



TOWN OF GROTON
Affordable Housing Trust



Becky Pine, *Chair*
Cynthia Lane-Hand, *Member*
Colleen A. Neff, *Treasurer*
Richard Perini, *Member*
Carolyn Perkins, *Member*

Minutes
Regular Session

Date: Thursday, January 21, 2021

Time: 7 pm

Location: Virtual meeting broadcast on Zoom and the Groton Channel pursuant to Governor's executive order concerning the Open Meeting Law

Members in attendance: Cindi Lane-Hand, Carolyn Perkins, Becky Pine, Colleen Neff and Rick Perini

Others in attendance: John Sopka, Heather Portier, Ray Lucas and Eileen Hoskin

Handouts: Agenda, draft Housing Coordinator letter of support, draft 2020 Annual Report, draft January 7, 2021 regular session minutes

Becky Pine called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Item #1: Update on the Emergency Rental Assistance program. Roll call vote may be taken.

Fran Stanley stated that a \$236.95 invoice from the Groton Electric Light Department was paid. This GELD invoice was for the cost of the one-page flyer advertising the Emergency Rental Assistance program that was included with electric rate payers' December bills.

Colleen Neff joined the meeting.

Item #2: Plan presentation of Site Assessment funding application to the CPC and potentially to Select Board. Roll call vote may be taken.

Regarding letters of support, Fran Stanley noted that the Groton Housing Authority has submitted a letter of support for the Trust's application. The Diversity Task Force also voted to send a letter of support. The Planning Board will consider whether to support the Trust's application at their upcoming February 11th meeting.

Fran Stanley will present the Site Assessment application to the CPC on the January 25th public hearing. It will be helpful to have Trust members who are residents volunteering their time to be present at the CPC rather than the CPC only hearing from people who are paid to speak to those interests. Carolyn Perkins will be in attendance at the CPC meeting, but she has recused herself from this matter. Cindi Lane-Hand, Rick Perini and Colleen Neff will all plan to attend. Becky Pine will be in the Select Board meeting instead that evening.

Becky Pine commented that if the Trust is asked about the \$150,000 amount, then recall that the Trust has heard input that it should even ask for more money from the community housing asset category. Also, Becky Pine noted that an in-cycle CPC application is a once a year opportunity and the Trust is actively looking at properties in Town. In addition, the Massachusetts Housing Partnership has committed about \$25,000 worth of engineering work to the Town. Colleen Neff observed that the Trust's request needs to be a meaningful amount so that the funding will be useful for the Trust's purposes.

Becky Pine provided a summary of the Select Board's CPC discussion on January 11, 2021 which has bearing on the Trust's expected request to the Select Board for a letter of support. Becky Pine stated that John Giger asserted that it may be a conflict of interest for the Select Board to recommend a project when it is sponsoring its own application (Middle School Track for \$1.4 million). The discussion will be continued by the Select Board in their January 25th meeting. Trust members noted that the Trust's application is not in conflict with the Middle School Track since the track cannot use community housing asset category money. The Trust's Site Assessment application could be fully funded out of existing funds in the community housing asset category.

Becky Pine attended and reported on the January 11, 2021 Community Preservation Committee meeting that discussed the percentage surcharge. Carolyn Perkins stated that Groton has collected a 43% return on the local taxes levied via the Community Preservation Act. She said that this has been a good investment and the Town would receive considerably less from the state if it adopted a lower surcharge percentage.

Item #3: Discuss sending letter to Community Preservation Committee for housing coordinator application. Roll call vote may be taken.

Carolyn Perkins moved that the Affordable Housing Trust send a letter of support recommending that the Community Preservation Committee support funding for the Housing Coordinator position. Colleen Neff seconded and the motion carried 5:0 by roll call vote with Pine – aye, Lane-Hand – aye, Neff – aye, Perini – aye, and Perkins – aye.

Item #4: Discuss 2020 Annual Report. Votes may be taken.

Becky Pine thanked Colleen Neff and Cindi Lane-Hand for their work drafting the proposed 2020 Annual Report. Becky Pine stated that her only reservation was the Boynton Meadows section as that is not this year's effort. That project is done and the Town got three affordable units. Colleen Neff noted that she left the Boynton Meadows section in per Fran Stanley's recommendation. There was no opposition to removing that section.

Becky Pine moved to approve the 2020 Annual Report as amended. Carolyn Perkins seconded and the motion carried 5:0 by roll call vote of Pine – aye, Lane-Hand – aye, Neff – aye, Perini – aye, and Perkins – aye.

Item #5: Review regular session draft minutes from January 7, 2021. Roll call vote may be taken.

Trust members reviewed draft minutes

Carolyn Perkins moved to approve the January 7, 2021 regular session minutes. Becky Pine seconded and the motion carried 5:0 with Pine – aye, Lane-Hand – aye, Colleen Neff – aye, Perini – aye, and Perkins – aye.

Becky Pine asked about setting the next meeting and the group's preferred meeting frequency. Cindi Lane-Hand said that the consistency of an every other week Thursday meeting is helpful for her own scheduling. Colleen Neff agreed.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 7 pm

Items #6 and #7: Executive sessions

Becky Pine announced that the Affordable Housing Trust has two executive session matters scheduled for the end of this meeting. The Trust will review executive session minutes and discuss potential land acquisition and plans to adjourn from that executive session without returning to regular session.

Colleen Neff moved to enter executive session and not return to open session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, c.30A, §21(a), Clause 7 – “To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.” – Purpose – Review, Approval and Potential Release of Executive Session Minutes and also pursuant to 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, potential land acquisition. Becky Pine as chair so declared. Cindi Lane-Hand seconded the motion and the motion passed 5:0 on a roll call vote of Perini – aye, Lane-Hand – aye, Neff – aye, Perkins – aye and Pine – aye.

Regular session adjourned at 7:29 pm. Notes by Fran Stanley