

26 January 2022

Groton Planning Board

Public Hearing

Members Present: Deb Johnson, Kristina Madden, David Madden, John Rescigno, Ray Blake, Dave LaBar, Russ Carruth

Members Absent:

Residents/Other Attendees: Pam Hamel, Anne Joyce, Scott Sharp, Jim Gaffey, Tony Tavares, Thomas Hahn, Steven Spafford, Sherry Nelson, Jeff Gannon, Bernard Dauphinais

Meeting Open: 7:00 PM

Members review minutes from the January 17 2022 public hearing, Deb Johnson reads minutes aloud. Kristina makes a motion to accept minutes as amended, David Madden seconds this motion with all in favor.

The Planning Board received three inquiries regarding the proposed zoning since the last public hearing. These inquiries were from the Circle Camp, Ruth and Doug Millet, and Green Acres. The board briefly discusses each inquiry and how we have responded. We greatly appreciate those who have taken the time to give us their suggestions and comments on the proposed zoning.

Public Hearing Open: 7:49 PM

Green Acre Woodlands, Inc. brought forward several concerns and comments on the proposed zoning. As far as the idea on an article allowing communication/cell towers, it is too late to add this to our zoning proposal but it could be considered a business for District C.

District C line issue raised - If the proposed zoning does pass, we will correct the zoning map regarding the zoning line change to eliminate any future confusion. Mr. Hahn would also like to see "special exception" and "variance" defined and used separately.

Article 5: Section C., #3e states that we are required to have a minimum of two off street parking spaces, is this necessary?

- We can change this requirement to allow one parking space as long as it suits the property or say “adequate” off street parking.

Article 5: Section C., #3g states that all ADU’s must meet lot area requirements required for a principal dwelling unit which includes frontage. What does this mean?

- This simply means that you may not go over your lot line or extend out to beyond the state regulated twenty five feet of the roadway.

Article 5: Section C., #3h states no tiny houses, why? Is a mobile home considered an ADU?

- The purpose of the state regulated ADUs is to provide additional permanent housing. Not temporary arrangements. We cannot allow wheeled tiny homes and manufactured homes as ADUs. These would not be considered an ADU unless they sit on a permanent foundation.
- 

Can we change the term “manufactured home”?

- We can further define or clarify.
- 

Can we put language in the ordinance requiring ADU’s to possess septic systems?

- We have already established this in the proposed ordinance on page 6.

What does internal ADU mean?

- The ADU law states that the new facility needs to either be attached or internal to the current home. By zoning, the state law indicates towns to allow detached ADUs on a permanent foundation. Groton wishes to do this which is why it is included in the proposal.

Can we simplify the purpose of this zoning ordinance to show the residents that we only want to protect them, their property rights and the natural environment?

- We can say that in the Purpose. The board must remain unbiased in presenting the ordinance and have definitions and use certain legal terms to allow our ordinance to stand up in a court or legal situation.

Was there a law passed that detached ADU's were permitted?

- They "may" allow with zoning, but as of now, our current one page ordinance will not allow detached ADUs.

Three residents believe the ordinance reads well with its current language and definitions and is the minimum we need to protect the town.

What is a conservation subdivision and is it defined in our proposed zoning?

- It is a residential subdivision that allows housing built closer together on smaller lots and also requires substantially reserved protected open space. This will be drafted into our subdivision regulations.

Several residents suggest doing 2 to 3 separate mailings to the town before town meeting with facts about the ordinance that will show the town how we are trying to protect them. Possibly a postcard, or bright colored letter.

- We are not opposed to this idea, but we need to discuss expenses, volunteers, etc..

Two residents brought up cluster zoning/open space offsets and how it can become expensive as well as more extensive as originally planned. It is also often not buildable in the only open space the developer reserves.

- We can include something stating that clusters must go through and meet subdivision regulation.

No further comments or questions from the public. Deb makes a motion to close the public hearing at 8:43 PM, John seconds this motion with all in favor.

While continuing in regular session, the PB wishes to remind the town that the proposed ordinance encourages home business/occupation, single family residences, and forestry/agriculture.

The Planning Board will consider doing a mailing with facts about the ordinance before the town meeting. We will be holding a work session on February 10th at 6:00 PM.

Kristina makes a motion to allow Deb to make the proposed minor and grammatical changes brought forward by residents and attendees on the 17th and tonight's meeting, John seconds this motion with all in favor. Deb will revise and have Sara post the Final proposed Ordinance.

No further business to be discussed. Kristina makes a motion to close the meeting at 9:22 PM, John seconds this motion with all in favor.