

**DRAFT**

Groton Planning Board  
January 27, 2010

Meeting convened 7 pm.

Present: Deb Johnson, Jenny Burnett, Chair Slim Spafford, Celine Richer, Russ Carruth, Steve Lindsey and invited guest Steve Whitman, planning consultant.

Absent: Kyle Andrews, Select board liaison

Minutes of Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> read. Celine moved, Jenny 2<sup>nd</sup> to approve minutes as read. All agreed.

Chair introduced Steve Whitman, invited to this meeting to offer help to the board in its updating of subdivision plans. Steve was a consultant on the Newfound Watershed Plan. He told the board that he has read Groton's Masterplan and Subdivision regulations, then reviewed the State Regs. To retain the town's rural character, he believes that some land use regulations may need to be passed at future town meetings. However, increased lot size, steep slopes constraints and increased road frontage are options that the Planning Board could presently include in Subdivision Regs. The board plans to research these options.

Steve went on to describe ideas that, if embraced by the board, would require a town vote. He called these "Diversity of density" ideas:

Cluster Development

Lot Size Averaging – allows flexibility in lot size as long as the result is one house to a specified number of undeveloped acres.

Allowance of shared driveways in subdivisions

Density of lots to be determined by geological features and wildlife habitat needs

All of these ideas aim to preserve open space in town. He left written material about all ideas presented for board members to read and consider. He also pointed out that the background purpose sections of all these plans offers language that can be used for educating the public. Steve also noted that the board might want to combine parts of two or more of these plans. Plans approved with built-in open space could be sent to the County seat with planning board notation that this land can no longer be developed.

Deb brought up the fact that some subdivision plans already approved by past planning boards have yet to be built on. "When someone does buy to build," she asked Steve, "can the planning board have a say about this?" Steve W. said that according to State Regs, the town, with town counsel's approval, might opt to repeal planned subdivisions left inactive for a long period of time. Deb also asked if the Planning Board could do anything about camps, built in the past, that are now year round homes. Steve replied that the Planning Board couldn't control whether a building can be lived in seasonally or year round.

Lastly, Steve presented the idea of having the board issue conditional use permits in lieu of variances. This, too, will be considered by the board.

Mr. Whitman was thanked for sharing his ideas with the board.

At 8:45pm, a motion to adjourn was made by Steve Lindsey, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Celine and approved by all.

Sharon Nelson  
Clerk