



**THE CITY OF GROTON  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES OF**

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

**Zoom Meeting - Pursuant to State of Connecticut Executive Order No. 7B**

**FINAL**

**I. ROLL CALL & ESTABLISH QUORUM**

Call to Order: 6:35

Present: P. Kunkemoeller,  
A. Bumgardner,  
S. Bergeron,  
I. Streeter  
J. Streeter  
M. Carmenati, Alternate, Seated for G. Keeler

Absent: G. Keeler  
D. Rose  
C. Foster (resigned effective 2/17/2021)

Staff: Leslie Creane, AICP, City Planner

**II. APPROVAL OF January 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Motion: Motion to approve the meeting minutes of:  
January 20, 2021;

Motion by: A. Bumgardner  
Second: M. Carmenati  
Decision: 6-0-0 Approved

**III. RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS**

**A. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED with EFFECTIVE Date of Receipt February 17, 2021  
Five Corners MUDD Master Plan Applications**

- |    |                                    |         |
|----|------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | 2 Benham Road / 91 Poquonnock Road | MD-002  |
| 2. | 8 Benham Road                      | MD-003  |
| 3. | 22 Benham Road                     | MD-004  |
| 4. | 46 Benham Road                     | MD -001 |
| 5. | 1 Mariani Court                    | MD-005  |
- Applicant: Loureiro Engineering Associates, Agent for GBU Capital, LLC**

Motion by: I. Streeter moved to accept all five applications individually, but treated collectively.  
 Second: S. Bergeron  
 Decision: 6-0-0 Approved

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Staff reminded all Commissioners not to participate in any *ex parte* communications regarding applications that are before the Commission;
- B. Staff notified the Commission that the Governor’s Executive Order regarding COVID procedures has been extended to April 19, 2021.

**C. Public Hearing**

**Text Amendment TA-20-01 GC Zone**

**Applicant: Eribart Gjonaj / Timothy Bleasdale, Esq.**

**Addition of NEW text** allowing “Automotive Paint Protection Establishments”

P. Kunkemoeller, Chairperson, opened the public hearing. Staff read notice from website posting as consistent with the Governors’ COVID-19 Executive Order. Attorney Timothy Bleasdale introduced himself and Attorney Mark Zamarka, both of Waller, Smith and Palmer, Precila Bejo, an associate of the applicant. Atty. Bleasdale explained that the Automotive Paint Protection establishment that the applicant would like to bring to the City of Groton does not fall comfortably into any of the existing uses included in the City Zoning Regulations, resulting in the submission of this application to add new text that clearly describes this new use. Atty. Bleasdale reviewed the application, including what distinguishes the proposed use from uses currently allowed in the City of Groton.

Attorney Bleasdale emphasized the need for a very clean, dust-free, indoor environment for application of the paint protection product and process.

The application consists of two changes:

- 1. Under Section 2.2 Atty. Bleasdale discussed the addition of a definition for the term “Automotive Paint Protection Establishment” to distinguish clearly this use from automotive detailing, car washes, and the like.
- 2. Add to Section 4.3.d the term “Automotive Paint Protection Establishment” as an allowed use, and requiring a Special Permit for this use.

Attorney Bleasdale reviewed portions of the POCD that support the granting of this application, including efforts that strengthen and enhance Sense of Place and the importance of Gateway areas. He quoted a section of the POCD on page 18 that discusses Gateway areas as promoting a sense of City identity and arrival. Attorney Bleasdale noted that his client is considering opening his business at the Bridge Street Gateway. Attorney Bleasdale mentioned the effect on property values and the addition of a legal use as having a positive effect on the City’s orderly development, improving the health, safety and welfare of the City.

Attorney Bleasdale referenced the history of automotive uses on the site within the General Commercial zone where his client hopes to open an Automotive Point Protection Establishment.

Precila Bejo addressed a commission question regarding chemical and fumes. No paint application to be done. A transparent polyurethane film is applied with baby shampoo and water and is applied with a squeegee. Cars that are excessively dirty will be turned away. The shop needs to remain clean and as dust free as possible.

Staff reminded commission that this application is to add a use to the General Commercial Zone, and not about a specific address.

Comments from the public:

Comments in favor:

Wayne Richard, Thames Street resident, former owner of barbershop in the City. Mr. Richards is in favor of this application. He has had his car protected with the same process proposed in this application. He is in favor of bringing small businesses to the Thames Street area.

Comments against:

Mark Oefinger, Broad Street resident. Lives across the street from an auto detailing business – Alpha Auto Detailing. Referenced the Facebook page for Alpha Auto Detailing. Mr. Oefinger is wondering if this is the same owner as the applicant. Expressed concerns about the proposed use being an extension of an auto detailing use as opposed to a distinct use from auto detailing. Mr. Oefinger referenced the material that he submitted via email shortly before this meeting. Mr. Oefinger expressed concern about nature of the use and its effect on surrounding property owners. He recommended the addition of the following language “all work to be done should be done in an enclosed building.”

Applicant response:

Attorney Bleasdale stated that he is amenable to the addition of “all work to be done shall be done in an enclosed building” be added to the definition of proposed new use. Further, Attorney Bleasdale requested that this public hearing be continued to next month so that he can consult with his client and enable him to research the questions posed by Mr. Oefinger.

Mr. Kunkemoeller requested clarification on the difference between “paint protection” and “automotive detailing”.

Mark Oefinger stated that he did not intend to delay commission action on this application. He believes that the Alpha Auto Detailing business across from his house is doing similar work to that proposed in application TA-20-01. He wants to be sure that no auto detailing will be done outside as part of the proposed use.

Ms. Creane responded to Mr. Kunkemoeller’s question about the relevance of the ownership and work by Alpha Auto Detailing business to this application. She will look into any connection or relevance.

General comments: none

Motion by: J. Streeter motion to continue the public hearing until the next regularly scheduled meeting on March 16, 2021 at 6:30. This meeting will be held via Zoom.

Second: M. Carmenati

Decision: 6-0-0 Approved

**D. Regular Meeting**

**Site Plan #478 / CSP #320, 47 Beach Pond Road**

Applicant: Igor Boris, Agent: John Paul Mereen

Mr. Kunkemoeller noted that this application was continued from the November 17, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. Streeter confirmed that he has not had the opportunity to listen to the recording of the November 17, 2020 meeting. Ms. Bergeron noted that she listened to the recording of the November 2020 meeting. Ms. Bergeron can participate in the discussion and voting on this application; Mr. Streeter may participate in the discussion, but may not vote.

Ms. Creane stated that this is the application referenced earlier in the meeting regarding the need for commissioners to refrain from discussing pending applications outside of official meetings. Ms. Creane explained that she, a DEEP employee, and two members of the City of Groton PZC received an unsolicited email referencing the PZC meeting of February 17, 2020 and the application for 47 Beach Pond Road. Several photos were included in the email showing the shoreline along 47 Beach Pond Road over time. The author referenced the lessened ability to pass along the shore due to a build-up of boulders.

Mr. Bumgardner noted that he was one of the two commissioners who received the abovementioned email. He further stated that he is aware of the restrictions on communications outside the bounds of the Commission and restrictions of such communication. Mr. Bumgardner further stated that he believes that he can act impartially on this matter. Mr. Streeter stated that he does not recall receiving an email; however, he did see some photographs on Facebook that match the description of those included in the email. He also stated that he believes that he can act impartially on the application before the commission for 47 Beach Pond Road, however he will not be voting on this matter because he has not listened to the recording from the November 17, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Kunkemoeller noted that staff has not yet received comments on the revisions to this application. Mr. Igor Boris stated that he has been in contact with DEEP. Mr. Boris invited Mr. John Paul Merreen to review the revised application with the commission. Mr. Mereen explained that they revised the plan to eliminate the boulders from the sides of the property and the pervious pavers that were originally proposed. Instead of pavers, the applicant is proposing to lay artificial turf in the back area. Artificial turf allows water to seep down into the ground and back into the ocean. There is nothing on the proposed plan waterside of the Coastal Jurisdiction Line. At the site visit on December 31, 2020 with Mr. Zawoy, DEEP staff, and Ms. Creane, City Planner, where substantial erosion between the boulder retaining wall toward the porch was noted. Stabilization of that area was deemed a high priority.

The size of the garage has been decreased by two feet and leaching galleries have been added to capture water runoff from the garage roof. Mr. Mereen also referenced a February 16, 2021 letter from Mr. Joseph Wren regarding drainage calculations.

Ms. Creane is waiting for comments for DEEP.

Mr. Mereen reviewed a few other aspects of the plans. The revised plans were received on February 4, 2021 for presentation on February 17, 2021 and no review comments have been received from DEEP.

Motion by: M. Carmenati made a motion to continue the hearing until the next regularly scheduled meeting on March 16, 2021 at 6:30. This meeting will be held via Zoom.

Second: I. Streeter

Decision: 5-0-0 Approved (J. Streeter did not vote)

**E. Coastal Site Plan Application #324, 445 Eastern Point Road  
Applicant: Pfizer Corporation, Utility Modification**

Kristen Solloway, PE, introduced the Pfizer application for repairs and addition of a new steam pipe on the west campus. The pipe will be underground in the parking area and rise to run above ground and hang below the building through the vehicle passage. The highest point of the pipe will be 25 feet above grade. The pipe will cross the vehicle passage ending on the west side of the building. The pipe will be painted to match the building.

Mr. Kunkemoeller stated that he is a retiree from Pfizer. He stated that this would not taint his ability to remain neutral when judging this application.

Mr. Bumgardner asked what the purpose of the pipe is. Ms. Solloway explained that in addition to maintenance and repair, it is to separate the steam systems between west and east campuses.

Motion by: A. Bumgardner made a motion to approve Coastal Site Plan Application #324.

Second: S. Bergeron

Decision: 6-0-0 Approved

**F. Site Plan #480, CSP #323, 1010 Shennecossett Road  
Applicant: Shennecossett Yacht Club, Agent: Docko, Inc., Boat Launch Ramp Paving,**

Keith Neilson, DOCKO Inc., introduced the application. The Shennecossett Yacht Club is preparing to make improvements to its boat launching capabilities. Mr. Neilson reviewed the plans. Mr. Neilson noted that this is a high-priority water-dependent use. No new lights, signs or changes in traffic are proposed or expected.

Ms. Creane's comments noted that this application has already been reviewed and approved by DEEP and Army Corps of Engineers.

Pete Chapel spoke in favor of the application.

No other comments were received.

Mr. Kunkemoeller noted that most of the work is below the coastal jurisdiction line.

Motion by: M. Carmenati made a motion to approve Site Plan #480.

Second: S. Bergeron

Decision: 6-0-0 Approved

Motion by: J. Streeter made a motion to approve CSP #323.

Second: A. Bumgardner

Decision: 6-0-0 Approved

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**VI. REPORT OF COMMISSION**

None

**VII. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (WRITTEN ONLY)**

See minutes above.

**VIII. REPORT OF STAFF**

1. Administrative approvals given for the following: none
2. MUDD  
404 Thames Street / 33 Baker Street, Zone WBR  
Igor Boris, Applicant  
Sketches continue to progress
3. EB SYAB construction status 9 Stormwater Monitoring Reports received
4. EB 3 Week Look Ahead received
5. Colonel Ledyard School – still owned by the Town of Groton, and no applications submitted as of 2/17/2021
6. Review of Shared Parking Sample Text – to be discussed at a later date.

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None**

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by: M. Carmenati made a motion to adjourn.

Second: S. Bergeron

Decision: 6-0-0 Approved

**\* THE COMMISSION, AT ITS DISCRETION, MAY CHOOSE NOT TO CONSIDER NEW BUSINESS OR AGENDA ITEMS AFTER 9:30pm**