



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

MEETING MINUTES OF

Tuesday, April 20, 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
G. Keeler
D. Rose
M. Carmenati, Alternate, seated briefly for A. Bumgardner

Absent: None

Staff: Leslie Creane, AICP, City Planner

II. APPROVAL OF March 16, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion: Motion to approve the meeting minutes of:
March 16, 2021 with friendly amendments offered by P. Kunkemoeller;

Motion: J. Streeter

Second: G. Keeler

Decision: 6-0-1 Approved

III. RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS

Item 1:

Addition of new dock and Removal of existing Dock

Coastal Site Plan Permit #326

Applicant: Pine Island Real Estate / Keith Neilson, agent

R-12 Zone

Action	Deadline or Date	Notes
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Date of Receipt (DOR)	April 20, 2021	Date of 1 st regular meeting after filing
Hearing	Public Hearing not Required	Docketed for May 2021 regular meeting. Deadline for Decision is 65 days after close of the hearing.
Notice Required	none	Notice to adjacent municipalities not required
Extension Available¹	See Footnote 3 below	Deadline to close hearing 6/24/2021 1 st 35-day extension – 07-29-2021 2 nd 35-day extension – 09-02-2021
Notice of Decision²	See Footnote 4 below	Within 65 days after close of hearing

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1:

Modification of Special Permit #461, Condition #A.12 - Extension of Hours

Applicant: Electric Boat / John Casey, Esq., agent

I/T Zone

Action	Deadline or Date	Notes
Date of Receipt (DOR)	April 6, 2021	Date of 1 st regular meeting after filing
Hearing	Required	Docketed for April 2021 regular meeting. Deadline for Decision is 65 days after close of the public hearing.
Notice Required	none	Notice to adjacent municipalities not required
Extension Available³	See Footnote 3 below	Deadline to close public hearing 6/10/2021 1 st 35-day extension – 07-15-2021 2 nd 35-day extension – 08-19-2021
Notice of Decision⁴	See Footnote 4 below	Within 65 days after close of public hearing

Attorney John Casey and Mr. Paul Harren requested that the modification to hours of work for the South Yard Assembly Building from 6am to 2am for the deck down work, and 7am to 6pm for the remainder of the project. We are requesting a modification to the Special Permit to modify the working hours for the balance of the project to 6am to midnight. The applicant asked that the Commission to consider this request as a minor amendment. Mr. Harren stated that the most disruptive work has been completed, and that moving forward the work that is expected to occur beyond 6pm includes welding, grinding, hoisting, panelizing of deck systems and site work. Lighting will be required. No site work that requires chipping away at rock would be done after 6pm. Once the building is enclosed, the activities within the building will not impact the surrounding area. The work done at night will be that with lesser impact. Ms. Bergeron recommended that EB notify area neighbors of ramifications of extended hours. Mr. Harren and Attorney Casey agreed that that was possible to do.

Mr. Kunkemoeller confirmed with the applicant that the request for extended hours went from 7am to 6pm Monday through Saturday to the current request is for 6am to 12am; a change from 11 hours a day to 18 hours a day, and that 12am Saturday means midnight on Saturday, and the no work will take place on Sundays. Mr. Harren confirmed that this is correct. He further stated that they do not intend to erect steel during evening / night

¹ The applicant may consent to one or more extensions of time to commence a public hearing, complete any such hearing, and make the decision, provided the total period of all such extensions does not exceed 65 days.

² If City does not issue notice to applicant by certified mail and publish legal notice of decision within 15 days, applicant may publish legal notice within the following 10 days.

³ The applicant may consent to one or more extensions of time to commence a public hearing, complete any such hearing, and make the decision, provided the total period of all such extensions does not exceed 65 days.

⁴ If City does not issue notice to applicant by certified mail and publish legal notice of decision within 15 days, applicant may publish legal notice within the following 10 days.

hours, and lighting at night will only be for work done on the ground. Mr. Kunkemoeller confirmed that there will be no work on Sundays.

Mr. Kunkemoeller explained the difference between a major and minor amendment: a minor amendment can be approved without a public hearing; with a major amendment, a public hearing is required before it can be voted on by the Commission.

Mr. Bumgardner was seated and Ms. Carmenati was thanked. Mr. Kunkemoeller confirmed that even though no longer seated, Ms. Carmenati can still participate in discussions.

Ms. Bergeron asked Mr. Harren whether the project can be completed if the requested amendment is not approved. Mr. Harren replied that he is not sure.

Motion: D. Rose moved to refer this application to a major amendment with a public hearing scheduled for May 4, 2021

Second: P. Kunkemoeller

Decision: 7-0-0

A. Public Hearing

New Construction: Building #605
Applicant: Electric Boat / James Waldron, agent
I/T Zone

Site Plan #481
Special Permit #464
CAM #325

Due to faulty notice, this application is rescheduled to a Special Meeting on May 4, 2021 at 6:30pm.

Modification of Special Permit #461, Condition #A.12 - Extension of Hours

Applicant: Electric Boat / John Casey, Esq., agent
I/T Zone

Motion: S. Bergeron moved to re-schedule Special Permit #461 and Special Permit #465 for public hearings at a Special Meeting to be held on May 4, 2021 at 6:30. (This meeting will be held via Zoom.)

Second: D. Rose

Decision: 7-0-0 Approved

New Construction: Multi-Family Residences
Applicant: MMR III Development, LLC / Birgit Stevenson-Loureiro
128-138 Meridian Street
RM Zone

Site Plan #482
Special Permit #465

Motion: D. Rose moved to re-schedule Special Permit #482 public hearing at a Special Meeting to be held on May 4, 2021 at 6:30. (This meeting will be held via Zoom.)

Second: S. Bergeron

Decision: 7-0-0 Approved

Five Corners Mixed-Use Design District (MUDD) Master Plan Applications⁵

2 Benham Road / 91 Poquonock Road	MD-002; ZC 03-21; TA 02-21; ZMA 03-21
8 Benham Road	MD-003; ZC 04-21; TA 02-21; ZMA 04-21
22 Benham Road	MD-004; ZC 05-21; TA 02-21; ZMA 05-21
46 Benham Road	MD -001; ZC 01-21; TA 02-21; ZMA 01-21
1 Mariani Court	MD-005; ZC 06-21; TA 02-21; ZMA 06-21

Applicant: Loureiro Engineering Associates, Agent for GBU Capital, LLC

Attorney Harry Heller introduced the team in attendance and the project. A comprehensive letter prepared by Seamus Moran, dated April 12, 2021, documents each comment from the City Planner and responses from each relevant team member. This document is on file.

Mr. Moran reviewed the correspondence between himself and Deputy Fire Chief Ted Sargent. The documentation is on file.

Attorney Heller introduced Architect David Goslin to address changes to the design. Mr. Goslin stated that very little was changed. A sign was added to the building’s residential entry to add clarity to that entry. Mr. Heller noted that the rooftop will have amenity space for residents allowing them to get outside and recreate on the roof deck. There will be an outdoor kitchen with electric grills. People who live there can host barbecues, there will be an outdoor sitting area with a TV mounted on the wall, and some outdoor game space like cornhole or board games can go out there. The rooftop terrace will be have seasonal outdoor furnishings that will be stored during the winter months. The rest of the rooftop will be left open. There will be two means of egress from the rooftop: one to the elevator lobby and one located at the stairwell at the south end of the building.

Mr. Heller introduced Kermit Hua, a traffic engineer. Mr. Hua stated that this project does not trigger OSTA because there are fewer than 100 units. Mr. Hua review some of the data used by traffic engineers, and used in this project. The data is from the Trip Generation Manual that is used to estimate the number of trips to and from a type of facility. Mr. Hua stated that stop arms used in conjunction with card readers for parking lot entry and exit require drivers to come to a complete stop that makes the interface between cars, traffic and pedestrians safer. Mr. Hua further explained how he estimated peak hour traffic at Benham Street and Poquonnuck Road. He explained that he used 2019 (pre-pandemic) data to estimate traffic volume for existing conditions (non-pandemic assumed) and will assume for post-construction in 2023 that every unit is occupied and assume an additional 2% traffic growth beyond the 2019 model.

Mr. Kunkemoeller noted that the EB will be increasing the size of their workforce. Mr. Hua stated that he believes that the volume counts that he used are conservative. His numbers do not include any credit for those who may walk or bike to EB from the site.

Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Bumgardner quoted from the MUDD regulations: “Parking for all uses shall be in accordance with the requirements of the parking analysis and plan for the MUDD incorporated into the master plan and approved by the planning and zoning Commission, the planning and zoning commission shall where possible seek to minimize the construction and parking spaces and encourage the use of shared parking facilities, mass transit and pedestrian connections.” Mr. Bumgardner asked if the applicant had considered shared parking arrangements.

Mr. Moran reviewed the documentation that they used to determine the amount of parking that the tenants would require.

⁵ MD - Mixed-Use Design District Master Plan Application; ZC – Zone Change Application; TA – Zoning Text Amendment; ZMA – Zoning Map Amendment.

Mr. Kunkemoeller raised the issue of massing and proximity to neighboring properties, issues raised by members of the public at last month's hearing. Mr. Goslin stated that the only way to adjust the massing is to remove units, and that would alter the pro forma resulting in a project that would not be financially feasible.

Mr. Kunkemoeller asked for comments in favor of the application. None were heard. He then called for comments in opposition to the application.

Dave Costello opposes the application. He noted the issues that he sees and experiences as a direct abutter of the proposed project. He raised the issue of conflict between cars exiting the garage, road traffic, and pedestrians. Mr. Costello asked if there is a monetary figure attached to burying the utility lines. Ms. Creane stated that she stated that the cost and funding for burying the utility lines is being investigated – no decisions have been made at this point.

Ralph Stanzione asked about the tax impact on the City, and what the impact on the school system could be.

Ms. Creane reminded the commission that although the public can raise the issue of school and tax impact in their comments, the commission cannot consider these potential impacts in their deliberations or in making their decision.

Lori McClain, sad that the idea for this development is even being considered. People are looking for areas to build single-family homes. Why does 5 Corners need to be re-invented? This proposal is not in character with the neighborhood. Extremely opposed.

Martin McClain, doesn't think that it's fair to the neighbors to put this project at this location.

Stephen Nye, opposes this project. Believes that this project is not fair. He started a petition against this project.

Marc Frucht, is not completely against the project.

Tristen Taylor, thanked the commission for taking everyone's comments. Asked about the intention of the 5' setback, water views and views into adjacent backyards, too much lighting, building design doesn't fit with the area, what about trash storage. Has KWH been to this area during actual peak traffic hours? Will off-site parking lots have traffic arms for entry and exit control? Will there be a limit to the number of people allowed on roof deck? Worried that property values will go down.

Lauren Nichols, traffic starts at 2:30pm, not 4pm. POCD focuses on residents as well as economic development.

Emily Donnel, is concerned about noise from rooftop and occupancy levels, light pollution, snow removal from balconies and roof. Design doesn't fit with the area. How many bikes can fit into two parking spots? Questions the location of a tree right in front of the building.

Dave Costello, asked if the current owner is the same owner that allowed the existing houses to fall into disrepair?

Tristen Taylor, stated her address.

Emily Donnel, has consideration been given to the small businesses on Poquonnuck?

Stephen Nye, parking capacity of 1.4 per unit is unrealistic.

After ascertaining that no one else wanted to speak against the application, Mr. Kunkemoeller asked if anyone wanted to make a comment neither for nor against. No comments were offered.

Mr. Heller addressed the questions that arose during the past hearings. He divided them into two categories – massing and traffic. Mr. Heller noted that Mr. Hua is the only expert to speak about traffic. (2:37:00)

The hearing is left open to receive traffic review from the City of Groton's traffic authority.

B. Regular Meeting

Text changes from last month are to become effective May 15, 2021

Motion by: I. Streeter
Second: D. Rose
Decision: 7-0-0 Approved

V. OLD BUSINESS

None

VI. REPORT OF COMMISSION

None

VII. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (WRITTEN ONLY)

See minutes above.

VIII. REPORT OF STAFF

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: J. Streeter made a motion to adjourn.
Second: S. Bergeron
Decision: 7-0-0 Approved

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