



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
Affordable Housing Trust



Sheila Julien, *Chair*  
David A. Wilder, *Vice Chair*  
Colleen A. Neff, *Treasurer*  
Becky Pine, *Member*  
Stuart M. Schulman, *Member*

**Meeting Minutes**

Regular Session

Date: Thursday, October 3, 2019  
Time: 7 p.m.  
Location: Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton  
Attending members: Colleen Neff, Sheila Julien, David Wilder, Becky Pine  
Meeting handout: Agenda, August 29, 2019 draft minutes

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Meeting called to order by Sheila Julien at 7 pm.

**Agenda Item 1:** 7 pm Executive Session – pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Sec. 21(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; and M.G.L. c. 30A, Sec. 21(6) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. Specifically, to discuss Affordable Housing Trust response to July 22, 2019 letter from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) regarding FY2012 Boynton Meadows CPA Project. Roll call vote to be taken.

See executive session minutes from October 3, 2019 for more information. Trust members resumed regular session at 8 pm.

**Agenda Item 2:** Update on Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) housing trust training held in Ayer on September 18, 2019.

The Town of Ayer has just formed a housing trust and presenter Shelly Goehring used the occasion to offer a housing trust training for the area. There was a good turnout of planners and resident board members from Tyngsborough, Littleton, Harvard, Lancaster and the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC). Becky Pine stated that she, Colleen Neff and Fran Stanley attended this presentation. Colleen Neff observed that the presentation and the later question and answer session impressed upon her that despite successes, creating affordable housing is difficult for everyone.

Becky Pine said that she liked some of the development models shown at the end of the presentation. Particularly, one town bought a larger parcel and intensively developed 10 to 15 units on a portion of the land. When thinking of applying this model to Groton, she thought of two parcels:

1. A ten acre plus or minus parcel at Surrenden Farm that is town owned (Map/Parcel ID: 220-33.2) and not constrained by a conservation restriction. Trust members discussed this parcel. The Select Board may have wanted to have active recreation or the possibility of affordable housing. There was a question about arsenic contamination. Also, the feasibility of access was discussed as the property abuts the Ayer town line and there is a long unimproved driveway/road to reach the parcel from the Groton side.

2. The Hayes Family land on Maple Avenue. There are two adjoining parcels (Map/Parcel ID: 104-30 and 220-33.2). One parcel is about 69 acres and the other parcel contains about 19 acres. The family has expressed interest in selling the land. Becky Pine said that she spoke with conservation agent Nikolas Gualco about the land. Apparently, the land appraises for \$1.4 million. The Commonwealth's Department of Fish and Game may be interested in some or all of the site. Ann Gagnon is exploring that option on behalf of Fish and Game. Becky Pine wondered if the Town might purchase a portion of the site for development of affordable housing with CPC funds.

Fran Stanley was directed to alert the Town's Housing Production Plan consultant about the Surrenden Farm parcel. Also, the Housing Production Plan will include an evaluation of the development potential for Town-owned parcels.

Considering the array of expenses and development uncertainty, the conversation turned to tax credit projects as a way for towns to leverage financing for affordable housing. Fran Stanley briefly described the federal tax credit program and how that is the main source of federal funding for new affordable housing.

The 797 Boston Road property is a Groton site that has been discussed in connection with a possible tax credit development. 119 Partners, LLC owns this 2.8-acre site and Donald Van Dyne is the principal. Over the years, he has discussed both commercial development and a 40B comprehensive permit project for the site. The Chelmsford Housing Authority is an experienced developer of affordable housing and they have expressed an interest in created a senior rental development funded with tax credits similar to what they are presently building in Shirley on Hospital Road. In order to advance, the present owner would need to be interested and the development would probably be dependent on an extension of town sewer to the site.

There is a potential 40B comprehensive permit project at 63 Gratuity Road (Map/Parcel ID: 216-47). Routhier & Roper Gratuity Road, LLC owns this 54-acre site and Richard Roper is the principal. If approved as a comprehensive permit project, then affordable housing would be created without any subsidy or particular inducement from the Town. The developer's representatives are presently working on a wetland delineation with the Conservation Commission. Although extension of sewer from the Riverbend neighborhood was briefly discussed, the developer appears to be planning for on-site septic. Should the developer propose a homeownership project, then the housing trust may want to evaluate whether to try to improve on that plan by buying out 1 or 2 affordable units to be given to the Groton Housing Authority to be used as affordable rentals.

### **Agenda Item 3: Minutes**

*David Wilder moved to approve the draft minutes from August 29, 2019 as written. Sheila Julien seconded and the motion carried 4:0 (Stuart Schulman absent).*

*Colleen Neff moved to adjourn the meeting. Becky Pine seconded and Sheila Julien adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.*

Minutes by Fran Stanley.