

PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 14, 2006  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Munn, Pritchard, Roper, Sherrard, Steinfeld  
Staff present: Glemboski, Goodrich, Murphy, Stanowicz

Chairman Sherrard opened the meeting with roll call at 7:04 p.m.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Watrous Resubdivision, 113 Fishtown Road

Chairman Sherrard opened the public hearing at 7:45 p.m. and read the public hearing procedures.

Steinfeld read the legal ad.

James Bernardo, Surveyor, 102A Spithead Road, Waterford represented Phil Watrous, owner of 113 Fishtown Road.

Mr. Bernardo explained that the application is for a resubdivision of the original Barber subdivision approved in 1998. The owner proposes to resubdivide the large front lot containing an existing house into two lots. There are wetlands on the property delineated in 1998. The Inland Wetlands Agency granted approval in February for this subdivision. The property is zoned R-40 (Noank Zoning).

Test holes were performed, and Ledge Light Health District has approved a septic system for a three bedroom house on the new lot.

No open space is proposed. In lieu of open space dedication, the owner will be making a payment of 10% of the fair market value of the property, in accordance with Town Subdivision Regulation 4.9 (5). An appraisal was submitted for the record.

Mr. Bernardo said the owner is requesting waivers for: Subdivision Regulation Section 4.5(1) for connection to public water, Section 4.6(2)(a) for connection to a public sanitary sewer system, and Section 4.8(1) for installation of underground utilities to allow the overhead utility connection to the existing home on Lot 1A to remain. He stated that connecting to the public water and

sewer system would create a disturbance of Eccleston Brook and the wetlands that run along the property frontage. The owner is requesting a waiver in order to

maintain the existing overhead utilities to the existing home on Lot 1A and to maintain the overhead utilities to SNET Pole #7069 to avoid disturbing Eccleston Brook. Utilities will be underground from Pole #7069 to the new house. The owners of 125 Fishtown Road have granted an easement over their property for this purpose.

Staff said all the approvals have been received. Approval of the requested waivers will protect Eccleston Brook. Maintaining the overhead utilities as proposed is consistent with what was approved for the Barber Subdivision. The driveway will be shared between the existing home, the rear lot, and the Kent property. To further protect Eccleston Brook, no additional driveways are proposed. All of the lots will have legal frontage on Fishtown Road.

Staff said sidewalks are continuous on the opposite side of Fishtown Road. Building new sidewalks on this side of Fishtown Road would also be disruptive to Eccleston Brook. An appraisal has been submitted, and was reviewed by the Town Assessor. The appraisal lists the fair market value before the subdivision at \$235,000. There is a note on the plan for this.

Pritchard asked staff if the Town accepts the appraised value. Staff answered yes.

Pritchard questioned how many houses will be served by the existing driveway, and if this was suitable. Mr. Bernardo answered three, and the Engineering report in the plan speaks to the ability of that driveway to accommodate emergency as well as construction vehicles.

Roper asked if the culvert has been checked to see if it will accommodate fire vehicles. Mr. Bernardo said yes, and an engineering report is in the file.

Steinfeld said that a sprinkler system was required in the previous approval. He asked if the Commission has to consider a waiver for the sprinkler. Staff said the Noank Fire Marshal has asked for an alarm system that will be hooked to a central system through the telephone line. The Kent property is handled this way as well.

Steinfeld asked about access on the driveway to the Kent property, and if any additional houses can be built back there. Staff answered there is land area, but there are problems with frontage. There is only 25 ft. of frontage now.

Steinfeld asked if the 10% fee in lieu of open space was acceptable to the developer. Staff said that the owner is in agreement with the 10% fee. The Town still requires open space dedication where it makes sense. Based on the small amount of land in this case, and the fact that there is no accessway to connect any

parcel on this subdivision with other Town-owned land, there is no public purpose to dedicating open space land, in staff's opinion.

Munn asked staff if this waiver of the requirement to underground utilities will produce any more overhead utilities than already exists there. Staff said there will not be an increase.

Sherrard asked if the Kent property is now served by the existing driveway, and if the sight lines from the driveway are ok. Staff said yes.

Roper asked if there is a legal agreement between the three driveways. Staff answered that there is. Mr. Bernardo stated that a right of way area is dedicated to the back lot.

Staff read the following correspondence into the record:

- Noank Fire District Executive Committee
- Noank Fire District – Noank Zoning District
- State of Connecticut DEP Public Health Department
- Email from John Phillip (Town Assessor)
- Ledge Light Health District
- Noank Water Company

MOTION: To close the Watrous Subdivision public hearing.

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

2. Library Hill LLC, 836 Noank Road

Steinfeld read the legal ad.

Chairman Sherrard opened the public hearing at 8:13 p.m.

Susan Marquardt, an engineer with Gary Sharpe, P.E., represented the applicant, Library Hill LLC. The property is in a CAM review area within 1,000 ft. of Beebe Cove. The application is to subdivide .89 acres into three lots in an RS-12 zone.

Each lot will have a crushed stone driveway. There is existing public sewer. The applicant is asking for a waiver for public water supply. The Noank fire district is 535 ft. to the west but the subdivision is outside of the fire district. The property is located more than 1,000 ft. from Aquarion's public water supply facilities to the east. Private individual wells are proposed to serve each house. A five ft. wide frontage sidewalk waiver is requested. Sidewalks exist on the

opposite side of the road. They are also requesting a waiver of open space, and will pay the 10% fee in lieu of open space. There is an appraisal on file with the application. There are several existing street trees along the frontage that will be removed only as needed. Parts of the stone wall will be removed for installation of the driveways. Lot #3 will have its own driveway and Lots #1 and #2 will have a shared driveway.

Staff said they are going to recommend a continuance of this public hearing until the next regular meeting because there are some items that need to be addressed with the CAM application.

Staff said the property to the south is a large estate house which fronts on Beebe Cove. The existing site was created through a free split. Presently there are vineyards on the site. The application is to divide the parcel into 3 lots, each 12,000 to 14,000 sq. ft. in size. The engineer is working with the State of Connecticut DOT on the design of the shared driveway access.

The applicant is asking for a waiver of public water hookup. Staff pointed out the water districts on a map. The site is located between the Aquarion Water service area and the Groton Utilities service area. Noank Water is 535 ft. from the property, but the property is not in the Noank Water District. Groton Utilities has no interest in extending the water lines to this site. The subdivision is on an existing road and frontage sidewalks may be required. There is a 4 ft. wide bituminous walk on both sides of Noank Road. They are asking for a waiver to allow them to install a 5 ft. concrete walk. Public Works feels that the existing bituminous walk is sufficient.

The applicant has agreed to pay a fee in lieu of open space. An appraisal setting the fair market value at \$234,000 prior to the subdivision is on file. The property abuts Beebe Cove and Avalonia Land Trust. If this site had direct access to Beebe Cove, the Town would ask for dedication of the land, but it doesn't. The Town Parks and Recreation Department has no interest in this property. Staff recommends the Town accept the fee in lieu of open space dedication on this site.

Munn asked if there is any sidewalk improvement proposed in this area at this time. Staff said Public Works does not have sidewalks on this portion of

Noank Road in their long term plans. Munn asked if there was a coastal access sign on this property. Staff said they had not seen this after walking the site. Ms. Marquardt believes it is on Avalonia Land Trust land.

Steinford asked if the Town Assessor agreed with the \$234,000 appraisal. Staff said yes. Steinford said the houses appear to be close to the side property line, and asked if they meet the Zoning Regulations for that area. Staff answered yes, the requirement is 12 ft. side yard setbacks.

Roper asked about the existing driveway. Mark Jakan, Shennecossett Road, a principal in Library Hill LLC, answered that there is no driveway on the site, just tire tracks.

Pritchard asked Ms. Marquardt to identify the square footage of the 3 lots. Ms. Marquardt said Lot #1 is 12,034 square feet, Lot #2 is 14,412 square feet, and Lot #3 is 12,149 square feet. A 12,000 minimum lot size is required.

Pritchard asked if a fire alarm system is required for this application, and if there are any other special requirements. Staff said the Fire Marshal did not have any special requirements. Staff said that all departments and agencies have approved the plan.

Sherrard asked the applicant if there is contamination on-site since this site was an old vineyard where there was a potential for pesticide use. Staff said there is no reference on the plans.

Regarding the fees in lieu of open space, staff noted for the record that the appraisal has been submitted to the Planning Department.

Chairman Sherrard asked for comments from the public.

Michael Noel, 100 Williams Street, stated that the property value doesn't seem realistic. He asked if the size of the lots met the Zoning Regulations.

Munn clarified that the fees in lieu of open space is the fair market value of the unimproved land before the subdivision. The Assessor reviews the appraisals. Any fees in lieu of open space collected by the Town is put into the open space fund set up for this regulation.

Steinford said that the lot size is listed as .85 acre, and 10% of that would be .09 acre.

Roper asked staff what the current assessed value of the property is. Staff said that the Tax Assessor's assessed value was in the range of \$180,000 or \$190,000.

**MOTION:** To continue the public hearing for Library Hill LLC, 836 Noank Road to the next regularly scheduled meeting on March 28, 2006.

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

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF February 28, 2006

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 28, 2006 with the following Modifications:

1. Pg. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence should read “regional multi-modal transportation plan”.

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

#### IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

A student at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies sent a survey for completion by the Commission. The responses need to be back to the student by April 1, 2006. Members can return their response to staff.

Staff received a request for input from the State of Connecticut DEP on the draft update of the 2006 assessment of the State’s Coastal Management Program. Individual responses are requested, and can be done online.

#### V. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Watrous Subdivision, 113 Fishtown Road

MOTION: To approve a waiver of Section 4.5 (1) of the Subdivision Regulations, for connection to public water. The Commission finds that this alternative is preferable to disturbance of Eccleston Brook and that the request conforms to the criteria specified in Section 1.10 of the Subdivision Regulations.

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

MOTION: To approve a waiver of Section 4.6(2)(a) for connection to a public sanitary sewer system. The Commission finds that this

alternative is preferable to disturbance of Eccleston Brook and that the request conforms to the criteria specified in Section 1.10 of the Subdivision Regulations.

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

MOTION: To approve a waiver of Section 4.8 (1) of the Subdivision Regulations for installation of underground utilities to allow the overhead utility connection to the existing home on Lot 1A of the Watrous resubdivision to remain. The Commission finds that this alternative is preferable to disturbance of wetlands and Eccleston Brook and the request conforms to the criteria specified in Section 1.10 of the Subdivision Regulations.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Munn.

Pritchard moved to amend the motion to insert “and to SNET Pole 7069” following “Lot 1A” in the motion. Munn seconded the motion to amend.

Motion to amend approved unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the main motion as amended, so voted unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the Watrous Subdivision with the following modifications:

1. In accordance with Section 4.9(5), a payment in lieu of open space of \$23,500, the equivalent of 10% of the fair market value of the land prior to the subdivision, shall be made prior to recording the plans.
2. The houses shall have an internal fire alarm system that shall be connected to a central station via telephone lines.
3. Note that all frontage trees called out on plan are “trees to remain” on plans.
4. Technical items raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Commission finds that frontage sidewalks are not required because a connected system of concrete and bituminous walks exists along the eastern side of Fishtown Road.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinford.

Pritchard moved to amend the motion to change “houses” to “house on Lot 1B”. Munn seconded the motion to amend. Motion to amend approved unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the main motion as amended, so voted unanimously.

2. Library Hill LLC, 836 Noank Road

MOTION: To continue the public hearing for Library Hill LLC, 836 Noank Road to the next regularly scheduled meeting on March 28, 2006.

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

## VI. SITE PLANS

1. The Woodlands, 0 Ronald Road – Request for extension

MOTION: To approve an extension for The Woodlands, 0 Ronald Road, until the next regularly scheduled meeting on March 28, 2006.

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

2. Northeast Academy Elementary School, 115 Oslo Street

Rick Norris, Town of Groton Project Manager, introduced Greg Smolley, Architect, JCJ Architecture. Mr. Smolley reviewed the history and need for the new school due to growth and inadequate facilities, and how the Town decided on the old Freeman Hathaway school site.

Mr. Smolley presented a PowerPoint presentation on the school project. A paper copy was distributed to the Commission members.

Mr. Smolley described the location of the site, the former Freeman Hathaway School. The site is in the RU-40 and RS-12 zones. A portion of the site, at the front of the building, is in the Watershed Resource Protection District (WRPD). This presents a problem for the location of the generator.

Mr. Smolley reviewed the existing site plan with the Commission. The Inland Wetlands Agency has approved a permit for the site. The Master Trails Plan shows a future path potentially through the site. The site has steep slopes and rock outcroppings. Borings of the site rock outcroppings show that the rock is of good quality, and can be crushed for reuse in the site work. The location of the wetlands, slope and rock outcroppings limit the location of the building.

There is an old septic system on site that was used before the existing building was connected to the public sewer system. Freeman Hathaway was the typical 1950's "baby boom" school. The proposed site plan shows how demands on the school have changed. The new building will be approximately 48,000 sq. ft., which is about three times as large as the current Freeman Hathaway School. The educational needs, as mandated by the State, must be met by the school building in order to receive state funding. There is a playscape suitable for ages 5 to 12, and another playscape for ages 2 to 5. The play areas need to be located

away from the road to provide safety and security for the students. In the proposed plan, the yards and fields are fenced in and visible from the building for safety. The detention basin and outflow from the basin are abutting the wetland. The quality of discharged stormwater will be increased from the existing site. There are parking spaces for 75 cars. The bus drop-off is separated from the parent drop-off, with separate entrances for each. Oslo Street ends in a cul-de-sac. They will keep the radius of the cul-de-sac the same as the existing one to be able to turn a fire truck around without coming onto the site.

There is an area on the plan marked for future expansion. The building will ultimately serve 450 students. The current plan is being built to fit the current population, which is about 390 students. The building setback is predicated on the build-out. A variance was received for the height of the building.

The applicants are asking for waivers for frontage sidewalks on Ann Avenue and between the two entry driveways. The applicant will increase the width of the sidewalk to match the existing sidewalk on Oslo Street, and repair the sidewalk at the house nearest the site. The proposed concrete sidewalk on Oslo Street is 5 ft. wide, and they propose to pull it back on the corner into the driveway to allow for the radius of the school buses. An asphalt sidewalk will be built around the building for the public walkway, as the Fire Marshal requested. There is enough outside area for student gathering in the event of an emergency. The walks will be concrete in front and asphalt around back. The sidewalks that are considered primary to opening on a snow day will be plowable. Those sidewalks secondary to opening on a snow day will be wide enough to be handled with a snow blower.

A potential trail on the site may be dependent on future water line locations, and this is still unresolved. The parking layout was detailed. Fire response equipment can access the perimeter of the school. There will be handicapped parking and raised crosswalks for ADA compliance. The architect's suggested standard formula for school building parking is one space for every 750 sq. ft. of building. That would be 78 spaces needed for the new

building, but existing schools smaller than the size of new school show that the number actually used is far less than the actual number available. They expect that 53 spaces will be used all the time for staff, with 19 available for visitors. Site and budget constraints will not allow them to increase that number. Widths and depths of the parking spaces were explained.

There will be a loading zone in front of the gym, next to the kitchen, in the WRPD area. There is an above ground fuel oil storage tank and concrete

bollards on the above-ground storage tank may be required. A propane storage tank will be placed behind the fuel oil tank. There will be no danger to the watershed from any leaking propane (which becomes airborne). This placement is within applicable codes for storage of oil and propane. There is no need for a compactor in this loading area. The placement of a transformer in the WRPD is not a problem. The diesel generator currently has no secondary spill containment for the fuel and this item is not completely resolved at this point.

Mr. Smolley said the drainage system has been reviewed and accepted by the Inland Wetland Agency, although the location of a catch basin in the loading area needs to be resolved to meet the WRPD requirements.

The public sewer has capacity for the school and 550 of students.

Water pressure in this area appears to raise a problem with continuity to meet the fire code. The applicants will be meeting with staff, the Fire Marshal and Aquarion Water this week to resolve this issue.

The site lighting proposed is on 15' high poles, below the tree line. Residual lighting on the walkways is still being discussed with the Fire Marshal. This area has no foreseeable night use. They may have to use shorter poles or mount lighting off the building because of the adjacent properties.

Mr. Smolley discussed the site plantings and buffer. There is a 25 ft. no-cut zone around the property and within that area is all native vegetation on a majority of the site. There will be buffer plantings on either side of the entrance driveway. There may be an issue with the view of an adjacent neighbor and the Town has asked the neighbor if they would like to grant the Town a construction easement on his property. The Town would then build a buffer on his property to buffer his view of the school.

The floor plans were reviewed. The first floor includes the boiler area, kitchen, music room, art room, cafetorium, Pre-K and kindergarten rooms,

media, classrooms for grades 2 and 3. The classrooms for grades 4 and 5 will be on the upper level. The egress for the younger students up to second grade has to be separate from the older students. L-shaped classrooms allow a one-on one or small group work area as well as classroom area. This layout will reduce the staff requirements.

The cafetorium has a shaded roofline to keep the room cooler in the summer months. The highest point of the building is the classroom wing on the upper level. The height variance has been approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals. There is a pitched roof to protect roof top units. The units are subject

to review by an acoustical engineer who will advise if any noise abatement steps need to be taken. The site lines from the neighborhood house on the west side were reviewed. They may have to provide a screen for one rooftop.

Staff said they are working closely with the applicant on the WRPD issue. The water issue needs to be agreed upon with the various agencies. Sidewalks exist on Oslo Street and Lamphere Road, and a short section of Ann Ave. The Master Trails Plan shows the existing sidewalk on Oslo Street. It is presently a very narrow bituminous path. Within the next 2 years the Town's Capital

Improvement Program (CIP) proposes to rebuild the sidewalk on Oslo Street. The Town will replace the existing asphalt sidewalks with concrete. The Master Trails Plan also proposes a future sidewalk on the opposite side of Ann Avenue from the school's frontage. An existing dirt trail from Ann Avenue is currently used by children going to the playground. It has not yet been determined if this trail will be used or improved with this project. A note will be on the plans so as not to prevent future construction and use of this trail. If the water line has to come up through Ann Avenue, the trail may be there sooner than later. The buffer plantings still need to be addressed with the applicant. With regards to screening, the Town regulations call for evergreen trees, every 10' on center, but this may be too much for the school grounds in certain areas as it can create a hiding area. The safety issue for the school versus a privacy issue for the neighbors needs to be balanced. The design of the walls and fencing has not been decided. The Conservation Commission has made some recommendations for the project, which are attached to the staff summary sheet.

Roper asked Mr. Norris if the reason for not building the full size school was for budget reasons. Mr. Norris said that the Town is trying to keep equality between the two new elementary schools and to keep the programs the same. They have cut 6,000 square feet out to the original building, which is 2 classrooms less than the Kolnaski school. They are still struggling to stay within budget. Based on the site design, the addition can easily be added at a later time.

Roper asked if the dumpsters were for recycling materials. Mr. Smolley said yes. Roper said he would like the trail to be done as soon as possible.

Steinfeld asked if the water will be able to accommodate the future addition. Smolley answered yes. Steinfeld asked if there is an elevator to the second floor. Mr. Smolley said yes; it is required by code.

Steinfeld asked if the section of the drain under the building will have easy access to the cleanouts. Scott Lindgren, an engineer with Pare Engineering, said the existing drain is not under the existing school, but under the location of the future addition. The cleanout placement and future addition have been taken into consideration with the plans. Steinfeld asked if they are going to replace the portion under the new school. Mr. Lindgren said yes, it is being fully replaced from Oslo Street. There will be a storm water particle separator and new lines to the discharge area.

Munn asked Mr. Smolley to clarify the ages for the playscapes. He asked if there will be a preschool going in this school. Mr. Smolley said no, the qualification is the physical size of the child, not the actual grade level. Munn asked about the fuel tank size and protecting the tank with bollards. Mr. Smolley said they are not committed to the placement of the fuel tank until the location of the generator is resolved.

Munn asked about the transportation of students, and from what distance from the school would the students be walkers. Munn asked if the Ann Avenue trail, as well as the other trail, which runs east to west on the site, would be entryways for the students. He also asked if Oslo Street and Lamphere Road are suitable for increased traffic to the school. Mr. Smolley stated that the road has the proper turning radii and is able to accommodate school buses. The original turn around is kept in order to keep the cul-de-sac as it is on Oslo Street. The subdivision roads, out to Cow Hill Road, will have no detrimental impact from the additional traffic from the school. Accessing the building from Ann Avenue was discussed. Ann Avenue has the most water with the best pressure and a trail along a new water line fits into the Town's future trails system. Then there could be two ways of access, although Ann Ave. is least able to handle the traffic.

Various alternatives to the Oslo Street entrance were discussed. Mr. Smolley said the traffic study looked at Cow Hill Road and the surrounding neighborhood. The peak times for the school are not the same as the business traffic hours. The Town will infill the sidewalks, increase the size of the sidewalks, and make the building available after hours for the neighborhood. There is a little more vehicular traffic than when the school was originally built.

Ann Avenue could be used as an access, but the access would need to be cleared, paved, lit, and maintained, and the liability to the Town is increased. Fencing and gating discourages access on an unmonitored trail entryway. The Board of Education doesn't want the trail to be part of the school. Mr. Norris said the Department of Public Works is committed to repaving Oslo Street once the project is completed.

Sherrard noted that on Mr. Smolley's aerial zoning map, Route 184 was mislabeled.

Sherrard asked if there will be bike racks installed for the kids. Mr. Smolley answered yes.

Sherrard asked how much larger the new school will be than the Hathaway School. Mr. Smolley said the new school will be roughly 2 ½ times larger than the existing school. Due to educational needs, there will be 11 classrooms, fewer students per classroom, support classes and specials classrooms. It will have the same capacity as the existing school, but will be a bigger building.

Sherrard asked if Oslo Street is the only access for emergency service. Mr. Smolley said yes, but the end of Lamphere Road could provide a hose trail to provide a secondary access for fire.

Sherrard asked if other activities, such as organized sports, PTA or voting have been factored into the parking spaces. Mr. Smolley said that the driveway is

the same width as a public roadway, so one side can be used for parallel parking during the off-school hours. Mr. Smolley said he will bring an off-hour parking scenario to the Commission.

Sherrard asked about noise buffering. He said there may be a potential noise issue with the school moving closer to the homeowners. Mr. Smolley said most of the noise would come from the roof top units. An acoustical engineer will be doing a noise study. The playgrounds have been moved behind the building for safety, and to shield noise. The school will use a pager system so there will not be any ringing bells.

Sherrard asked if the play areas will be able to handle the expansion. Mr. Smolley answered yes. Sherrard said his biggest concerns are the one access on Oslo Street. Mr. Smolley said that the Fire Marshal and Police have been at every meeting.

Roper asked from which area will students walk, and from which area will students be bused. Mr. Smolley said Ann Avenue will probably be bused, and Cow Hill and beyond will probably be bused. There are 200 to 300 houses in the neighborhood, and those students will be walkers. Students who live less than one mile from the school will walk as long as there are sidewalks.

Staff told the Commission there is a special meeting on Monday, March 20th to discuss Fitch High School, and Northeast School can be added to the agenda.

Roper asked if the letter from the Conservation Commission has been addressed. Staff explained that the Planning Department extended the referral to the Conservation Commission as a courtesy and will follow up.

**MOTION:** To continue Northeast Elementary School to the next regular meeting on March 28, 2006.

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

3. Catherine Kolnaski Elementary School, 500 Poquonnock Road

Mr. Smolley, JCJ Architecture, represented the applicant. He introduced Jim Hoagland of JCJ Architecture, Scott Lindgren of Pare Engineering, Scott Celella of JCJ, Jim LaPosta, CEO of JCJ Architecture, Evan Cowles of Ferrero Hixon Associates and Rick Norris, Project Manager, Town of Groton.

Mr. Smolley reviewed the location of the site. There are 124 acres on a lot of rock. The Inland Wetland Agency has approved a wetlands permit for the

project. The project is designed to preserve the site for potential further development by the Town. General Dynamics – Electric Boat is the neighbor to the west, with their parking lot across the street.

Mr. Smolley said the steep slopes on the site are being addressed and the top of the hill will be leveled out for the school. There are three areas of archaeological interest on the site. These areas were substantially disturbed previously, according to the Phase 1 and Phase 2 environmental site assessments from '03. The sites include slag from the train tracks which is fine and fly ash from an old furnace chimney on the property, which can be removed or fenced. There are 2 or 3 old 55-gallon barrels on the site, and it is assumed they were used as burning barrels for warmth during a previous project in the area. There is also fill that was pushed into the wetlands. The fill is probably sandblasting material from EB or one of the industries in the area. The fill is inert, and cleaning up the fill would be more of a disturbance than fencing or avoiding the

area. The environmental scientists said that these sites do not warrant removal. The proposed site plan shows steep slope crests right in front of the school with a knoll which will be taken down. The access road will be a 24 ft. wide roadway with a 10 ft. wide snow shelf and 10 ft. wide bike path. This is the width of a public road, so emergency access will not be an issue. Bikes are probably a more prevalent means of access than walking at this school. The bus and parent dropoff areas are separated. There will be three access areas to the building. This building will be a little larger than the Northeast Academy building because it is being built for 550 students. The runoff from the top of the hill is being moved north to a detention basin. The parking area and front of the building will drain towards a wetland area to the south. The turning radii and parking spaces will be similar to the Northeast Academy School. The fire department will be able to turn their largest equipment in the turnaround. For this building, about 75 parking spaces are suggested. There will be a loading dock and dumpsters. The fuel oil tank and propane tank are behind the building.

Screening for this area is being worked out with staff. There will be an asphalt walk around the back of the school. Sidewalks are being built for walkers and bikers. The school will be 500 ft. from the nearest neighbor, so there is little concern with impact on the neighbors to the west. Slightly taller light poles, 24 or 25 ft. will be used within the parking areas. Toward the bottom of the driveway, a possible lease arrangement with Groton Utilities may provide a slightly different light fixture.

Mr. Smolley said tree plantings will be about 10 ft. back from right-of-way on Poquonnock Road so the view is not obscured. Trees will be limited to the areas where the trees can actually take hold. There will be plantings to slow down draining water. The plantings were reviewed with the Commission members.

The site utility plan was reviewed by Mr. Smolley. Groton Utilities will run the utilities underground near the school. The existing transmission lines will remain overhead. The school will be using gas instead of oil.

Drainage areas were pointed out for the Commission. The floor plan is similar to the Northeast School, except that the two-level classroom wing goes down a floor. The applicants are working with the state building official on the exiting requirements. This school will have grades kindergarten through five.

The roof plan has been increased by two roof top HVAC units. If and when another school is built on this property, a sound/noise study will be necessary.

Staff discussed the request for a sidewalk waiver along the frontage. There are several small areas of site frontage along Poquonnock Road. A sidewalk for Poquonnock Road is proposed in the Master Trails Plan.

Mr. Smolley addressed the access drive off the intersection. Groton Utilities will have a separate access off of this drive for their utility lines and pole. An easement agreement has been reached with Dr. Patel, owner of the land to the west to allow the Town to use his land as a construction access to blast and stage equipment on the site. Erosion and sediment control will be split into three steps on the site.

Steinfeld asked why the bike path will be put on the side of the road that is opposite the school. Mr. Smolley said from the design of the roadway and what needs to be done for drainage, the bike path works better on the south side of the road.

Roper asked about the signage of the school. Smolley said sign locations had been identified, but they have to meet with the Board of Education to establish the identification sign. Roper stated that he would like to hear the list from the Conservation Commission addressed at the next meeting.

Pritchard asked if a traffic study was done. Mr. Smolley said the peak hours for the school are off from the peak traffic times for Poquonnock Road. Given the sight distance on Poquonnock and the time of day there will be no measurable impact. This portion of Poquonnock Road is a State road.

Pritchard asked if there could be an issue with the students near the water on the site. Mr. Smolley stated that fencing was reviewed to address that issue. On the southern end, it will be difficult to get to the wetland area from the bike path. The water is less restricted and easier to access from the back of the adjacent site.

Mr. Smolley stated that based on the location of the wetlands, there is enough area on the site for a second school to be built on the site if the Town found it necessary. The utilities could also support another school.

Sherrard asked if this site plan has been referred to the City of Groton. Staff said it was referred, and the Planning Department has not received any comments.

MOTION: To continue the Catherine Kolnaski Elementary School site plan application to the Special Meeting on the March 20, 2006.

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

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Chairman Sherrard reminded all the Commission members there will be a Special Meeting of the Planning Commission on Monday, March 20, 2006, to hear Fitch High School and Catherine Kolnaski Elementary School site plan applications. All regular members except Chairman Sherrard will be at the meeting.

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff reviewed the Office of Planning and Development Services' proposal for the Town budget. The revised budget submittal proposes to reduce the department's budget by \$54,000. Staff suggested not filling the vacant Housing Rehab Inspector position. A Schools Inspector position is proposed and will be paid for out of the school bond.

Staff told the Commission that a site plan application titled "Spears Property", 562 Long Hill Road, was received as a new application by the Planning Department on March 14, 2006.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:43 p.m. made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

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Respectfully submitted,

Margil Steinfeld