



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
Affordable Housing Trust



Becky Pine, *Chair*  
Carolyn Perkins, *Vice Chair*  
Phil Francisco, *Member*  
Richard Perini, *Member*

Regular Session Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2022  
Time: scheduled for 7:30 pm, started at 7:48 pm  
Location: Virtual meeting held via Zoom  
Members in attendance: Rick Perini, Becky Pine, Phil Francisco, and Carolyn Perkins  
Others in attendance: Charles Vander Linden, John Sopka (Groton Housing Authority board member)

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The Affordable Housing Trust re-entered regular session at 7:48 pm. This meeting is being recorded. Cameras were turned on and Trust members were identified.

**Minutes**

Draft minutes were corrected to show that sample grant agreement was included for reference only.

*Carolyn Perkins moved to approve the October 26, 2022 minutes as corrected. Richard Perini seconded and the motion carried (4:0) by roll call vote of Perini – aye, Francisco – aye, Perkins – aye and Pine – aye.*

**Prepare for November 22, 2022 meeting with the Finance Committee regarding annual transfer of CPC funds to the Affordable Housing Trust and determining a capital reserve goal.**

Carolyn Perkins recommended giving the Finance Committee a sense of how we expect to be using the money. For example, there might be a list to include designing preliminary site plans, buy down purchase of an affordable home, legal advice, soft costs for investigating sites, land purchase price, etc.

John Sopka asked and ascertained that the Trust would have needed \$1.8 million to purchase the 12-unit apartment building at 22 Adams Avenue. That property was unusual for Groton in terms of number of units and the connection to both public water and public sewer.

Trust members discussed supplying handouts and providing a list of towns who also make consistent transfers of CPC funds to their affordable housing trusts. Fran Stanley commented that the Groton Herald will be covering this subject in their upcoming paper. Charles Vander Linden noted that it is helpful for a committee to have something concrete and he asked what nearby communities are doing as that is often viewed as relevant information. Shirley/Devens (Shirley Meadows), Sudbury, Acton, Lincoln (Oriole Landing) and maybe Carlisle (Benfield Farms) were mentioned as having had effective municipal efforts. Becky Pine and Phil Francisco offered to help with review of the content.

**Discuss pending CPC application in view of initial feedback received from the CPC on November 7, 2022.**

Fran Stanley reported on the CPC review of the Trust's two-page application. Carolyn Perkins recused herself from the matter and was not present for the CPC discussion. Richard Hewitt had a list of considerations. Fran Stanley suggests that the expanded application address each point. The sample grant agreement was discussed. CPC chair Bruce Easom confirmed with the Town Manager that Town Counsel would be made

available to the CPC to help prepare a grant agreement associated with funds that the Trust receives. Town Counsel is reviewing the sample grant agreement language now.

Carolyn Perkins added that the Groton Housing Authority has submitted a \$120,000 application for feasibility and preliminary plans for the development of the former firefighters' parcel<sup>1</sup>.

John Sopka asked if the CPC funding for the Conservation Commission has time limits. Carolyn Perkins answered that most CPC grants are limited to 5 years but there is no such limit for Conservation Commission funds. Carolyn Perkins offered help with writing the CPC application.

### **Other business**

Massachusetts Select Board Association Becky Pine attended a webinar on funding for affordable housing. Her impression from the training is that there is money there and the question is how to access that funding. The Commonwealth's One Stop for Growth application portal was highlighted as beneficial to applicants<sup>2</sup>.

Update on the MBTA Communities zoning Becky Pine shared information about a Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) technical assistance training scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 6 pm. Fran Stanley will email the registration link to meeting attendees.

John Sopka stated that the Groton Housing Authority has been informed of a potential loss of operating funds if Groton does not gain MBTA Communities compliance by 2024. This was information shared with the board by its accountant<sup>3</sup>.

Hoyts Wharf parcel Richard Perini said that he expects to have a meeting in early December with his veterans contact and he will have handouts for the Trust a future point.

Phil Francisco asked for the Trust to avoid third Wednesdays of the month as this time conflicts with another of his volunteer commitments.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm. Notes by Fran Stanley

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 7 pm

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<sup>1</sup> Undeveloped 8.8-acre parcel (227-135) with no frontage, accessible to Nashua Road via a deeded easement. This land was formerly owned by North Middlesex Mutual Aid and taken for back taxes in 2012. This land was transferred from the Town of Groton to the Groton Housing Authority in March, 2022 with the proviso that the property will revert back to town ownership if the grantee does not obtain a building permit to construct housing to be owned and operated by the grantee within five (5) years (see deed 79865/572 at Middlesex South Registry of Deeds).

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.mass.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth> for more information.

<sup>3</sup> Upon further investigation, DHCD representatives confirmed this information on November 17, 2022. Municipal housing authorities would be barred from receiving Local Capital Projects Funds. The legislature appropriates 10% of housing authority operating funds from the Local Capital Project Fund account. DHCD has advised communities to anticipate a 10% reduction in housing authority operating funds if they do not gain compliance with the MBTA Communities zoning requirement.