

PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 28, 2006
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Munn, Pritchard, Roper, Steinford
Alternate members present: Kane, Perez Pullen
Staff present: Cullen, Glemboski, Goodrich, Murphy, Stanowicz

Acting Chairman Steinford opened the meeting with roll call at 7:08 p.m.

Acting Chairman Steinford appointed Kane to sit for Sherrard.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Library Hill LLC, 836 Noank Road (Continued)

Acting Chairman Steinford appointed Roper to serve as Secretary.

Acting Chairman Steinford opened the public hearing at 7:55 p.m. and read the public hearing procedures.

Roper read the legal ad.

Acting Chairman Steinford answered questions from the public regarding the advertising of public hearings.

Susan Marquardt, Engineer, Angus MacDonald/Gary Sharpe Associates, represented the applicant. Ms. Marquardt began with addressing the issues outstanding from the previous meeting. The State DOT review area was addressed. At the request of the DOT, the plans have been revised to move the shared driveway for Lots 1 & 2 into one lot. A note will be added to the plans that any vegetation within the site line will be removed. The proposed driveways will be paved to the right-of-way line. A copy of the DOT letter was given to staff. A CAM application and CAM narrative has been submitted to staff.

Staff gave a brief overview of the application. The application is for a three lot subdivision on Noank Road. The applicant is requesting to provide a fee in lieu of open space. The open space as required by the Town regulations would be a very small area of the site. The only other Town-owned open space is across the street. The Town Parks and Recreation Department sees no potential for any of land on this site. The applicant will provide 10% of the value of the land prior to subdivision as a fee in lieu of dedicated open space.

The water lines to the site were reviewed. At the previous public hearing meeting, staff explained that the site is split between the Groton Utilities and Aquarion Water water districts. The State was contacted to identify the water supply exclusive use district, and their map shows the site is in the Groton Utilities exclusive use area. The site is greater than 1,000 ft. from Aquarion Water lines, greater than 1,000 ft. from Groton Utilities water lines, and 585 ft. from the Noank water lines, but the property is not in the Noank Water District. The applicant is asking for a waiver of Subdivision Regulation Section 4.5(1) for connection to public water. The applicant was asked by staff to submit a cost estimate to extend the water lines to the Noank water service lines. Aquarion Water said there is potentially a lot of ledge in the area, so the cost will be high.

The CAM application shows this site as shorelands, and the site is located away from the cove. To increase impervious area, gravel driveways will be installed. If in the future the driveways are paved, the grading is designed to drain the site so it does not encroach into the neighbor's property or move towards the cove. Erosion and sediment controls will be in place during construction.

Munn questioned the 2004 free split. A lot split does not require Planning Commission approval as long as it doesn't create a third lot. Deeds were filed with the Town Clerk's office.

Kane asked how water is supplied to the property right now. Staff said the property is vacant. There is a large house to the south. Previously, water was supplied from an existing well across the street. Staff was not sure if there is a well on the adjacent site right now. Wells are being proposed for this subdivision.

Roper asked if a note will be included on the plans to save the stone wall. Staff said yes. Roper asked if the appraised value of the property is 234,000, and 10% will go to the Town in lieu of open space dedication. Staff answered yes.

Pritchard asked if the waivers are limited to the connection to public water and the sidewalk width. Staff said the sidewalk is not an official waiver. The Planning Commission has the option to require or not require sidewalks. The only waiver is for the wells.

Steinford asked if the plans show the driveways blacktopped only to the property line and the rest as gravel. Staff answered yes. Steinford asked if the driveways can be blacktopped by a subsequent owner. Staff said they can unless the Planning Commission made it a specific condition on the plans. The drainage will not be an issue, as the applicant had to show the drainage on the plan to accommodate possible future blacktopped driveways.

Roper asked if it is the recommendation of staff to require sidewalks. Staff said sidewalks exist on both sides of the Noank Road, and in good condition, and it is a state highway.

Acting Chairman Steinford asked for comments from the public.

Anne Nalwalk, president of Avalonia Land Conservancy, said she is very disappointed that the Town sends no notification to neighbors for new subdivision proposals. She is also concerned with the small size of the lots. Ms. Nalwalk asked about the swale around the rear of Lot 3 and behind Lot 2 and through Lot 1, and advised the applicants to be especially careful during construction to assure no water runs into the Avalonia property. She said she would like the trees on the road to stay.

Emily Barrett, 26 Charles Street, West Mystic, spoke against the project. Her letter was submitted to staff for the record.

Acting Chairman Steinford said the project is predicated by the Zoning Regulations. It is the Commission's responsibility to assure the application complies with all statutes and regulations. The Commission cannot judge the need of the project.

Robert Schneider, 3 Main Street, Noank, spoke against the project. Mr. Schneider recommended adding a statement about the use of herbicides and fertilizers on the property. The environment could be deteriorated by overuse of chemicals on the lawns.

Martie Young, Mystic, spoke against the project, and stated the lots are too small.

Ms. Marquardt told the Commission that the cost to install a water main 850 ft., from Noank to all three lots would have an estimated cost of \$68,000 with no ledge. The estimated cost to install the main if a lot of ledge needs to be blasted would be \$109,000.

Pritchard asked for a review of the storm water drainage. Ms. Marquardt pointed out the roof leaders proposed for each house, the driveways, the swale, and showed how the water would be carried out towards the state road. Pritchard asked if all water would drain to Route 215. Ms. Marquardt said yes the drainage pattern is not being changed.

Perez Pullen asked if this is a protected area. Staff said no.

Staff addressed the potential for public water lines to serve other lots in the area if necessary. The only other lot that could potentially served by this area is existing developed property. There should be no more development in the future in that area due to the open space parcels.

MOTION: To close the public hearing for Library Hill LLC, (CAM) 836 Noank Road.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Roper distributed notice of Old House Fair 2006, scheduled for April 22, 2006.

Staff received notice of a permit from the State Department of Environmental Protection authorizing work on an existing sea wall and new pier at 2 Eldredge Street.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Library Hill LLC, 836 Noank Road (CAM)

MOTION: To approve a waiver of Section 4.5 (1) of the Subdivision Regulations for connection to public water. The Commission finds that this site is located more than 1,000 ft. from the existing service lines for the water district(s) in which the site is located. The request conforms to the criteria specified in Section 1.10 of the Subdivision Regulations.

The Commission finds that the site is located less than 1000' from the Noank Water District existing service lines but this subdivision is not located within the exclusive service area of this water district.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Munn. Motion passed 4-0-1, 1 abstention (Kane abstained).

MOTION: To approve the Library Hill Subdivision (Cove View) at 836 Noank Road with the following modifications:

1. In accordance with Section 4.9(5), a payment in lieu of open space of \$ 23,400, 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. Technical items raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Commission finds that the existing bituminous frontage sidewalk is sufficient along the eastern side of Noank Road to meet the intent of Section 4.7 of the Subdivision Regulations.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Roper. Motion passed 4-0-1, 1 abstention (Kane).

MOTION: To approve the Coastal Area Management application for the Library Hill (Cove View) at 836 Noank Road because it is consistent with all applicable coastal policies contained in CGS 22a-19, and includes all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts and creates no unacceptable adverse impacts.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Munn. Motion passed 4-0-1 abstention (Kane).

2. Crosswinds Subdivision, Groton Long Point Road – Request for bond release, Phases III & V

MOTION: To release a bond for \$98,120 for Phase III and \$25,668 for Phase V of Crosswinds Subdivision, Groton Long Point Road.

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

3. O & C Subdivision, 120 Godfrey Road – Request for extension for filing plans

MOTION: To approve a 90 day extension for recording of the O & C Subdivision, 120 Godfrey Road

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

4. Cooper Subdivision, 109 New London Road – Request for bond reduction

MOTION: To reduce the performance bond to \$19,420.00 for the Cooper Subdivision, 109 New London Road.

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

5. Hickey Subdivision, Briar Hill Road – Request for extension for filing plans

MOTION: To approve a 90 day extension for recording of the Hickey Subdivision, Briar Hill Road

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

6. Obrey Resubdivision, Route 184 – Request for extension for filing plans

MOTION: To approve a 90 day extension for recording of the Obrey Resubdivision, Route 184.

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

V. SITE PLANS

1. Northeast Academy Elementary School, 115 Oslo Street

Rick Norris, Project Manager, Town of Groton, introduced the applicant's representatives, Wes Greenleaf, Director of Buildings and Grounds, Groton Public Schools, and Greg Smolley, JCJ Architecture.

Mr. Smolley showed a PowerPoint presentation addressing the outstanding issues on the project.

Mr. Smolley addressed the buffer areas on the site. The applicant had been trying to work with the neighbor to provide flexibility. The applicant has now decided to plant the buffer on the school site. They will plant under the oak trees on the Town property. Rhododendrons and broad-leaf evergreens are proposed to fill in so there will not be a concern for children hiding.

The applicants are working with the Town Engineering and Planning Departments to resolve an issue with the catch basin in the loading area. A deeper catch basin sump will be used to be compatible with the Town's equipment to clean the catch basin out.

The generator outside the loading bay area will have full containment for the generator fuel tank. Cut sheets have been provided and will become part of the generator specs.

The applicant met with the Fire Marshal to develop a plan to install a water line from Ann Ave. to the site. They need an adequate water supply and water demands as required by code and the approval of the Old Mystic Fire Marshal.

Staff distributed the Fire Marshal's letter addressing the agreement on the water issue to Commission. The Zoning Official has approved the parking spaces. The parking plan that is approved also addresses the after-hours use of the building. Based on the daytime staff and visitors, the need is for about 75 spaces. During non-operating hours, the gym and cafeteria could be used. That is 6,200 sq. ft. of area, and based on the calculations, 70 spaces are needed for night-time use.

Staff said there will be two addenda in the motion. One is for the landscape design in the buffer area to allow low evergreens to be planted in the understory of the oak trees, and modifications to the other buffer area. The sidewalk has been moved out from the curb area to keep students away from the bus drop-off area and the cars entering site.

The other addendum will address the water line, which is out of the 100 ft. regulated area, under the playground area and towards the building. Staff showed the location of the line on the map. There are still some issues regarding the catch basin in the loading zone. The Town environmental planner is not comfortable with just the deep sump. She feels there needs to be a shut-off valve. The suggestion is to either move the catch basin out of that location, or suggest something else for best management practices in this area.

Staff addressed the lighting on the site. The height of the poles will not exceed 15 ft. and the lighting should not exceed an average of 0.8 footcandles on the site, which is the average for school facilities.

Steinford asked if there are concerns with the water main pressure because of the elevation difference from Ann Avenue up to the school.

Mr. Smolley stated that he did not know the exact elevation difference, but all elevation differentials were taken into consideration by the Fire Marshal. Mr. Smolley said that Ann Avenue has more pressure than Oslo Street.

Pritchard asked if this is a temporary fix to the water supply.

Mr. Norris explained the flow rates and duration. Aquarion Water can't provide the duration. The first half hour will be provided via the pipeline from Ann Avenue, and an additional 1 ½ hours can be provided by the Pequot Avenue tank. The flow to meet the Fire Marshal's total requirement may be a dry hydrant in the pond at the end of Oslo Street. The fire department can also run a tank truck shuttle, which is often used in that area due to the limited water supply. In the future, a water tank might be placed on the school site. The pipe from Ann Ave. is big enough to handle the flow of water, but the water supply isn't there.

Pritchard said that if the site plan is approved and there is no funding for the resolution, then it becomes a town-wide issue. Mr. Norris said the Fire Marshal is approaching the water supply as a community issue. If we negotiate with Aquarion water and provide them the land to put the tank on, it could minimize the costs.

Pritchard asked where the generator is being relocated. Mr. Smolley said in the original plans, it was outside the loading bay, in the WRPD. At that time no technical data had been received. The generator could be put in the existing fuel

oil storage shed. In the interim, cut sheets have been received for a generator that is acceptable to Town regulations.

Pritchard asked Mr. Smolley to review of the north path, and asked if it is still usable. Mr. Smolley reviewed the path on the drawings, and said the plan is to leave the path as it is. The Board of Education is not precluding the Town from carrying out the Master Trails Plan. The clearance for the water line will be done, but the Board of Education does not want the responsibility created by the trail. During school hours, all gates will be closed.

Pritchard asked if the acoustical surveys have been resolved. Mr. Smolley said the acoustical cabinets and locations are pretty close to what they need. There may be an acoustical screen wall installed on the southern piece of the roof. He said he should have that report very soon. Mr. Smolley said that since he has not heard from the engineer, he feels a solution is obtainable.

Roper asked if there was a fire at the school and another fire in the same area at the same time, would there be a greater risk. Mr. Smolley explained that the Fire Marshal uses the worst-case scenario in the computations. Two building fires in that part of town would be an issue. The applicants are working with Aquarion Water to resolve this.

Staff said there has been no history of Aquarion Water denying site plans in that area. Staff is urging the applicant to deal with the emergency situation. They would like more pressure, but it cannot be mandated. Because it is a school, this becomes a more apparent issue. Staff said that while it is not the optimal situation, it does meet the regulations. The Town needs to continue working with Aquarion to reach a solution.

Roper asked about the tanker ability. Mr. Norris said it is done frequently. They need to make sure they have the appropriate amount of space for the trucks to loop in and out. Aquarion Water recognizes the problem, and they are more open to the Town's suggestions. The school is scheduled to open in August, 2007. The Fire Marshal said a plan to solve the water problem needs to be in place by May, 2007. The Public Works Department may set up a water task force to address these issues.

Kane asked the age of the water system that currently exists on Ann Avenue, and if that is a consideration. Mr. Smolley the system doesn't raise any issue. The supply of water is Aquarion Water's issue, not the infrastructure. The ability to keep water in the tank is Aquarion's issue. There has not been any concern with infrastructure.

Kane asked if there is any legal recourse. Mr. Smolley said they have been discussing this. Aquarion Water has obligations as a public utility to work out a

solution, but both parties have some obligation to resolve the problem. Kane asked how the existing school is served now. Mr. Smolley said the old Freeman Hathaway School is served by a 6" line on Oslo Street.

Munn stated that he is uncomfortable with the open-endedness of the water situation. Mr. Smolley stated that the old existing school fell under different water requirements and fire code.

Steinfeld asked if there will be containment for the fuel lines in the boiler room, and if it is designed into the plans. Mr. Smolley said all the lines that fall in the WRPD zone will have double walls and a monitor built in.

Steinfeld said he is also concerned about the loose ends with the water supply. He does not want the Town to have to pay the cost. Steinfeld asked if there would be any benefit in doing a cross-connect with new line coming in and with the old existing line on Oslo Street. Mr. Norris said there would be no real benefit, because they would only gain 15 gallons per minute, and there would be additional cost.

Steinfeld asked if the water supply problem is in the ability to pump or the availability of water. Mr. Smolley said it is the availability of water in the storage tank. Another tank needs to be put in that area. Mr. Smolley said the water situation will not deteriorate. The Fire Marshal is comfortable with the situation as it stands now, and will not run dry on water, but he wants a plan in place to find the solution by May, 2007.

Steinfeld asked about the capacity of the pond and the Fire Marshal's ability to pump water from the pond. Mr. Norris said the capacity of the pond needs to be evaluated. Mr. Norris discussed the details of the fire situation.

Kane asked if there is any problem with ground water on the site. Mr. Smolley stated that the finished floor elevation on this school is raised. There are no issues anticipated with the ground water.

Roper asked about the Conservation Commission's notes. The first note calls for a trail. Mr. Greenleaf said the Board of Education is not opposed to the trail but they do not want to build it. There is no need for it. If the path is put in by the Town, they would put a locked gate there during school hours for the safety of the students. Roper said he would rather the children use a path from Ann Ave. rather than walk on Cow Hill Road. Roper asked about note #3, the laurel on the property. He asked if the laurel could be used for landscaping on the site. Mr. Smolley said it is not economical to move. The applicants will work with the Planning Department on the plantings. Roper said he would like to see it reused or given to public.

Pritchard asked if the Fire Marshal will sign off on the Certificate of Occupancy if the water issue is not resolved. Mr. Norris said the fire Marshal will sign off on the Certificate of Occupancy if the school meets the requirements at that time. It will not be based on the regional water problem. Pritchard said the Fire Marshal's letter states that a solution has to be identified, and a plan in place, but the solution doesn't have to be in place.

Pritchard asked if this decision has to be approved by the public. Staff said no, that the funding has already been approved by the public. The project will now go out to bid.

Steinford asked Mr. Smolley to review where the fences will be located around the building. Mr. Smolley used the PowerPoint slides to show the fence locations around the site. Steinford asked if a path is required will there be a gate at the back of the property. Mr. Smolley said yes.

Roper asked about note #6 regarding the use of pesticides on the property. Mr. Greenleaf said the Board of Education is restricted from using pesticides except in a dire emergency situation.

Steinford asked if the catch basin will be appropriately cleaned by the Town staff. Staff said yes.

MOTION: To approve the site plan for the Northeast Academy Elementary School at 115 Oslo Street with the following modifications:

1. A note shall be placed on the plans stating " Any modifications and/or mitigation required by a State EIE (Environmental Impact Evaluation) or any other State review process shall be reviewed by Town staff. Any required modifications to the site plan, based on required modifications or mitigation, shall obtain the necessary approvals from the appropriate agencies."
2. All site lighting shall use "cut-off" fixtures and the height of the poles shall be a maximum of 15'. The photometric plan shall demonstrate that the lighting on the site shall not exceed an average of 0.8-footcandles. The design and details shall be approved by the Town of Groton Planning Department and shown on the final plans. Roof-top equipment shall not exceed 45 dba at the property line.
3. The landscaping and buffering on the site shall be as shown on Addendum # 1 (Sheet L-310). Appropriate details shall be provided on the final plans.

4. The final plan shall show locations and details for all roof-top equipment, fuel tanks, and generators and shall show how the units are adequately shielded and/or screened, as appropriate.
5. The catch basin located within the loading and dumpster service area shall be relocated or an alternative design and/or best management practices shall be incorporated in accordance with Section 6.12 of the Zoning Regulations and as approved by the Town of Groton Planning Department.
6. The storage of all fuels and other hazardous materials on the site shall meet the requirements of the WRPD district.
7. The installation of a water line from Ann Avenue through the site as shown on Addendum Sheet # 2 shall be incorporated into the final plans.
8. A note shall be added to the plans “that the applicant shall continue to work with the Fire Marshal on the temporary and permanent water supply issues.
9. Technical Items raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Planning Commission notes that the Commission is allowing the interior walkways to the sides and rear of the building to be constructed of a bituminous material instead of concrete in accordance with Section 7.5-4 of the Zoning Regulations.

The Planning Commission finds that frontage sidewalks will not be required along a portion of Oslo Drive west of the eastern entrance to the school and along Ann Avenue in accordance with Section 7.5 of the Zoning Regulations because there will be no significant pedestrian movement from the west along Oslo Street and that the frontage along Ann Avenue is within a regulated area and the future sidewalk network on Ann Avenue is shown for the opposite side of the street.

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

Roper asked if the rest of Oslo Street will be sidewalked. Staff said yes.

1. Fitch High School, 101 Groton Long Point Road CAM)

Greg Smolley, JCJ Architecture, introduced Rick Norris, Project Manager, Town of Groton and Wes Greenleaf, Director of Buildings and Grounds, Groton Public Schools.

Mr. Smolley addressed the outstanding issues. He reviewed the additional street lights added along the entrance road.

Mr. Smolley addressed the request for a modification to the buffer on the southern property line with the Franklin residence. Instead of a mix of deciduous and evergreen plantings, the applicants propose to plant densely packed evergreens which will provide a better buffer from noise and headlights.

Mr. Smolley said they are also asking for a modification to the buffer requirement for the northern boundary with St. Mary's Church. The applicants are developing a secondary egress between the properties. The applicants would like to work with staff and St. Mary's to find an acceptable final landscape design for this area.

Mr. Smolley reviewed the waiver request for frontage sidewalks along Groton Long Point Road. There is 2,000 linear feet of frontage, and almost 4,000 linear feet to connect to existing sidewalks. There are wetlands along the road shoulder and the sidewalk would be within the regulated area. There is limited pedestrian traffic to the south of the entrance road.

Mr. Smolley discussed the parking. There are currently 438 parking spaces on the site. The final build-out without building the alternate parking lot will be 450 spaces. If there are enough funds to build the alternate lot, there will be 569 parking spaces.

Mr. Smolley reviewed the parking during construction. There will be 240 on-site parking spaces during construction. If the State Department of Environmental Protection approves the use of the Merritt property for temporary parking, there will be 400 spaces provided during construction. When the project is completed, the lot will be graded and restored for use as an athletic field.

Staff reviewed the phased construction plan.

Roper asked if a crosswalk could be installed from the Town Garage to the school to accommodate an off-hour event and overflow parking. Staff said it is a state highway and authorization from the state would be required. The State Traffic Control Permit #792 should address that issue. Police are always present at the site during peak times at the school.

Steinford said that at the last meeting there was a question about the width of the road during the construction phase. Mr. Smolley said that has been addressed.

Pritchard asked if the demolition will be done during the summertime. Mr. Norris said yes.

Pritchard asked about the lighting on the south parking lot that may spill over into the neighbor's property. Mr. Smolley said they can adjust the height or number of light poles to reduce the lighting spillover on the neighbor's property.

Kane asked if the neighbors are aware of the situation. Mr. Smolley said they are aware.

Steinford asked how the Commission can ensure that the temporary parking lot is returned to a field as soon as possible. Staff said there will be a stipulation in therecommended motion to address that. The parking lot restoration is tied to the completion date and the applicants will have six months beyond that date to grade and reseed the lot.

Staff said the locations for stop signs and stop bar, clearing the site lines, and phasing plan should be part of the project plans. This is a CAM application as well.

MOTION: To approve the site plan for the Fitch Senior High School at 101 Groton Long Point Road with the following modifications:

1. Additional light fixtures shall be included at the intersection of the Fitch entrance drive and Groton Long Point Road. All site lighting shall be no more than 25 feet in height, be full "cut-off" fixtures, and the final base design and details shall be approved by the Town of Groton Planning Department and shown on the final plans. The lighting on the site shall not exceed an average of 0.8 foot candles. Light infiltration onto neighbor's site shall be restricted.
2. The temporary parking lot use located on 0 Groton Long Point Road (adjacent Merritt property) shall be abandoned and the site graded and seeded within 6 months of the completion of the project projected for September 2008. Grading and site details for 0 Groton Long Point Road shall be shown on the final plans and shall conform to the Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (2002).
3. The internal sidewalk from Groton Long Point Road shall be located on the north side of the entrance driveway.
4. The final plan shall show all details for the construction of the rear access road and restoration of the rear access road to a path and indicate how and where handicapped and pedestrian accessibility through this area to the fields will be maintained.
5. The final plans shall include the construction phasing plans.
6. Stop signs, stop bars and frontage road clearing shall be included in the final plans as identified in the Fuss & O'Neill Traffic Study dated March 13, 2006.

7. A note shall be added to the plans that "No Building Permit shall be issued until issuance of the State Traffic Commission Certificate amending Certificate #792.
8. Technical Items raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Commission finds that no frontage sidewalks to the south of the entrance drive shall be required because there will be no significant pedestrian traffic to or from the site south of the entrance road, no anticipated development in the vicinity of the school frontage south of the entrance road that will result in an increase in pedestrian traffic to the school site and the proximity of wetlands along the frontage would limit the installation of a sidewalk.

The Commission finds that the lot size and shape and existing buildings and road ways make it infeasible to comply with Zoning Regulations Section 7.4-4, that the proposed dense evergreen plantings proposed for the southern boundary provides for privacy and screening of the residence. Final plans for the landscaped buffer for the northern boundary shall be designed to facilitate access between the two sites, accommodate utility lines and consider safety and screening issues thereby meeting the intent of Section 7.4-4 of the Zoning Regulations.

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

MOTION: To approve the Coastal Area Management application for Fitch High School 101 Groton Long Point Road because it is consistent with all applicable coastal policies and includes all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts and creates no unacceptable adverse impacts.

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

3. The Woodlands, 0 Ronald Road

Greg Hammond, Schochet Associates, the owners/developers, presented the project. They are the owners of Lighthouse Square and Country Glen. Mr. Hammond introduced Brian Kent, Brian Kent & Associates, Roger Lemieux, Northeast Engineers, and John Casey, Robinson & Cole.

The applicants are proposing a 60 unit apartment complex. The complex will consist of three buildings housing 19 one-bedroom units and 41 two-bedroom units. There are no three-bedroom units proposed. The layout is similar to Country Glen, which the applicants also own. Access to the property is through an easement with the Phoenix Apartments. There will be access to the interior roadway at Country Glen, which terminates at Meridian Street Extension. The other modes of transit are walking to Meridian Street Extension or the sidewalk

between the Phoenix Park Apartments and the fire station, or walk to Lighthouse Square on Route 1.

Mr. Hammond said 75% of the site is woodlands, wetlands and rock formations. The density of the woodlands provides a natural sound barrier. There is a very steep slope, from 115 ft. to 63 ft.

Mr. Hammond showed the building floor plan to the Commission members. By having three buildings, there are more units with two sides of windows. All of the units will have nice views and access to the outdoors.

A walking path will connect to the sidewalk along Country Glen. The plan is for four to eight fitness stations along the trail. Although owned by two separate entities, the fitness center at Country Glen will be expanded to accommodate residents from both complexes. The site plan has already been submitted to the Planning Department.

Mr. Hammond discussed the benefits of this project for the Town of Groton, based on the POCD, to reduce sprawl, protect open space, encourage people to walk or bike to establishments on Route 1 for shopping and dining. on Route 1 for shopping and dining.

Mr. Lemieux, Northeast Engineers, explained the site utilities. There will be peak runoff controls for 100 year storm events. They will retrofit stormceptor units to catch 80% total suspended solids and add hydrocarbon removal. There are water and sewer connections available through the existing Country Glen apartments. A newly installed pump station will pump through a forced main to an existing sewer manhole in Country Glen. Drainage from the Phoenix Apartments wouldn't allow them to use an existing manhole that is on the property. That will be removed, along with the 8-inch line. A culvert is being built to intercept storm water runoff from Phoenix to the wetlands. They will use 18-inch pipes into the wetland, where it discharges now. Yankee Gas lines are currently being extended down Route 1 and into this site. Groton Utilities is revising the underground services and transformer layouts. The Inland Wetlands Agency has issued a permit for grading outside of the wetland buffer. There will be disturbance within 50 feet of the buffer. Five culverts pass beneath Clarence B. Sharpe Highway to a drainage brook maintained by the State Traffic Control and then to Birch Plain Creek, away from this site.

Brian Kent, Brian Kent Associates, addressed the landscape plan. He said the plan exceeds the minimum regulations for Groton's requirements. The plantings will be low maintenance and very aesthetic with the use of canopy trees, ornamental grasses and lawn grass. In the transition to the wetland buffer there will be native plantings in naturalized groupings. Evergreens will be placed in the areas abutting the residential cul-de-sac to the east.

Staff explained that all multi-family dwellings must meet eleven specific requirements in the regulations, including patios and balconies, which are provided. The applicants are asking for a waiver for the dead storage requirements. Of the 60 units, 48 units will have storage within the units, and 12 units will have 80 ft. of storage in Building A. The regulations require a minimum of 7% recreation space, and this project exceeds the 7%. Although the applicants own Country Glen, this must be addressed as a stand-alone project. There is no legal standing or easement between the two. There will be underground utilities. The applicants have also asked for a waiver of the indoor laundry facility requirement. The Town regulations state the tenants must be able to access a common laundry area without going outside the building. The owners are going to provide a washer and dryer in each individual unit.

There are sidewalks along Meridian St. Extension and Clarence B. Sharpe Highway. There is 119 ft. of frontage along Ronald Road, up to the cul-de-sac and 410 ft. on Clarence B. Sharpe. There will be internally connecting sidewalks within Country Glen and Woodlands, giving access to Meridian Street Ext.

A State Traffic Control permit has been applied for. Staff and the applicants are working with the Fire Marshal regarding the sprinkler system. No access proposed from Ronald Road. The site has steep topography. At the end of the Ronald Road cul-de-sac is a very steep drop-off. It would be very difficult for a road or utilities to be put there. The applicant should show the whole sidewalk connection to the fire station and Lighthouse Square on Route 1.

Pritchard asked if an easement has been received from Country Glen for the utilities. Mr. Hammond said the easement has been drafted but not signed. The lender will have to sign a subordination agreement.

Roper asked if there will be bicycle racks on the site. Mr. Hammond said none are planned, but they will consider them. Roper asked if they anticipate having many school children residing there. Mr. Hammond said probably not. Statistically, more children are in the three-bedroom units. These units are designed as split 2's where the two bedrooms are separated. The more likely tenants will be young and middle aged adults.

Roper said the storage areas being in a different building needs to be justified. Mr. Hammond explained that twelve of the sixty units will have to go to Building A instead of Building C. On average, a tenant will access the storage area two to six times a year, and they do not believe that will influence the decision to live there.

Kane asked why the storage isn't available for those twelve units in Building C, and it is available in Buildings A and B. Mr. Hammond stated that the difference is due to the topography and high water table of Building 3. The

balconies are 73 sq. ft. They could break out and put closets there and eliminate the balconies, but they are hoping to avoid that.

Kane asked if the washer and dryers provided. Mr. Hammond said they are provided at no charge in each unit.

Mr. Casey, Robinson and Cole, addressed the sidewalk waiver for Sharpe Highway and Ronald Road. The topography of sidewalk is difficult. There are wetlands on Sharpe Highway, and the highway is not a pedestrian access area. There is no pedestrian movement in the area.

Munn asked if they will be maintaining a sidewalk down to Woodhaven Road. Mr. Hammond said yes, the sidewalk will be continued. Munn asked if there is any sense to having a stairway to Ronald Road. Mr. Lemieux said they would not put stairs because it is too steep.

Perez Pullen asked if a school bus would be able to get in and turn around. Mr. Hammond said there is enough room for the fire trucks to get in there, so there will be room, but school buses don't typically go on private roads. Perez Pullen asked if there will be a play area for children. Mr. Hammond said no, but it is not a high traffic area

Steinford asked the applicants to research where the children in Country Glen are picked up by the school bus.

MOTION: To table The Woodlands until the next regular meeting on April 11, 2006.

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Munn said the public information meeting on the Economic Development Strategic Plan is Thursday, March 30, 2006.

Steinford said there will be a Town Council budget hearing on Wednesday, March 29, 2006 at the Senior Center.

VII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None.

VIII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff reiterated that the Economic Development Strategic Plan public meeting will be on Thursday, March 30, 2006, at the Town Hall Annex.

Staff discussed the Planning and Development Department's budget for next year, and the effects of budget cuts on the Community Development program, resulting from the zero dollar increase budget scenario.

Roper left at 10:40 p.m.

Staff said the State of Connecticut DEP may be changing their policy on the sewer avoidance areas.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:47. Motion made by Munn, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Roper