



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
Affordable Housing Trust



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

Regular Session Minutes

Date: Thursday, October 12, 2023  
Time: 3:30 pm  
Location: Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street  
Members in attendance: Carolyn Perkins, Phil Francisco, Richard Perini, and Becky Pine  
Others in attendance: John Sopka (Groton Housing Authority)  
Referenced documents: Draft CPC application  
Draft July 25, 2023 regular session minutes

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Becky Pine called the Affordable Housing Trust to order at 3:30 pm.

**Discuss bid for town owned land as developer for Heritage Landing 40B has requested permanent restriction on approximately 14.5 acres.**

A newly created LLC called Groton Conservation Trust and Management LLC bid \$200,000 for a permanent restriction on the use of 14.5 acres on parcels 249-51 and 249-57. The manager for this LLC is George Defelice III of Dracut. Defelice is also the manager of Heritage Landing LLC, the entity that filed the 40B application. In addition, Defelice and Guy L. Constantine of Tyngsboro are the two managers of DefCon 1 LLC which is the current owner of parcel 248-42 on Cow Pond Brook Road. Becky Pine explained that the price can be negotiated up but not down. The Trust's potential house lot on the Hoyts Wharf parcel (249-51) is in question and the Park Commission has an interest due to the impact on its plans to improve the recreation area at Cow Pond.

Becky Pine noted that she sent an email to Misty-Anne Marold at Natural Heritage asking for that agency's opinion on how a 14.5-acre restriction would impact the Town's other plans for this area.

Becky Pine and Phil Francisco suggested postponing the Trust's vote. Rick Perini said that he did not want to vote on anything until he knows what it is. Trust will revisit this issue at its next meeting.

The group discussed:

- the likelihood of guarantees for the developer constructing 40 units with 10 affordables on parcel 248-42,
- the possibility of grants for bringing town water to the site,
- that the upcoming October 28 meeting creates an artificial time crunch for the Town,
- whether \$200,000 is fair compensation for the proposed restriction,
- the form of the transaction as a restriction rather than a sale, and
- the fact that a permitted 40B development adds value for the owner so there would be no incentive for the owner to change course at that point.

**Review draft minutes from August 16, 2023.**

Trust postponed review to a future meeting.

## **Review application for upcoming CPC grant round due October 26, 2023.**

Becky Pine requested edits for the application to describe Trust's present strategy to build up reserves and look for land to purchase. Also, summarize the yield from the review of town owned properties in the application as that of "declining possibilities". Group requested edits and suggested wording for expanding the table of town owned parcels as well as the description of the Trust's assets.

The group discussed the amount to request and will be thinking about an amount ranging from \$150,000 to \$400,000. Application will be revisited at the next meeting. CPC applications are due on October 26, 2023.

## **Discuss 797 Boston Road application including developer interest in receiving financial support for affordable units**

The group discussed the new senior 24-unit project with 50% affordability. This will probably be a rental project. The developer would like to tie in to the Four Corners sewer if possible and the Sewer Commission is going to see if there is adequate capacity. A Town Meeting vote to extend the sewer district would be required. The developer is open to an offer from the Trust to pay down the affordability level from 80% AMI to a lower level.

The developer expects that these units would not go on the SHI but rather have local affordability restrictions. It is in the Town's interest to have affordable units on the SHI. Fran Stanley said that historically, the Planning Board has interpreted local zoning bylaw language on affordability to mean SHI eligible units. The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (formerly DHCD) does allow senior units to be added to the SHI so long as the affordable units do not bar children<sup>1</sup>. The state housing agency does not have a problem with developers who choose to bar children from their market rate senior units.

## **Update on pending 40Bs**

Heritage Landing received an extension until April 2024 from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). For Groton Farms, the ZBA closed the public hearing on October 11<sup>th</sup> and plans to vote on the application on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Other Business**

Thinking about the Trust's idea to cooperate with the Conservation Commission on buying land for affordable housing and conservation purposes, Becky Pine recommends seeking advice from Town Counsel on how to structure that sort of transaction.

Next meeting: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 7 pm

Meeting adjourned.

Notes by Fran Stanley

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<sup>1</sup> [Local Initiative Program Policy Regarding Restrictions on Children in Age-Restricted 55+ Housing](#) (2018); see also [Regional Housing Services Office memo on Municipal Considerations for Planning for Age-Restricted Housing](#) (2018).