



TOWN OF GROTON
Affordable Housing Trust



Allen B. King, *Chair*
David A. Wilder, *Vice Chair*
Joshua A. Degen, *Treasurer*
Stuart M. Schulman, *Secretary*
Colleen A. Neff, *Member*

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 10, 2013
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: 1s Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street Groton, MA
Present Members: Colleen Neff, Allen King, David Wilder, Joshua Degen and Stuart Schulman
Meeting handouts: Summary of Zoning Board of Appeals of Lunenburg v. Housing Appeals Committee (recent 40B decision regarding inexpensive local housing and infectious invalidity doctrine)

Colleen Neff moved to accept the November 15, 2012 minutes as drafted. David Wilder seconded and motion carried 3:0 (abstentions by Stuart Schulman and Joshua Degen).

Update on area organizations involved in affordable housing

As of May 1st, Groton Commons will become a no smoking property. This change is considered healthful by HUD, but in the short run will negatively impact one long term resident who smokes and will need new housing.

Habitat for Humanity of North Central Massachusetts is seeking a new project and is open to working in Groton. The group discussed the Habitat for Humanity call for projects in Groton. Habitat for Humanity works from nationwide template that has served the nonprofit and its constituents well in the past. That template usually involves donated land, a large percentage of donated building materials, donated labor and local fundraising of about \$75,000 per home. Habitat has its own methods for homeowner selection and provides mortgage financing. Fran Stanley reported that Habitat director Maggie Monroe-Cassel is open to considering any affordable housing proposal which may have varying characteristics as the challenge of developing affordable housing in Massachusetts can call for some creativity. Allen King noted that a new Habitat build is occurring in Acton across from the Donelan's plaza on Great Road.

The group discussed the Croteau subdivision planned for North Road. There, the affordable unit required by Groton's inclusionary zoning is expected to be met by one condominium unit of a planned triplex. It may not be feasible for Habitat to build a portion of a building. Typically, the organization would be gifted with a lot. The donation of a lot can have tax advantages for a developer.

The group considered whether there might be some buildable lots received by the Town through the tax title process that might provide a site for either a Trust build or a Habitat build. No specific properties are anticipated, but the potential for such was noted.

Joshua Degen wondered whether Squannacook Hall might be considered for renovation into a Habitat for Humanity two unit project – one condominium unit on each floor. The Town is poised to send out a request for proposals to sell the property as the Board of Selectmen would like to get the property back on the tax rolls. The property is zoned R-A for residential agricultural and it is slated to have a four bedroom sized septic system installed. If converted to affordable housing, the exterior of the building would need to be preserved as Squannacook Hall is well liked by many West Groton residents. It is presumed that Town residents would want historic preservation to be a part of an affordable housing proposal. Habitat budgets do not allow for historic preservation so multiple funding sources would be needed. [January 15 update: RFP has issued.]

Update on Boynton Meadows

Allen King received a walk through tour of the Boynton Meadows retail building this morning. The roof is on and windows have been installed. With the carpenters having reached this construction phase, it will be time to call in the other trade subcontractors – electrical, plumbing, insulation, etc. to work on the interior of the building. Mount Laurel is hoping to complete construction of some units by March.

Other topics

Oakridge comprehensive permit project. Fran Stanley reported that the developer had not yet returned to the Town with a revised project. The group generally discussed the background on this project. Oakridge is a 40B comprehensive permit project that was permitted to be a thirty-six (36) unit housing development limited to 55 and over aged households. Oakridge is an ownership project. After the real estate and stock market reversals in 2007, the developer tried unsuccessfully to remove the age restriction. Regardless of the legal definition of uneconomic, the developer's attorney maintains that the project as permitted would not gain lender approval and yet the developer has sunk costs in the project. So, the developer is contemplating changes that might gain the support of the Town of Groton as well as the Zoning Board of Appeals. To gain support, the developer is considering the following changes: lowering the unit count, converting to a rental project, moving the development further away from the large vernal pool and moving the development away from rear abutters. Converting to a rental project may improve project financing chances and would definitely increase the development's unit count on the Town's subsidized housing inventory. Reducing the unit count would allow the developer room on the property to reconfigure the use of space to be more sensitive to abutter concerns and environmental concerns.

Housing Production Plan update. The Planning Board is meeting with its contractor Community Opportunities Group to follow up on Master Plan implementation work. The Housing Production Plan is a part of the implementation phase.

Accessory apartments. Fran Stanley provided an overview of the accessory apartment bylaw. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts considers accessory apartments a form of affordable housing even though the Commonwealth does not credit municipalities for such units on their subsidized housing inventory lists. From his time on the Planning Board, Joshua Degen recalled hearing an estimate of approximately two hundred and fifty (250) accessory apartments in the Town. Few of these accessory apartments are permitted. The group briefly explored the matter of accessory apartments in Groton including how they are regulated. After some deliberation, the Trust declined to focus on accessory apartments at this time.

Nashua Road project. The Governor has proposed a consolidation of the Commonwealth's two hundred and forty (240) local housing authorities which would result in six (6) regional housing authorities. The Groton Housing Authority has a long term pending project for the creation of additional public housing on Nashua Road. The Affordable Housing Trust and the Housing Partnership are open to learning more about the Nashua Road project in an effort to be helpful with the Authority's efforts. The Groton Housing Authority indicated the intent to solicit this input in November and deferred the meeting until after the holidays so that the Authority would have more time to prepare.

Allen King moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Stuart Schulman seconded and motion carried 5:0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Minutes drafted by Fran Stanley.

Meetings Overview

Meeting Date	Status	Town Website
September 8, 2010	Final	Posted
October 13, 2010	Final	Posted
November 17, 2010	Final	Posted
December 20, 2010	Final	Posted
February 2, 2011	Final	Posted
April 6, 2011	Final	Posted
April 25, 2011	ⁱ	n/a
May 18, 2011	Final	Posted
June 27, 2011	ⁱⁱ	n/a
July 27, 2011	Final	Posted
August 24, 2011	Final	Posted
September 13, 2011	Final	Posted
September 26, 2011	Final	Posted
October 6, 2011	Final	Posted
October 17, 2011	Final	Posted
November 3, 2011	ⁱⁱⁱ	n/a
November 9, 2011	Final	Posted
November 10, 2011	^{iv}	n/a
December 14, 2011	Final	Posted
January 25, 2012	Final	Posted
February 23, 2012	Final	Posted
March 22, 2012	Final	Posted
April 26, 2012	Final	Posted
May 24, 2012	Final	Posted
June 28, 2012	Final	Posted
August 23, 2012	Final	Posted
September 27, 2012	Final	Posted
November 15, 2012	Final	Posted
January 10, 2013	Final	In process

ⁱ 2011 Spring Town Meeting. See record of 2011 Spring Town Meeting

ⁱⁱ Board of Selectmen Meeting. See Selectmen's minutes.

ⁱⁱⁱ Planning Board and Conservation Commission meetings. Housing Trust lacked quorum. See Planning Board and/or Conservation Commission minutes for more information.

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