

**Minutes of Meeting
Grafton Planning Board
March 14, 2011**

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A regular meeting of the Grafton Planning Board was held on Monday, March 14, 2011 in Conference Room A at the Grafton Municipal Center, 30 Providence Road, Grafton, MA. Present for the meeting were Chairman Bruce W. Spinney III, Vice-Chairman, Robert Hassinger, Clerk Stephen Qualey, Heath Christensen, David Robbins and Associate Member James Walsh III. Staff present was Town Planner, Stephen Bishop and Assistant Planner Ann Morgan.

Chairman Spinney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

There were no Action Items.

DISCUSSION ITEM 2-B – SOUTH GRAFTON ZONING UPDATE

Mr. Bishop distributed to the Board a draft copy of a Fisherville & Farnumsville Potential Mixed Use Zoning District map, stating this will be a starting point to review and begin implementing some changes, particularly removing the prohibition of one and two family structures currently in the Neighborhood Business district, that makes those dwelling have pre-existing, non-conforming status, and allowing them to fit into the Mixed Use zoning. Mr. Bishop noted the vision was to start out small with Main Street being the primary focus and then expanding to other areas with respect to existing buildings, aligning the zoning to what is already there, and trying to maintain the vitality of the area.

Mr. Bishop remarked that he hopes to be able to hold some Planning Board workshop meetings at the South Grafton Community House for resident input while the park is being constructed.

DISCUSSION ITEM 2-C – SIGN BY-LAW UPDATE

Mr. Qualey informed the Board that he has given the Board copies of the survey that has already been completed, that they are in a critical phase of the by-law now regarding the CEVMS input and survey, and will be working on the language for the by-law with hopes of being ready for Town Meeting in October. Mr. Qualey encouraged residents to attend the meeting this Wednesday, March 16 at 7:00 p.m. in Room E-2

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Bishop informed the Board that there is the need for one amendment to the Zoning By-Laws for the May Town Meeting warrant with regard to Section 6 – Flood Plain Districts reflecting the updated FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Mr. Bishop noted this information will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for their recommendation before the warrant closes.

Mr. Bishop also stated they will be sending out invitations to the ground breaking ceremony for the Mill Villages Park taking place on Saturday, April 9, 2011.

Mr. Bishop pointed out that Toll Brothers will be coming before the Board for a public hearing on March 28th for sign relief under Section 4.4.4 of the By-Law for the North Grafton Preserve Subdivision.

Mr. Bishop added that he has scheduled Vera Koliass of CMRPC to attend the April 11, 2011 Planning Board meeting to present information with regard to the 495 Metrowest Compact, modeled after the South Coast Rail study. Mr. Bishop noted he has also extended invitation to the EDC, the Conservation Commission, and the Grafton Land Trust.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

MOTION by Mr. Christensen, **SECOND** by Mr. Robbins, to approve the open session minutes of February 28, 2011 as drafted. **MOTION** carried unanimously 5 to 0.

SP 2011-1 REBECCA & JOHN WILSON (APPLICANT/OWNER) – 66 BRIGHAM HILL ROAD – KEEPING OF LIVESTOCK (GOATS & CHICKENS) UNDER 5 ACRES OF LAND

Mr. Qualey read the legal notice and Chairman Spinney opened the public hearing. Present for the meeting were Rebecca & John Wilson.

Mr. Robbins announced that since he was a member of the Board of Directors for the Lions Club, which owns property next to the Wilsons, he would recuse himself to the audience.

Ms. Wilson explained to the Board that she was requesting the Board approve their request for the keeping of 30 goats, 20 chickens and possibly a Llama to be used for guarding the animals rather than dogs. Ms. Wilson also explained that she would not have all of these animals at this time, but was trying to receive the approvals for the next year or two. Ms. Wilson noted that she now only possessed and needed approval for 4 goats, one of which is pregnant and will be having 2 to 6 kids within the next few months.

John Wilson clarified to the Board that the four initial goats would temporarily be increasing when they bear their kids, but that they would be sold in about six months when they are weaned from the mothers.

Chairman Spinney asked about the number of chickens being requested and where the manure shed was to be placed on the property. Mr. Wilson presented a plan showing the location and was asked to show the plan to the abutters in the audience also.

Mr. Hassinger informed the applicants that the by-law requires that an engineered site plan be submitted with the application; that the altered aerial view presented is not documented very well and will not meet the requirements needed in the record to refer to if the permit is granted.

Mr. Wilson stated that he and his wife were on a limited income and were not able to afford expensive engineered plans. Ms. Wilson noted they were willing to negotiate the number of goats.

Chairman Spinney informed the applicant that the application was for 30 goats and 20 chickens, which is what the Board is considering in their process now.

Mr. Hassinger suggested that it is always a good idea to apply for less if the total amount is not needed right away, and then come back to request an additional amount at a later date.

Mr. Christensen asked about the need for a guard animal. Ms. Wilson explained that they have coyotes and unleashed dogs in the neighborhood and the Lions Club Park nearby that will attack and kill the goats. Ms. Wilson added that the llama was thought to be a better choice over dogs whose barking could disturb the neighborhood, but that nothing had been decided yet as far as a guard animal.

Chairman Spinney designated Mr. Walsh a voting member for Special Permit SP2011-1.

Patricia Reichle of 70 Brigham Hill Road expressed concerns of who will take care of the goats when Rebecca goes off to college, the obvious odor resulting from so many animals, the temperament of the animals with so many children in the neighborhood, how secure the fencing in of the animals will be to keep them from straying into neighboring yards, attracting other animals such as coyotes, and the effect loud motorcycle traffic in warmer weather will have on the animals.

Leslie Guertin of 72 Brigham Hill Road also expressed similar concerns for the amount of animals requested, specifically the odor problems. Ms. Guertin noted that she walks past a goat farm on Hudson Street and the odor is very strong in passing the area. Ms. Guertin stated that with the warm weather and no central air conditioning in her home, she will not be able to open up her windows without enduring this strong odor all summer. Ms. Guertin added that she has additional concerns for the noise factor, and who will care for the animals while Rebecca is at college.

Chairman Spinney informed the applicants that their application package is missing a considerable amount of data, specifically input from the Board of Health and other information pertaining to matters relating to the keeping of these types of animals. Chairman Spinney pointed out that there are many different type and breeds of all these animals, each with their own specific needs and possible concerns. Chairman Spinney also stated that there is a request for a waiver of the \$250.00 application fee.

Mr. Hassinger noted that the burden of proof is on the applicant and that they must persuade the Planning Board that the screening & buffering, etc. is adequate for the Board to approve the special permit. Mr. Hassinger added that the Board needs a far more detailed site plan and more submitted requirements to decide if they can allow any of the waiver requests and consider the abutter's legitimate concerns.

Mr. Wilson remarked that under these circumstances, they may go with the 2 acres State exemption with more goats, which are worth \$250.00 to \$500.00, and will be able to show the \$1,000.00 per acre income.

Chairman Spinney stated that the applicants can choose how they would like to proceed, but that with regard to the special permit application, they will need to supply all of the information that is required according to the Town By-Law.

The Board suggested the applicants discuss how their neighbors feel about them requesting the permit for only 4 goats at this time.

The abutters reiterated their previously stated concerns, specifically the odor problems and secure fencing and added that they would need to hear reliable information on how much manure accumulates from 4 goats.

Chairman Spinney informed the applicants that they need to request a continuance of the public hearing and provide adequate information to the Planning Board by the next meeting to possibly obtain a special permit before their July boarding deadline for 4 goats and the kids of the pregnant goat.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Christensen, to grant the applicant's written request to continue the public hearing to March 28, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. **MOTION** carried unanimously 5 to 0 with Mr. Robbins recused.

CORRESPONDENCE

Clerk Stephen Qualey read correspondence from DHCD concerning Housing Production Certification and a letter to the Planning Board from resident Nancy LaHair regarding the subdivision "Village at Institute Road".

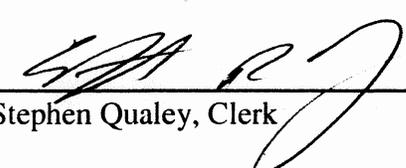
Mr. Hassinger suggested Staff put the numbers in perspective with respect to Chapter 40B, detailing how well the Town is doing and where the Town stands. Mr. Bishop noted he has not had time to review the DHCD correspondence which will require time to do research on the information discussed in the letter.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Christensen, to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION** carried unanimously 5 to 0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITS

- **Item 5A: Draft Meeting Minutes**
 - Grafton Planning Board, February 28, 2011, 4 pages.
- **Item 2B: South Grafton Village Zoning District**
 - Color map, 8 ½ x 11”, Draft Fisherville & Farnumsville Potential Mixed Use Zoning District, dated 3/14/11, 1 page.
- **Item 3: Staff Report**
 - Proposed Amendment to the Grafton Zoning By-Law, to amend Section 6 – Flood Plain Districts, 2 pages.
- **Public Hearing 9A: SP 2011-1, Rebecca Wilson & John Wilson (owner), 66 Brigham Hill Road, keeping of livestock on less than five (5) acres:**
 - Unbound application packet prepared by the Applicant, received February 8, 2011 including the following:
 - Application for Special Permit, 1 page.
 - Application for Site Plan Approval, 1 page.
 - Project Description, Special Permit / Site Plan Approval Application to Keep Livestock at 66 Brigham Hill Road, 2 pages.
 - Color photograph illustrating size of goats, 8 ½ x 11”, 1 page.
 - Color map, 8 ½ x 11”, showing property, zoning and rough location of proposed facilities, 66 Brigham Hill Road, dated 9/16/10, 1 page.
 - Color aerial photograph, 8 ½ x 11”, showing property and rough location of proposed facilities, no date, 1 page.
 - Color aerial map, 8 ½ x 11”, showing property lines, 66 Brigham Hill Road, no date, 1 page.
 - Memorandum regarding Project Review Comments from the Conservation Commission, received 2/25/11, 1 page.
 - Memorandum regarding Project Review Comments from the Board of Selectmen, received 3/4/11, 1 page.



Stephen Qualey, Clerk

