



TOWN OF GROTON
Affordable Housing Trust



Becky Pine, *Chair*
Carolyn Perkins, *Vice Chair*
Cynthia Lane-Hand, *Clerk*
Richard Perini, *Member*

AGENDA
Regular Session

Date: Monday, May 10, 2021

Time: 6:30 pm

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

Members in attendance: Rick Perini, Carolyn Perkins, and Becky Pine

Handouts: Agenda

Becky Pine called the meeting to order for the Affordable Housing Trust at 6:34 pm. The Affordable Housing Trust participated in the Community Preservation Committee's meeting on Monday for the single agenda item to discuss possible extension of the Emergency Rental Assistance program.

Becky Pine provided a recap of the Emergency Rental Assistance program. She noted that Town Meeting approved the CPC funding article for \$200,000. Town Counsel reviewed the CPC proposal and strongly advised that the Town contract out the administration of the program. The Affordable Housing Trust did contract out administration to Metro West Collaborative Development. To date, Metro West has reported that the program has had eight (8) participating households. On April 16, 2021, Executive Director Jennifer Van Campen informed the Town that 2 households would be concluding their 4 months of participation in April and that several others will wrap up their 4 months of assistance in May. Jennifer Van Campen asked if Groton would like to extend its rental assistance program for another 4 months. Several other municipalities had acted to extend their programs.

The Affordable Housing Trust discussed this question at their April 29, 2021 meeting. Trust members discussed whether program parameters would allow for an extension. They weighed the idea of offering 2 months of additional assistance instead of an extra 4 months. Trust members expressed that they did not want to see households suffer for lack of rental assistance while waiting for federal assistance programs to deliver assistance. Becky Pine explained that Trust members voted to ask to discuss the matter with the Community Preservation Committee.

Dan Emerson asked about the difference between 2 and 4 months and was told that Trust members considered the influx of state and federal money into RAFT, ERMA and ERAP and wondered whether an additional 2 months would serve as a bridge to non-local monies. Rick Perini added that he has observed delays by the federal government in getting money out to recipients and for this reason he would like the Town to do whatever it can do to help. Dan Emerson said that he was leaning towards a 4-month extension.

Anna Eliot asked questions to clarify her understanding of the current operation of the program. Richard Hewitt asked whether there were any specific family situations that would speak to the amount of need. Fran Stanley said from her limited knowledge, participating households had a variety of needs/experiences. Also, Fran Stanley noted that it is by design through the contracting out that the Town has not received much information about participants. Richard Hewitt said that, lacking this sort of detail, he was leaning towards a 2-month extension.

Bruce Easom commented that the Trust should check with the Town Manager to make sure that an extension would be within the four corners of the document.

Speaking on behalf of the CPC, Carolyn Perkins moved for the Community Preservation Committee to approve an extension of the rental assistance program for up to four months contingent upon the approval of Town Manager that it is within the four corners of the original motion of Town Meeting. Bob DeGroot seconded and the CPC motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Speaking on behalf of the Affordable Housing Trust, Carolyn Perkins moved for the Affordable Housing Trust to approve an extension of the rental assistance program for up to four months contingent upon the approval of Town Manager that it is within the four corners of the original motion of Town Meeting. Rick Perini seconded and the motion passed 3:0 by roll call vote of Carolyn Perkins – aye, Rick Perini – aye, and Becky Pine – aye (Cindi Lane-Hand absent).

Affordable Housing Trust members thanked CPC members for their attention and support of this matter.

Meeting adjourned at 7 pm.

Notes by Fran Stanley