



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
Affordable Housing Trust



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

Regular Session

Date: Thursday, July 8, 2021

Time: 7 pm

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street, Groton, and later move to Small Conference Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street, Groton

Trust members in attendance: Cindi Lane-Hand, Rick Perini, Carolyn Perkins, and Becky Pine

Diversity Task Force members in attendance: Raquel Majeski (Chair), Susan Hughes, Dierdre Slavin-Mitchell and Amy Degen

Handouts: Agenda, Draft regular session minutes from June 17, 2021

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Becky Pine called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

**Meet jointly with the Diversity Task Force in the First Floor Meeting Room to discuss June 27, 2021 Housing Summit.**

The group discussed the event and comments heard included 'good turnout', 'great questions' and that the audience was 'receptive and positive'. Regarding the second session, Carolyn Perkins said that one expectation was that there would be more feedback yet she did not think that people were prepared to give feedback. She said that she did not know how the committees can break down people's general interest in affordable housing into particular support for certain approaches.

The group discussed whether the second session might be a time to invite a Massachusetts Housing Partnership speaker. Several members agreed that Bruce Easom's statistic about CPC funding was interesting. Bruce Easom had said that community preservation act funding typically subsidizes community housing at an average cost of \$30,000 per housing unit. Carolyn Perkins said that more information on funding would be welcome.

Becky Pine said that one additional piece is the multi-family zoning measure that will probably be considered at the Fall Town Meeting. The May 10, 2021 zoning draft has a fifteen percent (15%) affordability quotient. Becky Pine believes that the affordable percentage should be higher, perhaps set at twenty percent (20%) affordable units. Amy Degen asked who is pushing this measure and Becky Pine explained that the impetus is the 2020 Housing Choice legislation and its provisions related to MBTA communities. Carolyn Perkins said that the Planning Board is waiting for the state to issue guidance on this aspect of the legislation and so the Planning Board may act at that point, maybe at the end of August. Rick Perini said that Massachusetts needs rental housing. He gave the example of Thomas Menino creating 12,500 apartments in Boston alone during his long tenure as Mayor of Boston.

The group discussed the varied nature of Groton's housing related committees and noted that several have different responsibilities. Becky Pine said that considering this, some of the coordination does not seem beneficial. That said, a united front at Town Meeting is key and being on the same page is important for the public. The group agreed that big meetings can be hard to manage when the agenda requires in-depth

participation. Becky Pine said that more information is needed from experts involved in the development of affordable housing and gave the example of David Hedison who spoke with the Affordable Housing Trust in October 2020. Rick Perini said that the three main elements are known. To build, the Trust needs land, outside funding and a town contribution.

Fran Stanley recalled competitive tax credits as the main and usual way of obtaining outside funding. Rick Perini set those past funding paths aside noting that with the pandemic there is the possibility of unprecedented amounts of money – say five billion dollars – in federal grants directed to affordable housing. Rick Perini will follow up with U.S. Representative Lori Trahan for more information on those funds.

Raquel Majeski concluded that the next session is a work in progress.

At approximately 7:35 pm, the Affordable Housing Trust moved to adjacent Small Conference Room to continue with the remainder of its agenda.

**Discuss percentage of required affordable units in future zoning bylaws prepared to respond to Groton’s status as an MBTA community as referenced in recent Housing Choice legislation (Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020).**

Trust members continued the discussion about percentages and agreed to review a draft letter to the Planning Board at their next meeting asking for higher percentages of affordable units.

**Discuss housing trust vacancy.**

No candidates have been identified at this time.

**Plan for setting up site walks of certain town owned parcels.**

Fran Stanley reported that conservation agent Nik Gualco, who is familiar with the Townsend Road area near Academy Hill, confirmed that the Trust could access Town owned Fieldstone Drive parcels via Conservation Commission land and so would not need to cross the narrow strip of land owned by Joel Bissel. Trust members directed Fran Stanley to email the Select Board requesting permission to access the parcels still under consideration that are listed in the Housing Production Plan. Ideally, the Trust will arrange August site walks to access the Fieldstone Drive parcels. Site walks do not need to be posted under the Open Meeting Law so long as it is merely a site walk and not deliberation on committee business.

**Review draft regular session minutes from June 17, 2021.**

Trust members agreed to defer consideration of the draft minutes to a later date.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, July 22, 2021

Notes by Fran Stanley