



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
Affordable Housing Trust



Stuart M. Schulman, *Chair*  
Sheila Julien, *Vice Chair*  
David A. Wilder, *Treasurer*  
Fredrick J. Dunn, *Secretary*  
Joshua A. Degen, *Member*

**Meeting Minutes**  
Regular Session

Date: Thursday, June 14, 2018  
Time: 7:30 p.m.  
Location: Lunch Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Town Hall, 173 Main Street Groton, MA  
Attending Members: Stuart Schulman, Sheila Julien, Joshua Degen, Fredrick Dunn and David Wilder  
Other attendees: Becky Pine  
Meeting handouts: Agenda, draft minutes from April 4, 2018

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Joshua Degen called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

**Reorganization of Trust Officers**

Fredrick Dunn announced that he expects to move out of town in early July or perhaps a few months later depending on the pending closing for his residence. Trust members thanked him for his volunteering efforts over the past years. The group discussed whether reappointment to a new term as a trustee was advisable.

*Joshua Degen nominated Stuart Schulman to be chair, Sheila Julien to be vice chair, David Wilder to be Treasurer, Fredrick Dunn to be secretary and himself to serve as a member. Trust members voted unanimously to approve these nominations (5:0).*

**Minutes**

Members reviewed draft minutes.

*Joshua Degen moved to approve and not release the April 4, 2018 executive session minutes. David Wilder seconded and the motion carried 4:0 (Stuart Schulman abstained).*

*Joshua Degen moved to approve and release the April 4, 2018 regular session minutes. David Wilder seconded and the motion carried 4:0 (Stuart Schulman abstained).*

**Discussion of Age Restricted Market Rate Housing**

Becky Pine introduced herself to the group. She explained that as a newly elected Selectperson, she asked for the Select Board to add a goal related to housing. In particular, she is interested in increasing homeownership housing suitable for Groton residents who are empty nesters and want to downsize but who are over income or over asseted and so would not qualify for subsidized or affordable housing. Sheila Julien noted that she is sympathetic to that objective but how does that goal fit with the charge for the affordable housing trust. Joshua Degen commented that a mixed project of over 55 market rate and affordable housing could be within the mission of the housing trust.

Conversation moved to a discussion of what a realistic price point might be for an age restricted market rate home considering that starter home pricing for new construction in our area can cost between the high four hundreds to low five hundreds, as measured in thousands of dollars. David Wilder suggested that the 55+ Autumn Ridge development in Ayer might be a project that meets Becky Pine's criteria in terms of level of finish and price. Autumn Ridge is a 56 unit condominium association that has two bedroom homes selling in the mid three hundreds (measured in thousands of dollars).

Stuart Schulman commented that he thinks it is okay to do affordable housing that does not count on the inventory as affordable housing. He dubbed that sort of project as affordable housing with a small "a" instead of the capital "A" of a DHCD subsidized housing inventory unit. Stuart Schulman stated that the housing trust would need some money in order to accomplish a new project.

Fredrick Dunn referenced the Graniteville Woods subdivision in Westford that was offered for initial sale at prices ranging from the high \$300 thousands to low \$500 thousands. Some people who bought ended up quickly selling because the development was not age restricted. For those purchasers, these downsizing seniors (moving from larger homes on larger lots) did not like to be in such close proximity with boisterous families with young children. Their reality of homeownership in a non-age restricted project did not match their imagined experience at the outset.

### **New Potential Projects**

#### 372 Townsend Road

Joshua Degen reminded the group that Roger Kanniard is expected to submit a friendly 40B proposal to the Select Board in the near future for a project located at 372 Townsend Road. All comprehensive permit projects – even "friendly" ones that have garnered municipal support – will have long-term affordability restrictions on at least 20-25% of the units.

If a comprehensive permit project will be a rental project, there is the possibility of ALL of the units counting on the subsidized housing inventory.<sup>1</sup> Also, if the rental units are more deeply subsidized to households earning 50% or less of area median income (rather than units intended for households earning 80% or less of area median income), then a lower 20% of the units must qualify as affordable. Otherwise, 25% of the units must be made affordable.

If the project is homeownership as Roger Kanniard has planned, then the project must provide 25% affordable units available for purchase by households earning 80% or less of the area median income and only the affordable units count on the subsidized housing inventory.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "(1) General - In a rental or ALF development, if at least 25% of units are to be occupied by Income Eligible Households earning 80% or less than the area median income, or alternatively, if at least 20% of units are to be occupied by households earning 50% or less of area median income, and meet all criteria outlined in Section 1, then all of the units in the rental development shall be eligible for inclusion on the SHI. In determining the number of units required to satisfy either percentage threshold, fractional numbers shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number (e.g.: in a 51 unit development, one would restrict 13 units in order to meet the 25% standard).

If fewer than the aforementioned percentages of units in the development are so restricted, then only the units that meet the requirements of Section II.A.1 shall be included." Guidelines, G.L. C.40B Comprehensive Permit Projects and Subsidized Housing Inventory (updated December, 2014), page II-4.

<sup>2</sup> "c. Homeownership. Only the units that meet the requirements of Section II.A.1 shall be eligible for inclusion in the SHI." Guidelines, G.L. C.40B Comprehensive Permit Projects and Subsidized Housing Inventory (updated December, 2014), page II-5.

Trust initiated affordable housing

Joshua Degen stated that the Town of Groton's community housing account contains over \$440,000. Therefore, the housing trust has a potential to receive local funds that can be used to build on public land. Perhaps the 14 available acres at Surrenden Farm; or, perhaps the 30 or so acres located at the end of Cow Pond Brook Road beyond the Transfer Station. Alternatively, the housing trust can consider buying land to be used for building new affordable housing. Fran Stanley noted that some consultants involved in building affordable housing estimate that the minimum feasible size to allow for economies of scale is about 40 units. Tax credit financing is reserved for affordable rental projects and the process is highly competitive.

Joshua Degen noted that the Town of Groton has recent experience with public building projects – Center Fire Station – and that the Town can retain ownership of the land by allowing a 99 year ground lease. Joshua Degen referred Becky Pine and other Trust members to the Dick Heaton reports on affordable housing and to look at other parcels. The housing trust can plan to select a site, secure it and then put out an RFP to locate an entity that will create affordable units.

**Status Update on Current Affordable Housing Projects**

Joshua Degen noted that the Select Board had received a letter from CHAPA regarding the upcoming resale of an existing affordable condominium at Groton Residential Gardens. CHAPA serves as the monitoring agent for this development that was permitted via a Chapter 40B comprehensive permit.

Fran Stanley reported that the lottery agent for Boynton Meadows held an information meeting this evening. The lottery agent has received one application so far for this two bedroom affordable condominium. The application deadline is July 14, 2018. There are two pending closings for affordable units in the Reedy Meadow subdivision.

Stuart Schulman asked Fran Stanley to invite Russ Harris to the housing trust's July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss his housing ideas.

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 12, 2018 at 7 pm

Minutes by Fran Stanley.