

**Minutes of Meeting
Grafton Planning Board
September 8, 2014**

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A regular meeting of the Grafton Planning Board was held on September 8, 2014 in Conference Room A at the Grafton Municipal Center, 30 Providence Road, Grafton, MA.

Present: Chairman David Robbins, Clerk Sargon Hanna, Robert Hassinger, Linda Hassinger and Associate Member Andrew Clarke. Absent until 7:25 p.m.: Vice-Chair Michael Scully

Staff present: Town Planner Joseph Laydon and Assistant Planner Ann Morgan.

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

PUBLIC INPUT - None

ITEM 3: STAFF REPORT

- Mr. Laydon reported that the office had been busy with an influx of new applications.
- Mr. Scully, Elias Hanna, Mr. Laydon and members of the EDC had been attending the Central Massachusetts Business Exposition today.
- The upcoming months will be busy with the increased work load as well as preparing for Town Meeting. Mr. Laydon asked that the Board review tasks and help staff prioritize work items.

ITEM 5: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna to accept the August 20, 2014 minutes as drafted. **MOTION** carried unanimously, 4-0.

ITEM 6: CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Hanna noted that the flyer for the First Annual Business Breakfast had been distributed to the Board. It is being sponsored jointly by the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and the Town Administrator's office will be held on Thursday, September 25, 2014 at the Brigham Hill Community Barn. Staff has been working on coordinating details and reaching out to the business community. Mr. Laydon reviewed the outreach effort which included social media, direct mailings, flyer distribution in person and phone calls. Staff and the EDC are hoping that this will be an annual event that continues to expand in scope in an effort to bring the business community together. Response has been good so far. Contact information continues to be updated which will provide a good outreach database for other efforts in the future. Mr. Laydon noted that the Town and EDC will continue to strengthen ties with other regional economic organizations such as the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Route 9 Corridor Chamber of Commerce, the Worcester Chamber of Commerce and Worcester Business Development Corporation.

ITEM 7: REPORTS FROM PLANNING BOARD REPRESENTATIVES ON TOWN COMMITTEES AND CMRPC

Mr. Hassinger noted that there is a vacancy for a CMRPC delegate. This delegate is appointed by the Planning Board. Ms. Morgan stated that the vacancy will be posted in the upcoming week.

Mr. Robbins stated that there is no update regarding the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Study Committee. The Committee will hold a public information meeting to discuss the survey results and seek additional input. That meeting date has not been set.

DISCUSSION ITEM 2A: FUTURE ZONING INITIATIVES AND UPDATE OF COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

Comprehensive Master Plan: A spreadsheet with all the individual tasks (Chapter 8: Implementation) was distributed to the Board. Ms. Morgan noted that she had provided some notes on specific items that had been either completed or were no longer viable because of changes in state programming. Mr. Hassinger noted that the Planning Board develops and adopts the Master Plan and subsequent updates which should take place every 10 years. Ideally it should also be adopted by Town Meeting. The Board discussed the Master Plan and how to approach the next steps. Mr. Robbins noted that that the Board needs a more usable action list, that date needs to be updated and that public outreach effort be conducted to affirm and/ or revise the community vision. Items discussed:

- The Board should not be creating a whole new plan. A lot of current information can be found in documents such as the recently adopted Housing Production Plan, which also has updated action items that could be used to advance work items in the Master Plan.
- Goals and objectives should be established and work items should be organized under these. Need to reorganize the material to make it more of a working document.
- Identify data sets that need to be updated and look for assistance and other recent source material to provide that information.
- Create and then prioritize a “laundry list” of work items based on Goals and Objectives; what’s doable; and long term vs. short term implementation time frames.
- One potential approach to is prepare an assessment of the Plan and present it to the public as an update while at the same time seeking input to ensure that the community vision is being respected.

Mr. Scully joined the Board at 7:25 p.m.

Mr. Laydon suggested that a small subcommittee work with staff to assess the document and make recommendations for next steps to the whole Board. Mr. Hassinger and Mr. Robbins volunteered.

Zoning By-Law – Future Zoning Initiatives: There will be a public hearing on September 22nd to receive input on the three draft warrant articles that the Board has proposed with regards to signs and lot perimeter. Future initiatives include temporary signs, portable signs and kennels.

PUBLIC HEARING 9A: SPECIAL PERMIT (SP 2014-6) TREVOR HARDY, BLUEWAVE CAPITAL, LLC, (APPLICANT) – PATRICIA K. KNOWLTON, TRUSTEE – KNOWLTON FARMS NOMINEE TRUST, (OWNER) – APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A SECOND PHASE OF THE SOLAR ENERGY GENERATING FACILITY ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 43 ESTABROOK AVENUE.

Paul Knowlton, property owner, introduced the members of the development team that were present to review the application.

Anne Reitmayer of Blue Wave Capital noted that is application is considered Phase II of a project that has already been permitted on the same property. Once complete, Phase I and II combined will produce a total of 5 megawatts of energy which will be fed into the local grid.

Mr. Adam Christie reviewed the application in a slideshow presentation. Comments from Graves Engineering have been addressed in the revised plan set. They have completed the Stormwater review with the Conservation Commission. Key points reviewed included:

- Phase II will be built on 55.3 acres of the site located behind and north of the existing farmhouse.
- A gravel access road will loop around the site and will meet the requirements of the Grafton Fire Department.
- The facility will be connected to the grid along existing poles along Estabrook Avenue down to Adams Road where it will tie in.
- The solar arrays have a low impact design with minimal grading. The screening plan was reviewed.
- A six foot high security fence will surround the site with access gates.
- Construction materials and staging area will be on the site. No parking will be allowed on Estabrook Avenue.
- Less than one acre of site clearing will be needed near the pond area. The rest of the site currently an open field.
- The site consists of 6% to 8% slopes with little grading proposed. It will be maintained much in the same manner as a meadow to minimize runoff. Low growth solar field grass seed will be used to keep the vegetation between the rows down, to prevent erosion and for easy maintenance.
- The solar panels are similar to those in Phase I and have a slightly smaller surface area.
- The applicant is currently in discussions with Sun Edison to purchase the energy. They feel confident that an agreement will be forthcoming shortly.
- Decommissioning – they are aware that they need to provide surety in the event of decommissioning. Mr. Laydon noted that Town Counsel is working towards executing an agreement for Phase I and suggested that the Board consult Town Counsel on how to proceed with this. It was noted that the conditions of the Phase I decision included a condition that required surety in a form acceptable to the Town. The issue was deferred to Town Counsel.

There was no public input.

MOTION to close the public hearing and direct staff to prepare a draft decision taking into consideration all testimony received on this matter made by Mr. Scully, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna. **MOTION** carried unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING 9B: SPECIAL PERMIT (SP 2014-7) LESLIE & RON ANDERSON (APPLICANTS/OWNERS) –SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL RAISING AND KEEPING OF LIVESTOCK (HORSE & A COMPANION ANIMAL) ON A PARCEL LESS THAN 5 ACRES, ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 15 BLANCHARD ROAD.

Leslie Anderson, Applicant / Owner, presented the Application. She is looking to build a barn and associated facilities and fencing to accommodate one horse and a companion animal on 1.25 acres of her current lot.

Mr. Robbins noted that there were several letters of support from neighbors and abutters.

The Board asked about manure management. She reviewed the proposed composting system and noted that there are several local companies who will haul away manure when necessary. The site is connected to sewer and water so there will be no impacts to wells. A three to four strand electric fence will surround the site.

Mr. Peter Adams of 100 Brigham Hill Road spoke in favor the application, noting that the Applicant is his niece. The subdivision is built on the site of his family's farm and he was in favor retaining the agricultural heritage of the area.

MOTION to close the public hearing and direct staff to prepare a draft decision taking into consideration all testimony received on this matter made by Mr. Hanna, **SECOND** by Mr. Hassinger. **MOTION** carried unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING 9C: MAJOR RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL PERMIT (MRSP 2014-4) "GRAFTON HILL" SUBDIVISION - WESTERLY SIDE GRAFTON LLC, (APPLICANT) – WESTERLY SIDE GRAFTON LLC, ROCKY ROAD REALTY TRUST; ROBERT B. MCINNIS & ABBY MCINNIS TRUST; & OLIVE SIMONO, (OWNERS) –MAJOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (43-LOT CONVENTIONAL PLAN (27 SINGLE FAMILY & 16 DUPLEX UNITS) / 46-LOT FLEXIBLE PLAN) ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 52 WORCESTER STREET; 48 WORCESTER STREET; AND 81 NORTH STREET. (CONTINUED FROM 08/25/14).

Mr. Robbins noted that the traffic engineer, Mr. William Scully, is no relation to Planning Board Vice Chairman Michael Scully. Mr. William Scully, traffic engineer, presented a slideshow presentation reviewing his findings. He noted that the study has been revised from an earlier version when the applicant submitted a slightly different proposal. The new study now reflects the site access redesign and focused on the flexible plan configuration. New standards in the ITE Trip Generation Manual and the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual are reflected in the new study. The analysis focused on 45 new single family homes with two access drives off of North Street. William Scully reviewed his methodology including traffic counts. Issues raised by the Board included:

- New internal roadway design – with the purchase of the property located at 81 North Street the developer was able to redesign the internal roadway system to create two access points from North Street. There was some discussion about the distance between the two. William Scully noted that it met design standards for safe entrance and exiting. There was discussion about the distances between each access point to the nearest intersection as it related to the 600-foot offset requirement of the subdivision rules and regulations (see below). Mr. Hassinger noted that neither access point met that standard. William Scully suggested that

the internal roadway be redesigned to loop back onto itself near the entrance, which would create one access point to North Street. The second access point could be graded and designed to accommodate emergency access into the site but only as needed. It was noted that a loop road design would result in a cul-de-sac that would violate the subdivision rules and regulations.

- Bicknell Road intersection with North Street – William Scully recommended that an advance notice sign be posted on North Street, north of the intersection, to provide advance warning due to the existing conditions which make it difficult to see north when stopped at the intersection.
- Distance from site entrance(s) to intersection with Old Westboro Road – Mr. Hassinger noted that neither of the proposed site access points were in compliance with the 600 foot offset to the nearest intersection requirement of the subdivision rules and regulations. Issues relating to safe stopping distances, rate of speed and sight distances along North Street were discussed. William Scully disagreed with premise of the 600' offset rule noting that several traffic engineering industry standards provide for significantly shorter spacing distances between intersections. Mr. Hassinger noted the Board had received correspondence from the Chief of Police expressing concerns about the short distance between the site and the intersection with Old Westboro Road. William Scully reviewed the data used to make his determination and noted that there was no data, including police reports, to support the premise that the shorter distance would create a significant safety problem.
- Intersection Redesign – Recognizing that the intersection off set would be an issue of concern to the Board, William Scully had prepared two conceptual intersection realignment plans. Questions about who would be responsible for designing and paying for the intersection could not be answered. The Board was concerned about the engineering viability of the turning radius in one of the scenarios and felt it wouldn't be prudent to further discuss the option until there was a more definitive engineered plan. William Scully noted that it would not be in the best interests of his client to pursue an expensive engineering design at this stage without any guarantee of a positive outcome of the permitting process.
- Site Distances and Prevailing Speeds – William Scully noted that even though North Street is posted as 35 mph their research indicates that approximately 85% of the people are travelling at a speed of 40 mph. Mr. Clarke he has observed that most people begin to accelerate up the hill from Bicknell Road and may be travelling much faster when they reach the vicinity of the proposed site access point(s). William Scully noted that there are ample sight lines and stopping distance to allow for safe entry and exit at the site even with the increased speeds along North Street. William Scully confirmed that the traffic counts were conducted in May acknowledging that counts will vary at different times of the year.
- Public Input: Mr. Ronald Dennis of 81 North Street raised concerns about safety and conceptual realignment immediately in front of his home. He noted that there have been two accidents in the past year at this intersection – Old Westboro and North Streets – since the installation of the new stop sign. He believes that the traffic problems are more serious than stated by William Scully and is concerned that they will increase even with a new realignment and increase in traffic due to the new subdivision. Mr. Dennis asked about his stonewall in front of his house which abuts the project site which he co-owns. William Scully noted that the current height does not impact the sight lines and would not be proposed for removal.

At 9:56 p.m. a **MOTION** to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m. to 10:05 p.m. was made by Mr. Hanna, **SECONDED** by Mr. Scully. **MOTION** carried unanimously 5-0.

Mr. Hassinger noted that it may be necessary to require peer review of the traffic study as has been done in the past adding that he hasn't received information on the distances on the proposed road to the intersections of existing roads in the area. Mr. Laydon noted that a definitive drawing and analysis of sight distances may need to be developed and that Graves Engineering would be qualified if they have the time. Mr. Hassinger added that he would want input on the radius and queuing distances as they relate to the proposed alternatives.

Mr. Robbins asked the Applicant if they wanted to close the public hearing or request a continuance. Attorney Antonellis asked if they could continue to September 22, 2014. Mr. Laydon noted that in addition to further traffic review, the Applicant will need to present information on additional items such justification of the base lot count and sewer connection.

MOTION to grant the Applicant's written request to continue the public hearing to September 22, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. made by Mr. Hanna, **SECOND** by Mr. Scully. **MOTION** carried unanimously 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

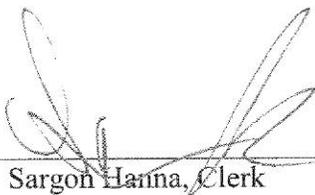
MOTION by Mr. Hanna, **SECOND** by Mrs. Hassinger to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION** carried unanimously, 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

EXHIBITS

- **Discussion Item 2A: Zoning Initiatives and Update of Comprehensive Master Plan**
 - Spreadsheet; 2001 Comprehensive Master Plan, Chapter 8: Implementation Plan; 17 pages.
- **Item 3: Staff Report**
 - Grafton Business Breakfast 2014 Flyer; color; 1 page.
- **Item 5: Minutes of Previous Meetings**
 - Open session minutes of August 25, 2014; 6 pages.
- **Public Hearing 9A: Special Permit (SP 2014-6) Trevor Hardy, BlueWave Capital, LLC, (Applicant) – Patricia K. Knowlton, Trustee – Knowlton Farms Nominee Trust, (Owner) Special Permit/Site Plan approval for construction of a Second Phase of the solar energy generating facility on property located at 43 Estabrook Avenue.**
 - Notice of Public Hearing, Grafton Conservation Commission, Application for Stormwater Management Bylaw Permit filed by Patricia K. Knowlton, 43 Estabrook Avenue, Grafton, MA; received August 4, 2014; 1 page.
 - Bound Application materials prepared and submitted by Meridian Associate, Inc.; received on August 1, 2014; includes the following:

- Correspondence from Meridian Associates, Special Permit & Site Plan Approval Application, Knowlton Farms Solar Development, 43 Estabrook Avenue, Grafton Massachusetts; 2 pages.
- Project Narrative, 4 pages.
- Application for Special Permit; dated July 29, 2014; 1 page.
- Application for Site Plan Approval; dated July 29, 2014; 1 page.
- Payment of Fees; 1 page.
- Abutter Requirements – Certified Abutters List; dated July 15, 2014; 1 page.
- Certificate of Good Standing; signed by the Treasurer / Collector’s Office on July 10, 2014; 1 page.
- Request for Waivers; 1 page.
- Plan set; Knowlton Farms Solar Development, 43 Estabrook Avenue, Phase II; prepared by Meridian Associates; dated August 1, 2014; 11” x 17”, color; 9 sheets:
 - Sheet 1: Cover Sheet & Locus Context Map
 - Sheet 2: Record Conditions Plan 1
 - Sheet 3: Record Conditions Plan 2
 - Sheet 4 Permit Site Plan of Land 1
 - Sheet 5 Permit Site Plan of Land 2
 - Sheet 6: Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan 1
 - Sheet 7: Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan 2
 - Sheet 8: Site Detail Sheet 1
 - Sheet 9: Site Detail Sheet 2
- Correspondence from Graves Engineering, Knowlton Farms Solar Development – Phase 2, 43 Estabrook Avenue, Site Plan and Stormwater Management Regulations Review; dated August 15, 2014; received August 19, 2014; 2 pages.
- Project Review Memorandum, Board of Assessors; received August 19, 2014, 2 pages.
- Correspondence from Meridian Associates via email; Site Plan and Stormwater Management Regulations Review, Knowlton Farms Solar Development – Phase 2, 43 Estabrook Avenue, Grafton, Massachusetts; dated August 18, 2013; received August 19, 2014; 3 pages.
- Correspondence from Graves Engineering, Knowlton Farms Solar Development – Phase 2, 43 Estabrook Avenue, Site Plan and Stormwater Management Regulations Review; dated August 19, 2014; received August 26, 2014; 2 pages.
- Correspondence from Grafton Fire Department, Knowlton Farms Solar Development – Second Phase; dated August 26, 2014; received August 27, 2014; 1 page.
- Slideshow Presentation Handout, Estabrook Avenue, Grafton, Phase II, Grafton Planning Board; color; prepared and presented by Meridian Associates; distributed at the Grafton Planning Board Public Hearing on September 8, 2014; 14 pages.
- **Public Hearing 9B: Special Permit (SP 2014-7) Leslie & Ron Anderson (Applicants/ Owners) –Special Permit/Site Plan Approval under ZBL Section 3.2.3.1 Raising and keeping of livestock (horse & a companion animal) on a parcel less than 5 acres, on property located at 15 Blanchard Road.**

- Unbound Application materials submitted by the Applicant on August 8, 2014; includes the following:
 - o Application for Special Permit; dated August 7, 2014; 1 page.
 - o Application for Site Plan Approval; dated August 7, 2014; 1 page.
 - o Correspondence from Applicant; dated August 7, 2014; 2 pages.
 - o Waiver Request List; 1 page.
 - o Correspondence from Diane & Michael Eddy, 5 Patricia Drive; dated July 31, 2014; 1 page.
 - o Site Map generated from the Town of Grafton GIS system; dated July 28, 2014; 1 page.
 - o Photography of Applicant's horse; 1 page.
- Correspondence from Kevin Shattuck, neighbor; dated August 18, 2014; 1 page.
- Project Review Memorandum, Board of Assessors; received August 19, 2014, 2 pages.
- Project Review Memorandum, Board of Health; dated and received August 20, 2014, 3 pages.
- Copy of Correspondence to Board of Health, 15 Blanchard Road – Special Permit (SP 2014-7), from the Applicant; dated August 29, 2014; received September 2, 2014; 3 pages.
- Email correspondence from Christopher Marino, Special Permit SP 2014-7; dated Sunday, September 7, 2014; received September 8, 2014; 1 page.
- **Public Hearing 9C: Major Residential Special Permit (MRSP 2014-4) “Grafton Hill” Subdivision - Westerly Side Grafton LLC, (Applicant) – Westerly Side Grafton LLC, Rocky Road Realty Trust; Robert B. McInnis & Abby McInnis Trust; & Olive Simono, (Owners); Continued from 08/25/14.**
 - Report; Traffic Impact and Access Study, Proposed Grafton Hill Residential Development; Grafton, Massachusetts (appendices not included); prepared by William J. Scully, P.E.; dated September 2012, updated August 2014; color; 37 pages.



Sargon Hanna, Clerk