



TOWN OF GROTON
Affordable Housing Trust



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

Regular Session

Date: Thursday, July 2, 2020

Time: 7:25 pm

Location: Virtual meeting to be held via Zoom pursuant to Governor's executive order concerning the Open Meeting Law

Trust members
in attendance: Becky Pine, Colleen Neff, Dave Wilder, Stuart Schulman

Other
Attendees: Judy Anderson

Documents: Agenda, Doneski invoice, draft minutes for January 30, 2020 and May 14, 2020

At 7:25 pm, Becky Pine called the meeting to order in regular session having recently exited executive session.

Draft Housing Production Plan (HPP)

Fran Stanley reported that the Planning Board voted on June 25, 2020 to approve the HPP with one correction and also one recommendation to the Select Board. The Select Board met on June 29, 2020 and voted to approve the HPP as corrected. The Select Board accepted the Planning Board's recommendation to have an implementation strategy that explicitly noted that Town Meeting can vote to send CPC funds to the affordable housing trust to be held for future affordable housing expenditures including the purchase of land withdrawn from Chapter 61 for affordable housing.

Now, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has been asked to approve Groton's adopted HPP. DHCD has 30 days for its review. Once approved, Groton will have a Plan that will be in effect for 5 years. If the Town meets certain affordable housing production goals, then it can qualify for a safe harbor to avoid unwanted Chapter 40B comprehensive permit projects.

The housing trust reviewed the Plan's implementation strategies and discussed several of the Town-owned parcels that are thought to have development potential. The group briefly discussed:

- the Nashua Road parcel owned by the Groton Housing Authority;
- a separate Nashua Road parcel that accesses the road via an easement;
- land at the end of Cow Pond Brook Road;
- a 16.9-acre parcel off Townsend Road at the foot of the Academy Hill subdivision; and
- the Prescott School.

Most of the Trust's attention centered on the Shirley Road parcel known as the Surrenden Farm reserve parcel. This land was purchased with CPC funds and so affordable housing is one of the few allowable uses of the land. The parcel is on the edge of Town along the border of the Town of Ayer. Access was discussed.

If water and sewer could be arranged through the Town of Ayer, then this would open up the development options in terms of design, number of units, and capacity to attract outside funding. Trust members agreed to explore options starting with research into the past permitting for the parcel. David Wilder recalled that arsenic may have been an issue on this site.

Stuart Schulman moved to have the Affordable Housing Trust approve the Housing Production Plan. Becky Pine seconded and the motion carried 4:0 by roll call vote: Becky Pine – aye, Colleen Neff – aye, David Wilder – aye and Stuart Schulman – aye.

Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA)

Becky Pine noted that the Select Board is currently planning to hold Fall Town Meeting on October 3, 2020. This early date will compress the time that the Trust will have to help move the emergency rental assistance project through the CPC as well as gather the outside support and exposure necessary for the project to gain Town Meeting approval.

Stuart Schulman said that the need for the project is clearly demonstrated. David Wilder advised that Groton's program should make use of the elements of other town's programs so as not to re-invent the wheel. Becky Pine noted that the \$200,000 grant amount is one pot of money and is valuable but this project does not do anything for the long term. She confirmed that the proposal asks for the unspent residue of the ERA project to remain with the Trust to be spent on other affordable housing matters.

Fran Stanley commented that apart from this out-of-cycle application, the housing trust can start the application process in the fall for separate projects such as (1) an amount of money to be spent in the future on as yet unspecified affordable housing projects, and (2) engineering and predevelopment money for the Surrenden Farm reserve parcel.

Fran Stanley will supply information on all program elements by the next meeting so that Trust members can choose desired program elements. Decisions to be made include:

- monthly assistance amounts
- duration of assistance
- selection by first come/first serve or lottery,
- in-house or contracted out administration,
- document approvals, and
- reporting features.

Becky Pine stated that she would like to learn how many people have approached the Commissioners of Trust Funds for housing assistance since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Review Invoice

Trust members reviewed David Doneski's June 12, 2020 invoice for legal services rendered to the housing trust. Becky Pine noted that the amount charged is about \$22 over what the Trust had previously approved.

Stuart Schulman moved to have the Affordable Housing Trust pay \$1,147.50, the full amount invoiced, to KP LAW PC for David Doneski's work. David Wilder seconded and the motion carried 4:0 by roll call vote: Becky Pine – aye, Colleen Neff – aye, David Wilder – aye and Stuart Schulman – aye.

Review Minutes January 30, 2020 and May 14, 2020.

Colleen Neff moved to approve the January 30, 2020 regular session minutes as written. Becky Pine seconded and the motion carried 4:0 by roll call vote: Becky Pine – aye, Colleen Neff – aye, David Wilder – aye and Stuart Schulman – aye.

Stuart Schulman moved to approve the May 14, 2020 regular session minutes as written. Becky Pine seconded and the motion carried 4:0 by roll call vote: Becky Pine – aye, Colleen Neff – aye, David Wilder – aye and Stuart Schulman – aye.

Housing Trust Vacancy

Becky Pine noted that the housing trust has a vacancy since Sheila Julien stepped down from the Trust at the end of June. The affordable housing trust is organized as a five-person committee with individual members appointed by the Select Board. David Wilder said that he is also planning to step down but that he is open to staying on while additional members are sought.

One person recently submitted her name as interested in the vacancy. That person did not respond to email inquiries.

At 8:05 pm, Trust members voted to enter executive session with an intent to adjourn without returning to regular session.

Notes by Fran Stanley