

PLANNING COMMISSION  
APRIL 25, 2006  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Munn, Pritchard, Sherrard, Steinfeld  
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Kane  
Staff present: Glemboski, Goodrich, Stanowicz

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

Chairman Sherrard seated Fitzgerald for Roper.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Colonel Ledyard Estates, 0 Colonel Ledyard Highway

Chairman Sherrard opened the public hearing at 8:00 p.m. and read the public hearing procedures.

Steinfeld read the legal ad.

MOTION: To continue the public hearing for Colonel Ledyard Estates, 0 Colonel Ledyard Highway, to the next regularly scheduled meeting on May 9, 2006.

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

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of March 28, 2006 and April 11, 2006.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of March 28, 2006, with the following modifications:

1. Page 1, last complete sentence, add “nearby” after “open space”.
2. Page 1, last sentence, change “potential for any of land” to “potential for recreational needs”
3. Page 2, second full paragraph, change “so it does not encroach into” to “away from”
4. Page 2, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence add “appraised” before “value of the land”.
5. Page 8, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, first sentence, remove “of”.
6. Page 10, first sentence, remove “and will not run dry on water”.

7. Page 19, Roper, not Steinfeld, was the Secretary.

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

MOTION: To approve the minutes of April 11, 2006, with the following modifications:

1. Page 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, change the square footage of the restaurant to 740 and of the lounge to 740.
2. Page 7, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, last sentence, change "entry" to "entrance" and change "with" to "and".
3. Page 9, Motion should read, "To accept the applicant's extension until the meeting on April 25, 2006 and table the Hilton Garden Inn, Gold Star Highway".

Motion made by Steinfeld, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passes 5-0-1, 1 abstention (Munn abstained).

#### IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff distributed the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Journal", the "Avalonia Trail" quarterly newsletter, and the April-May edition of "Connecticut Wildlife".

Staff distributed a Notice of Tentative Determination from the Office of Long Island Sound Programs for approval of a permit to install a fixed pier, ramp and floating dock at 268 Elm Street, Noank.

#### V. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Colonel Ledyard Estates, 0 Colonel Ledyard Highway

The public hearing for Colonel Ledyard Estates was continued until the next regularly scheduled meeting on May 9, 2006.

2. Palmer Subdivision, Cedar Road (2 lots)

MOTION: To release a bond for \$600.00 for Palmer Subdivision, Cedar Road.

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

#### VI. SITE PLANS

1. Boulder Heights/Carriage Park, Colver Ave.

MOTION: To grant an extension for start of construction for Boulder Heights/Carriage Park, Colver Avenue, to September 1, 2006.

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

Chairman Sherrard requested that the applicant be informed that the plans for Boulder Heights/Carriage Park should be recorded before the Planning Commission will consider any further extensions.

2. Hilton Garden Inn, 224 Gold Star Highway (Continued)

Chairman Sherrard seated Kane for Munn for the purpose of this agenda item.

Harry Clarke, DiCesare-Bentley Engineering, presented for the applicant and reviewed the outstanding issues.

Options for the design of the connector road between the site and Wal-Mart were presented to the Commission. Exhibit C showed a 20 ft. road including stop bars and stop signs at each parking lot. Exhibit D would realign the connector on the hotel side, so traffic coming to the hotel would face an island on the hotel parking lot. Exhibit D's design would not match up with Wal-Mart's approved plan. The applicant would prefer Exhibit C.

The request for a waiver of a portion of frontage sidewalk on the eastern side of the driveway was reviewed. This portion of frontage sidewalk would have no connection to any other sidewalk. The steep grade behind the sidewalk would require a fence. The applicant will agree to build the sidewalk when the adjoining property is developed.

Staff distributed the revised shared-parking analysis. The revised parking plan calculations assume 25% public use of the restaurant and 100% occupancy of the hotel. The Zoning Officer approved the shared parking calculations.

A lighting plan and photometric plan were submitted. The pole heights will be a maximum of 25 ft. The landscaping plan has been revised. The WRPD requirements and outstanding stormwater monitoring program have now been approved by Groton Utilities and submitted to staff.

Staff reviewed the location of existing sidewalks in the immediate area. Staff presented the Commission with two possibilities: (1) require frontage sidewalks at this site or (2) require a sidewalk agreement that requires a review of the need to install sidewalks within five years of the date of approval unless there is a need to complete them before that. Staff recommends a sidewalk agreement to complete the portion of the sidewalk from east of the entrance to the eastern property line. Staff is recommending the light fixtures be brought down to 20 ft.,

and the footcandles be lowered from 3.2 average to 2.8 average for the site. The applicant agreed to work with staff on the lighting plan.

**MOTION:** To approve the site plan for Hilton Gardens Hotel at 224 Gold Star Highway with the following modifications:

1. In accordance with Section 7.5-5 A. of the Town of Groton Zoning Regulations, a sidewalk agreement shall be recorded with the site plan that stipulates that the property owner agrees to appear before the Planning Commission when any significant development occurs in the vicinity, or within a period not to exceed five years from the date of approval, whichever occurs sooner, to allow for a determination to be made as to the need for the installation of a 5 ft. concrete sidewalk along the remainder of the property frontage from the entrance drive to the eastern property line as shown on Exhibits A and B. Said determination as to the need for the installation of this sidewalk shall be at the discretion of the Planning Commission.
2. A note shall be placed on the plans stating “Any modifications required by a State Traffic Commission (STC) Certificate, or any other State permitting process, shall be reviewed by Town staff. Any required modifications to the site plan shall be approved by the appropriate agencies, as necessary.”
3. The connector drive shall be as shown on Exhibit C dated April 20, 2006. The applicant shall coordinate the construction of this drive with the adjacent property owner.
4. Provide a location on the site for recycling materials.
5. The site 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.
6. The final site plan shall address the erosion control, stormwater management, and monitoring items listed in the Groton Utilities memo dated April 21, 2006.
7. All signage shall meet the Zoning Regulations of the Town.
8. A Sewer Benefit Assessment fee of \$ 18,880.71 shall be paid prior to a building permit being issued for this site.
9. Technical Items raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Planning Commission finds that the proposed parking meets the Shared Parking provision of Section 7.2-6 of the Zoning Regulations due to the difference in the principal operating hours of the mixed-uses and also that the mixed-uses will be geared toward the same users thus reducing the demand for parking.

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

Chairman Sherrard reseated Munn.

3. Spears Property, 562 Long Hill Road

Scot Deledda, Dicesare-Bentley Engineers, represented the applicant, Arthur Spears. Mr. Deledda explained the location of the site, which is on Route 1, with McDonalds and commercial properties to the west, commercial properties to the north, residential to the south, and commercial further to the south. To the east is residential. The lot size is 80 ft. in width by 500 ft. in length. The site has a single family house with a detached garage and outbuilding on the property. An intermittent watercourse runs north to south through the middle of the site. The site is located in the Long Hill Watershed District. The applicant proposes to convert the residence to an office building. The outbuilding might be converted to a residence in the future, and the garage will be used for storage for the office space. There will be a new parking lot in the back of the office building, and a loop drive around the office building. The entryway would be 24 ft. wide. The loop drive would be one way. They propose 10 parking spaces, 6 paved and 4 gravel. There will be an internal connection made to the office building to the north. Another connector to the south is shown but will not be built as that adjoining property is residential. The landscaping was reviewed, including proposed evergreen shrubs along the southern border to buffer the adjacent residential property. There would be one pole-mounted light in the parking lot on the site. The drainage plan was reviewed. The Inland Wetland Agency approved the plan. Approvals have been received by Groton Utilities and the Fire Marshal. All comments by Public Works and the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation have been addressed. Revised plans need to be sent to the Department of Transportation.

Staff explained this is a pre-existing non-conforming lot. The garage is proposed as storage for the office. By regulations, the garage is viewed as a parking space. Staff recommends removing the garage door and installing bituminous curbing and landscaping in front of the garage to redirect traffic and remove the possibility it will be used for parking. The applicant is not proposing internal sidewalks from the parking lot to the main building due to the small number of employees.

Munn asked what type of business this would be. Mr. Deledda said an insurance office. Munn asked about the purpose of the internal connector. Staff said it is to reduce merging traffic on the highway.

Utilities to the outbuilding were reviewed. Staff said the applicant wants to reserve the ability to maintain the use as a rental. Steinford asked if the utilities were overhead. Staff said yes. Steinford asked if it is possible to expand the use of this property. Staff stated the lot is pre-existing non-conforming, and the lot width does not meet the OMF regulation.

Fitzgerald asked how the neighbor is protected from the lighting. Mr. Deledda explained there is only one light with a cut-off light fixture located away from residential properties.

Sherrard stated he would like a note added to the plans that no building permit will be issued for the outbuilding until site plans have been submitted to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Deledda stated the applicant does not want the garage door and pavement in front of the garage removed. They want to be able to access the garage with a vehicle for storage purposes.

Kane stated he had a problem with the outbuilding being labeled as a "single family residence" on the plan. Staff said that as a technical item, the designation of the outbuilding will be changed on the plan.

**MOTION:** To approve a site plan for the Spears Property, 562 Long Hill Road, with the following modifications:

1. The garage doors shall be removed and bituminous curbing shall be installed at the curve of the access drive across the entrance of the garage to restrict any use of the garage as a parking space. Additional landscaping as approved by staff shall be installed in this area in front of the garage.
2. A 4 ft. low-growing evergreen hedge shall be included along the length of the rear of the 10 ft. front landscaped area to screen the interior drive from the road to the extent possible.
3. All comments from the State Department of Transportation shall be incorporated into the final plans.
4. Note 20 on page 3 of 6 shall be revised to read: The site is located within the Long Hill Watershed Drainage Area within the Town of Groton and the applicant agrees to pay the impact fee of \$ 5,514.48 prior to recording the plans.

5. A note shall be added to the plans that trash removal will be handled by a residential hauler as per Town of Groton Department of Public Works.
6. Technical Items raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Commission finds that a system of internal sidewalks as per Section 7.5-4 is not required due to regulatory limitations on the size and intensity of any use and restrictions on the number of employees at this site that will limit the pedestrian traffic.

A note shall be added to the plan that no Building Permit may be issued for residential or any other use for the rear outbuilding until site plans are submitted to, and approved by the Planning Commission.

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

3. Monster Mini Golf, 688 Long Hill Road

Ken Petrini, DiCesare-Bentley Engineering, represented the applicant, Tom Gaccione. Mr. Petrini explained the location of the site as the former Gymboree, in the same shopping center as T.J. Maxx and the Goodwill Store. The applicant is proposing to put in an indoor mini golf course. The parking spaces, including handicapped parking and striping, were reviewed. Utilities and lighting were discussed. Site landscaping was reviewed. A compactor with access from inside the site is provided by the center; they will not need outside dumpsters.

Fitzgerald asked why a site plan was required for a use change. Staff said the change of use is an intensification. Combined with other recent tenant changes at the center, staff wanted the parking and traffic pattern reviewed.

Staff asked the applicant to install a landscaped buffer at the corner of the building to protect the building from turning trucks.

Pritchard asked about the signage. Staff said there will be a separate application for signage at a later date.

**MOTION:** To approve the Monster Mini Golf Site Plan, 688 Long Hill Road, subject to the following modifications:

1. All signage shall meet the Zoning Regulations of the Town.

2. An additional landscaped area shall be added at the end of the parking area along the building to protect the building from turning trucks.
3. Technical Items as raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Planning Commission finds that the existing mature healthy trees and shrubs to the Northeast and Northwest of the site meet the requirements of Section 7.4-4 Buffer Area.

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

VII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Sherrard stated that he has not heard about a scheduled Chairperson's Meeting with the Mayor, and it has been quite some time since their last meeting.

Chairman Sherrard asked if "99" Restaurant is moving forward with the installation of sidewalks. He asked staff to review the landscaping to ensure compliance with the site plan.

Chairman Sherrard asked that a discussion of notification of abutters for subdivisions and site plans be added to the agenda for the next regular meeting.

VIII. REPORT OF STAFF - None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:00. Motion made by Munn, seconded by Fitzgerald, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Margil Steinford