

PLANNING COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2005 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular Members Present: Sherrard, Roper, Steinfeld, Pritchard, Munn  
Alternate Members Present: Kane  
Staff Present: Murphy, Goodrich and Moulding

Chairman Sherrard opened with roll call at 7:01 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of September 13, 2005

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the September 13, 2005, Planning Commission meeting with the following modification:

1. Page 5, item #2, line 5, add “Police Department” impound area

Motion made by Munn, seconded by Roper. Motion passed 4 in favor, 1 abstention (Pritchard).

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Roper received a phone message from Councilor Sheetz regarding Great Brook. She felt that she had been misrepresented and was only looking for information.

Steinfeld attended the Citizenship Day celebration and thought the turnout and dinner was great.

Staff stated that the Commission members should have received copies of a memo to the Town Manager regarding the Great Brook Subdivision.

Staff received a letter from the State Department of Transportation regarding the Thomas Road Bikeway stating that they are about ready to start the process. Staff stated that the bid package should follow shortly.

IV. SITE PLANS

1. WPCF Upgrade, Gary Court

Virgil Lloyd, Fuss & O’Neill, Inc. stated that this project has been around for many years. The original site plan approval was in 1999 and then it was modified in 2001. He displayed the site plan for the original proposal to compare it to the new much smaller proposal with a reduced impact area. Mr. Lloyd stated that the Town is required to add nitrogen removal to their process in order to be in compliance with the Department of Environmental Protection. The hydraulic capacity will increase by 50% and there will be various other upgrades. The new, innovative, process will use much smaller tanks resulting in a reduced impact area.

Kurt Mailman, Fuss & O’Neill, Inc. explained the color scheme of the proposed plan. There will be two secondary clarifiers that are rectangular shaped and placed up against the wetlands buffer. The new process will need some chemical additives to supply organics to the process. There will be a blower building expansion and a storage area for the methanol. They will be widening the channel with more concrete. There will be an effluent screening building added to collect fine particles. A sludge pumping building will also be added. Roof water will fall onto rock areas surrounding the building. They

are proposing to add to and modify site lighting by installing three masts with shoebox style fixtures. Mr. Mailman stated that they would remove the present driveway and use it as a staging area until the project is finished and then they would loam and re-seed the area. Thirteen Cedar trees will be removed from the site and then Red Maple or Norway Spruce trees will be added to the site. A concrete pad will be added for the dumpsters, which will remain, where they are now. The site presently has 4' wide bituminous walks and the applicant is requesting that the same character be continued in the new walks. Mr. Mailman described the Erosion and Sedimentation methods to be used during construction. They are proposing to add an extension to the Lilly Lane trail along the 50' wetlands buffer and connecting it to Gary court. Thirty-nine parking spaces are required and provided. The parking calculation according to the building square footage requires 39 spaces, which are already on the site. The Environmental Impact Evaluation identified two State Listed bird species, the yellow-breasted chat and the brown thrasher in the vicinity of the site. Existing trailers on the site will be removed after construction is completed.

Staff stated that this plan reduces the impact to the wetlands. The plan meets the parking requirements and completes a key link in the trail for Lilly Lane. The question of the Natural Diversity Database Map has been resolved. The expansion has been pulled away from the residential area on this new plan. Staff noted that all parking will be striped, a concrete pad, large enough for both dumpsters and recycling will be added as well as trees in a new location.

Roper asked if the process would generate more sludge. Carl Almquist, Public Works stated that the new process will be removing nitrogen but not creating more sludge. He also stated that the 39 parking spaces are already on site and they will not be adding impervious surface for parking. Mr. Almquist explained the elaborate security system, which was installed last year including cameras and a night watchman. Mr. Almquist explained that the effluent pump system will be rebuilt and will not be covered over. He does not expect the odors will become worse with these site changes. He explained that there would be a decrease in impervious surface because the driveway is being removed. Mr. Almquist stated that this site plan proposal is based on a 20-year facilities plan.

Steinford asked how much of an advantage does the Town have in upgrading the facility. Mr. Almquist stated that it is good for the environment and the credits are a nice benefit but would not pay for the project. He also stated that the State would not give us any grants if we did not install this nitrogen system. Roper is pleased with the trail being included in this project.

**MOTION:** To approve the site plan for the Town of Groton Water Pollution Control Facility Upgrade, 170 Gary Court with the following modifications:

1. A note shall be placed on the plans stating "Any mitigation required by the State EIE (Environmental Impact Evaluation) process shall be reviewed by Town staff. Any required modifications to the site plan, based on this mitigation, shall obtain the necessary approvals from the appropriate agencies."
2. Technical Items raised by staff shall be addressed.

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

**MOTION:** To approve the Coastal Area Management application for Town of Groton Water Pollution Control Facility Upgrade, 170 Gary Court, because, as modified, it is consistent with all applicable coastal policies and includes all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts and causes no unacceptable adverse impacts.

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

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

2. The Ledges Site Plan Modification, Drozdyk Drive

Gary Craig, representing The Ledges stated that this modification includes the addition of 25 parking spaces along the extreme northern perimeter of the site. The plan calls for the removal of a couple of "Do Not Enter" signs and striping. None of the grading would change. The gazebo will be removed from the location because there is no safe way for people to get to it.

Staff stated that the applicant was originally trying to implement a one-way system of roadway that no longer works well with the Boulder Heights connection change. Staff stated that the width is wide enough for a two way travel system. There is a portion of ledge that may crumble off so a landscaping berm has been recommended at the head of the parking spaces. Staff stated that the gazebo was an extra amenity that does not need to be retained in the plan. Staff stated that fire access issues could become a concern if the roadway was reduced in width. Mr. Craig stated that the stone removal is completely done. Staff suggested having an arborist check the remaining trees on the ledge for safety concerns. Mr. Craig stated that the additional parking spaces would only increase drainage by a small amount. Munn asked if the additional parking spaces were required. Mr. Craig stated that the extra spaces were market driven.

**MOTION:** To approve The Ledges site plan modification with the following modifications:

1. A licensed arborist shall inspect the trees at the top of the ledge and make recommendations regarding any additional trimming or removal. These recommendations shall be shown on the plan.
2. The parking lot striping plan shall be modified to retain two-way traffic circulation with 24' wide aisles.
3. Technical items raised by staff shall be addressed.

Motion made by Munn, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed 4 votes in favor, 1 abstention (Steinfeld). Steinfeld abstained because it is consistent with his action in past proposals for this site.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Review of procedure for seating alternates.

The Commission continued this item to another meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Roper was not able to attend the Regional Planning meeting.

2. ZBA referral for September 28, 2005 public hearing

ZBA #05-23 – 15 Fort Hill Road, Hood/Shipman LLC Owner/Applicant

Staff stated that the applicant would like to add a second floor to a non-conforming structure, which is 3' from the boundary. The Zoning Official has signed off on the use.

The Commission had no comment.

3. Referral from Town of Ledyard for public hearing on October 6, 2005

Referral Founders Preserve, Subdivision Application #464, 43-lot Subdivision

Staff gave a brief history of the proposed subdivision north of Deerfield. Staff was informed that at the public hearing quite a few Groton residents expressed concern about the traffic through Heather Glen Lane. As a result the applicant's attorney wrote to Ledyard suggesting restricting the interconnector to Heather Glen Lane to one way traffic and/or emergency use only. Staff could not support these options. The stub in the Deerfield Subdivision exists for the purpose of connecting to the new development. Staff does not have an issue with the single-family home development and cannot address the issue of one way traffic because it is an issue for the Traffic Control Authority.

The Commission recommends a two-way access interconnection to Heather Glen.

4. IWA referral for September 28, 2005 public hearing

IWA #05-14 - Obrey Resubdivision, Gold Star Highway

Staff gave a brief review of the wetland application for a crossing over an intermittent watercourse.

The Commission had no comment.

5. New Applications

a) River Road Culvert Replacement (CAM)

IX. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Sherrard asked about the status of the Maritime School on Thomas Road. Munn asked about a new alternate member just appointed to the Commission. Staff has not received a letter yet regarding any new members.

X. REPORT OF STAFF

1. Changes to Connecticut State Statutes Section 8-7a.

Staff stated that this statute effective January 1, 2006 lays out additional requirements for Zoning, Planning, and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings. At any meeting where there are deliberations, formal petitions, applications, requests or appeals a competent stenographer has to take the evidence or the evidence would need to be recorded by a sound-recording device.

Staff mentioned that the Great Brook memo was written to the Town Manager to show that the Town should not become a party to enforcement of the covenants and to propose alternatives to educate the public.

Staff stated that we should be receiving a grant for the first segment of the Lily Lane bike path shortly. A new round of grants will be coming soon. Staff would like to extend Lily Lane to Depot Road.

Staff stated that the Magnet School article was a surprise to staff. Staff had been contacted for a list of soil scientists. The proposals are presently being submitted to the State.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:52 p.m. made by Munn, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Margil Steinfeld