

MINUTES  
TOWN OF GROTON  
ZONING COMMISSION  
MAY 4, 2016 – 6:30 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – 134 GROTON LONG POINT ROAD  
COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Marquardt, Sutherland, Hudecek, Sayer

Alternate members present: Smith

Absent:

Staff present: Glemboski, Jones, Gilot

Chairperson Sutherland called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. and seated Smith as a voting member.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Special Permit #346, 0 Route 12, PIN 178018417370, NMDD Zone. Proposal is for the construction of 147 multi-family residential units in the Nautilus Memorial Design District. Review is per Section 6.10-3 of the Zoning Regulations. (Lighthouse Point LLC, Owner; A.R. Building Company, Inc., Applicant)

The Chairperson recused herself from the hearing and appointed Vice Chairman Hudecek to sit as Chair for this application. Acting Chairman Hudecek read the legal notice.

William Sweeney, Attorney, Tobin, Carberry, O'Malley, Riley, Selinger P.C., New London, represented the applicant, A.R. Building. Mr. Sweeney introduced the applicants and their representatives who were present: applicants: Dan Mancosh, Jason Kambitsis, and John Thompson of A.R. Building; John Schmitz, BL Companies; and Geoff Campbell, Architect, Rothschild Doyno Collaborative.

Mr. Sweeney explained the site location in the Nautilus Memorial Design District (NMDD) and provided a brief overview of the project. The zone allows multi-family as a use by right, but new construction requires a special permit.

Mr. Sweeney submitted the original mailing receipts for notification to abutters.

Mr. Sweeney detailed the triangular shaped, undeveloped, 12.4 acre location off Route 12. There is multi-family located to the east and west. The development would be on the flatter, northern end of the property due to the slope of the site. Mr. Sweeney reviewed a previously approved project at this site. He said a wetland permit was granted for that project in 2005, and this project meets the conditions of the permit in effect.

The applicants propose to build a 147 unit apartment complex. The proposal meets all zoning requirements. They propose three identical buildings with 49 units each, a mixture of studio, one bedroom, and select two bedroom

units. The buildings will each have elevators, porches as required by the regulations, and each building will be sprinklered. All ADA requirements would be met.

The target market would be single upwardly mobile people who want to live in Groton. There is a need for new, high quality rental units in Groton.

Access to the site would be through two curb cuts on Pleasant Valley Road North. A traffic report was submitted. As part of their referral, the Planning Commission asked them to review the Gungywamp – Pleasant Valley Road North intersection and propose anything that might mitigate the traffic at this location. Markings to keep the intersection clear have been proposed as a solution.

A new frontage sidewalk will be installed along the west side of Pleasant Valley Road North and on Gungywamp Road and then connect to the existing sidewalk system at Route 12 and Gungywamp Road. Parking spaces required are 239; the State of Connecticut traffic authority will need to review the project and issue a traffic permit. There will be some covered parking as well as surface parking lots.

Mr. Sweeney reviewed the access drives, lighting, active and passive recreation areas, detention basins and stormwater. No playground area is proposed at this time. The utilities will be underground. The site is served by municipal water and sewer. The applicants propose to extend a new water line from Gungywamp to address water pressure issues. The buildings will be developed in the northern area, and the remainder of the site will be left in its natural state, out of the upland review area.

John Schmitz, BL Companies, Meriden, detailed the drainage and traffic. The traffic flow from two driveways on the site was reviewed. The queuing of cars on Gungywamp at the traffic light on Route 12 currently backs up and blocks the intersection at Pleasant Valley Road North. 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 crosswalk clear. He discussed the traffic study performed this year, and peak hours at the intersection during the am and pm commute.

Geoffrey Campbell, Rothschild Architect, Rothschild Doyno Collaborative, Pittsburgh, showed slides of other sites built by A.R. Building throughout the country.

The buildings/floor plans and elevations and building heights for the proposed units were reviewed. ADA accommodations were discussed. A clubhouse will be built on site. Garages and carports will be provided.

Mr. Sweeney addressed the special permit requirements, the Nautilus Memorial Design District and the Plan of Conservation and Development criteria.

Staff said the proposed traffic plan was sent to the Town Engineer, who said the report was acceptable. The Planning Commission had concerns with the

queuing issue during the morning and the afternoon peak times. The design will be sent to the Town Traffic Authority, as well as the state Traffic Commission.

The Acting Chairman asked for comments from the public and there were none.

Mr. Sweeney thanked the commission and stated that the applicants would be meeting with the Traffic Authority on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

The public hearing was closed at 7:46 pm.

2. Special Permit #347, 24 West Main Street, PIN 261918412001, WDD Zone. Proposal is to convert 2300 square feet of retail to a restaurant with up to 400 square feet of seating area. Review is per Sections 6.3 and 8.3 of the Zoning Regulations. (State & Elizabeth Lawrence, Owner; Cheryl Robdau, Applicant)

Chairman Sutherland was reseated. Vice Chairman Hudecek read the legal ad.

Rod Desmarais, 81 High Street, Mystic, owner of the ice cream shop on West Main Street, presented their proposal to move the existing deli at the ice cream shop to a new location at 24 West Main Street. A Certificate of Appropriateness was granted by the Historic District Commission. There would be no increase in intensity of use. Mr. Desmarais showed pictures of the elevations of the building, the former "Clad In" retail shop. He detailed the building's location, access, and the proposed change in handicap access when the Central Hall building is complete. There is no handicap access from the front because it is a historic building. They will have a handicap access ramp at the back of the building, which will be relocated to the side of the building when the Central Hall building is built.

Cheryl Robdau, owner of business, addressed the handicap access issue. She said there is just no land available to create an access, and after completion of Central Hall, handicap access will be from a separate entrance.

Mr. Desmarais presented the coastal access management report.

There will be no outside seating and no alcohol served.

Staff addressed the WDD. The restaurant would have over 100 s.f. of seating, requiring a special permit. Twelve parking spaces are required. An oil tank is being relocated and upgraded. The Planning Commission had no comment. The abutter mailings were in order.

The Vice Chairman asked for comments from the public and there were none.

The public hearing was closed at 8:07 p.m.

### III. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Special Permit #346, 0 Route 12, A.R. Building Company, Inc., Applicant

The Commission discussed existing traffic concerns. Staff discussed the previously approved application from 2006 for multi-family housing.

**MOTION:** To approve Special Permit #346, 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 conditions 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 Local Traffic Authority or the Office of the State Traffic Administration. Any modification to this plan imposed by another Federal, State, or Local agency shall require additional review by Town Staff and/or the appropriate Commission, whichever is appropriate.

Findings

The Commission finds that the development of a 147-unit multi-family residential development is consistent with the purpose and objectives of Section 6.10 of the Zoning Regulations for the NMDD zone. Multi-family residential is considered an appropriate use for the district and helps to create a viable service and residential area which serves the needs of the personnel associated with the Base and those associated with the defense-related industries in the surrounding area.

The Commission also finds that the development of a 147-unit multi-family development 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 and utilities 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 Smith, seconded by Sayer. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Special Permit #347, 24 West Main Street, Cheryl Robdau, Applicant

**MOTION:** To approve Special Permit #347, 24 West Main Street, to convert 2,300 square feet of retail space to a restaurant with up to 400 square feet of seating area.

The Commission finds that the conversion of a retail to a restaurant use complies with the objectives of Section 6.3 of the Zoning Regulations in that it will enhance the unique qualities of Mystic, will preserve and enhance the historic features of the existing building, and is in keeping with the goals of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The Commission also finds that this application complies with the special permit objectives in Section 8.3-8 of the Zoning Regulations in that it does not alter the essential characteristics of the Mystic area, does not cause traffic congestion or safety conflicts, 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 Sutherland, seconded by Smith. Motion passed 4-0-1 1 abstention (Sayer).

MOTION: To approve the Coastal Site Plan for the conversion of retail space to a restaurant at 24 West Main Street because it is consistent with all applicable coastal policies and will not have an adverse impact on coastal resources.

Motion made by Sutherland, seconded by Smith. Motion passed 4-0-1, 1 abstention (Sayer).

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of March 30, 2016 as amended.

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

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the meeting of April 4, 2016 as written.

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

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of April 11, 2016 as written.

Motion made by Smith, seconded by Marquardt. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Zoning Regulation Update – WRPD Discussion

Staff is still waiting for some responses from the consultant. The Commission discussed incentivizing LEED certification. For homework, the commissioners will review the Table of Permitted Uses.

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRPERSON - None

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

1. Meeting Schedule

A special meeting was scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup>, starting at 6:00 pm to finish the WRPD table, review a map showing combined residential zones, and review definitions associated with uses in the Table of Permitted Uses.

The next regular meeting will be held on June 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 pm.

A special meeting was scheduled for June 13<sup>th</sup> to continue the work on the WRPD and zone consolidation.

Staff presented Susan Marquardt with a Length of Service Award from the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies (CFPZA) in recognition of her 12 years of service on the Groton Zoning Commission.

The spring CFPZA newsletter was distributed.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:41 p.m. made by Smith, seconded by Sayer, so voted unanimously.

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Susan Marquardt, Secretary  
Zoning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot  
Office Assistant III