



TOWN OF GROTON
Affordable Housing Trust



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

Meeting Minutes
Regular Session

Date: Thursday, September 13, 2018
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Lunch Room, 2nd Floor, Town Hall, 173 Main Street, Groton
Attending members: Stuart Schulman, Sheila Julien, David Wilder, Joshua Degen
Other attendees: Colleen Neff, Becky Pine, Mark Haddad (phone participation)
Meeting handouts: Agenda, draft minutes from July 12, 2018

Stuart Schulman called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Meet with Town Manager regarding a possible affordable housing idea involving town owned land

Mark Haddad called in to the meeting. He asked if the housing trust wanted to fund an engineering study (at a cost of about \$20,000 to \$25,000) to explore the feasibility of planning a residential housing at the municipally owned Country Club.¹ He explained that idea is for an age 55 and up community that has a significant affordable component. The thought of building along the golf course has garnered some initial Country Club support as it is viewed as increasing interest in the Country Club. Some have expressed the opinion that buyers/renters would be drawn to age restricted homes along a golf course.

The Country Club site is town-owned and area of development represents a 5 to 10-acre subset of the whole along Whitman Road. For those familiar with the layout of the Country Club, this would be the area between the tennis courts and the pavilion. The Town would retain ownership of the land and allow housing development through 99-year ground leases. Access might be from Whitman Road side of the Country Club property.

Other towns in the region have had housing developments along golf courses. Tyngsboro has a privately owned 9-hole golf course that is being sold to the Toll Brothers with plans to convert the course to a 204-unit housing development for seniors.² Acton's Quail Ridge development was a conversion of an 18-hole course to a 9-hole course which freed land for a Pulte Homes housing development.³ Here in Groton, the proposed housing development would not displace any golf facilities.

The Town would need to explore extending the sewer line (presently terminating about half way down Lovers Lane). We would not know how many units could be built until engineering is done. Mark Haddad was thinking of reaching out to two local engineering firms David E. Ross Associates and Ducharme & Dillis for estimates.

The goal would be to limit the housing trust investment by defining a mixed market rate and affordable project that does not require additional housing trust financial investment to create. Once engineering helps to define the scope of the project, then the housing trust could issue an RFP that offers land (through ground leasing) and some assistance with permitting.

¹ The housing trust has approximately \$46,000 in unrestricted funds that originated as a mitigation payment from the Squannacook Hills 40B project.

² See http://www.lovelsun.com/todaysheadlines/ci_31994169/residents-mixed-loss-tyngsboro-golf-course .

³ Quail Ridge was a 153-unit project on 149 acres that created 8 local action units of affordable housing for the Town of Acton in 2012.

Joshua Degen asked why approach the housing trust rather than requesting this money from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Mark Haddad said that he certainly could ask the CPC but that this would result in a six-month delay since CPC grants must be approved by Town Meeting. However, if there is Town Meeting approval, then considering the more than \$450,000 in community housing funds it would not be a problem to plan the appropriation for fiscal year 2019.

After some discussion, the group agreed that there are options to explore including zoning (possible cluster format), rental versus homeownership, market needs, sewer capacity, etc. A couple of trust members stated that they thought that local zoning could work. David Wilder said that a neighbor told him that she wanted to see more over 55 senior housing. Until infrastructure issues are resolved, there are a lot of wild cards. Joshua Degen said that this idea is certainly worth looking at and recommended that the idea come before the Select Board as an agenda item to see if it will gain Select Board support. The housing trust approved of this course of action by consensus.

Housing Trust Vacancy

Stuart Schulman explained the process for filling a trust member vacancy stating that the housing trust recommends and the Select Board receives that recommendation but that they have the appointing authority. There are three candidates: Leah Carter, Colleen Neff and Becky Pine. Leah Carter was not present. Becky Pine stated that she was glad to see other residents volunteering to serve on town committees and boards and didn't want her interest in an additional role to bump another candidate. Colleen Neff said that she was a founding member of the housing trust and has an interest in bringing more affordable housing to Groton. She is an accountant and presently works in human resources. Stuart Schulman noted that Colleen Neff has had a long-term interest in the mission of the housing trust.

Joshua Degen moved to recommend Colleen Neff to fill the vacancy on the Town of Groton Affordable Housing Trust. David Wilder seconded and the motion passed unanimously (4:0).

Update on new affordable housing projects

372 Townsend Road – developer is now proposing a 9-unit subdivision – no affordable units – rather than a larger 40B comprehensive permit project.

63 Gratuity Road – no new updates since developer's earlier approaches to land use department, water and sewer departments.

Update on already permitted affordable housing projects

Reedy Meadows – both affordable units have been sold and Groton has applied to add these two units to our Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Academy Hill – building permits have been pulled this summer for the two remaining affordable units. Approved buyers are waiting for these two condominiums to be completed.

Boynton Meadows – an approved affordable buyer is scheduled to close on the final 2-bedroom affordable in early October.

Groton Residential Gardens – a new affordable resale is on the market.

Discuss Master Plan Implementation Committee's request for review of housing goal

"use CPA funds to address a broader range of affordable housing needs, even if the CPA-assisted units do not qualify for Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory"

Trust members agreed to discuss this question at their next meeting. Also, Joshua Degen reminded the group of the suggested joint meeting with the CPC that Russell Harris and a number of CPC members thought would be beneficial. Trust members are open to participating in this meeting.

Review draft minutes from July 12, 2018 meeting

Members reviewed draft minutes.

Joshua Degen moved to approve and release the July 12, 2018 regular session minutes as submitted. Sheila Julien seconded and the motion carried 3:0 (David Wilder absent).

Fran Stanley was asked to look up committee members' individual terms, distribute Declaration of Trust to Becky Pine, look at CPC language on AMI limits for community housing grants, forward housing trust recommendation to Town Manager's office, and communicate feedback delay on Master Plan implementation language to Carolyn Perkins.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 11, 2018 at 7 pm

Minutes by Fran Stanley.