn at 8:09 p.m. made by Bancroft, seconded by Hudecek, so voted unanimously.

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Susan Sutherland, Chairperson  
Zoning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot  
Office Assistant III