



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, February 4, 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 and Colleen Neff

Others in attendance: John Sopka, John Maynard and Nathan Shapiro

Handouts: Agenda, draft Site Assessment application, draft January 21, 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 did not have an update to offer. Carolyn Perkins asked Fran Stanley to check in with Metro West for an update so that she would have information to share with the Community Preservation Committee on February 8th.

Item #2: Discuss feedback received during the January 25, 2021 CPC public hearing for the Trust's Site Assessment funding application. Roll call vote may be taken.

The group discussed areas of the Trust's application identified by CPC members for clarification or expanded treatment. Most Trust members attended the January 25 meeting. Colleen Neff commented that the CPC wanted more detail for how the Trust would handle the money. Colleen Neff stated that the CPC members agreed that more affordable housing was needed; and one attendee opposed development of the Surrenden Farm Reserve Parcel. Colleen Neff concluded with the observation that letters of support are needed.

Rick Perini has provided a lot more detail on the management plan.

Carolyn Perkins agreed with Colleen Neff's statement that the application needs letters of support. She said that most people were positive and that a little more justification for the amount was sought. Carolyn Perkins thought that Fran Stanley answered the questions well.

Becky Pine said that she reviewed the recorded meeting and followed up with Ed McNierney about his characterization of the application as unusual in a later conversation. Becky Pine said that in that conversation Ed McNierney agreed that transfers to the Affordable Housing Trust from the CPC are similar to transfers from the CPC to the Conservation Commission. Becky Pine also reached out to Nikolis Gualco, the

Conservation Agent for the Town, and asked about some of expenditures that the Conservation Commission makes with its CPC funds. Nikolis Gualco's answer was appraisals, surveys, engineered plans to divide lots, title searches and recording fees.

The group agreed to make changes to the application in the areas discussed. Becky Pine will review the final draft and the final application will be due February 18.

Carolyn Perkins commented that she attended a CPC workshop that highlighted Brewster's efforts to create affordable housing. The seasonal rental market on the Cape operates as another barrier to affordable housing. In that community, proceeds collected via a tax on short term rentals were earmarked for affordable housing.

The group discussed how legal advice could guide the Trust on its expenditures. Carolyn Perkins asked if the Trust needed this assistance now and Becky Pine replied that she did not think that we need it now but that the Trust may want counsel later and we may want to lay the groundwork now.

Becky Pine asked about the CPC review process and Carolyn Perkins explained that process. Typically, the CPC requires that a project have Select Board approval if the project is to be done on Town owned land.

Item #3: Discuss Select Board views on the CPC and support of CPC applications. Roll call vote may be taken.

Becky Pine reported that the Select Board recently took a 4:1 vote in favor of writing letters of support only for projects on Town owned land or a Town asset. Then, the Select Board applied its new rule to the Trust's application and determined that the Trust's application did not meet its criteria for a letter of support. Colleen Neff asked isn't it the Select Board's policy to take a position on all warrant articles. Becky Pine said yes but that the Select Board may make that decision later and share its decision at Town Meeting.

At around 7:30 pm, the virtual meeting was disrupted by zoom bombing. Members exited the published zoom meeting and re-convened at 7:45 pm with more controls to reduce the potential for another disruption.

The Select Board does have a goal this year of increasing affordable housing. Also, there was a list of all Town owned parcels with development potential in the Housing Production Plan that the Select Board recently approved. Becky Pine asked for a copy of that list.

Carolyn Perkins said that this position could be awkward for the Trust because in the past lack of Select Board support has stopped other applications. Carolyn Perkins will ask the CPC about if there is no letter of support from the Select Board will this be fatal to our goals. Becky Pine remarked that it is important to remember parallels with the CPC's transfer of funds to the Conservation Commission. Carolyn Perkins said that the question of bonding a new project may have an impact on Groton's future decisions about the CPC tax surcharge.

Becky Pine mentioned that the recently drafted List of LIHTC Developer includes links to other regional projects. Becky Pine

Fran Stanley stated that the Select Board might offer a letter of permission instead of a letter of support.

Item #4: Review regular session draft minutes from January 21, 2021. Roll call vote may be taken.

Trust members reviewed draft minutes. Two corrections made.

Carolyn Perkins moved to approve the January 21, 2021 regular session minutes as corrected. Cindi Lane-Hand seconded and the motion carried 4:0 with Pine – aye, Lane-Hand – aye, Neff – aye and Perkins – aye (Perini absent).

Items #5 and #6: 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. Carolyn Perkins seconded the motion and the motion passed 4:0 on a roll call vote of Lane-Hand – aye, Neff – aye, Perkins – aye and Pine – aye (Perini absent).

Regular session adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 7 pm

Annual Town Meeting: Saturday, May 1, 2021 at 10 am

Notes by Fran Stanley