



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, May 30, 2024
Time: 7 pm
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street
Members in attendance: Richard Perini, Charles Vander Linden, Phil Francisco, and Becky Pine
Members absent: Carolyn Perkins
Others attending: John Sopka (Groton Housing Authority)
Handout: Hoyts Wharf task list, updated soil log and map

Becky Pine called the Affordable Housing Trust to order at 7:03 pm.

Site walk report for the Hoyts Wharf parcel (249-51 and adjacent parcel 249-57)

Charles Vander Linden said that we saw an area of upland, a kame terrace (glacial deposit), that is a relatively flat plateau. The driveway can exit in a location with good sight lines.

Becky Pine added that this location is screened from the road and may need some grade changes for the driveway. She said that neighbor Daniel Murdock came out (234 Hoyts Wharf Road). He is a long-term resident and said he would be worried about something being buried there. Regarding past disturbance, Charles Vander Linden said that elsewhere on the site, he saw evidence of disturbance such as spoil mounds near the Cow Pond Brook, but did not notice a disturbance in the house lot location.

Review \$870 Dillis & Roy invoice dated May 9, 2024 for Soil Testing & Report for Hoyts Wharf parcel.

Trust members discussed the engineering work at their previous meeting. The invoice amount appeared quite reasonable considering the amount of work done.

Charles Vander Linden moved to approve the May 9, 2024 from Dillis & Roy for soil testing. Phil Francisco seconded and the motion carried (4:0) (Perkins absent).

Since the Community Preservation Commission has control of the funds awarded to the Trust for site assessment (project #2022-04), that committee will also review the invoice.

Review May 14, 2024 proposal for engineering services from Dillis & Roy for parcels on Cow Pond Brook Road and Hoyts Wharf Road (parcels 249-51 & 57).

Phil Francisco estimated the total charges at \$9,100 although the consultation task represents an open-ended amount as an hourly rate was provided rather than a finite number for that task. Also, if any additional wildlife biologist work is needed for the Natural Heritage permitting, that would be an extra charge and possibly a separate contract. Since the Trust has paid for a habitat assessment and the Park Commission arranged for a plant survey, hopefully no further work in that area will be needed. Trust members agreed that it was good that the Dillis & Roy proposal noted the possibility since we do not know what Natural Heritage will want to focus on during its review.

The Trust wants to make sure that proper procurement steps are followed so the town's chief procurement officer will be consulted.

Charles Vander Linden moved to approve the May 14, 2024 Dillis & Roy engineering contract pending review of the Groton's chief procurement officer. Phil Francisco seconded and the motion carried (4:0) (Perkins absent).

Richard Perini continues to research design specifications for veterans housing. While noting that there is a multiplicity of housing types to meet the diverse needs of veterans, Richard Perini learned that for parking spaces it would be good to plan for:

- 1 handicapped car space,
- 1 handicapped van space,
- staff parking, and
- a parking space for each bedroom (assuming one veteran per bedroom).

By consensus, Trust members agreed to designate Charles Vander Linden and Richard Perini to follow up with Stan Dillis in an effort to make progress on the lot.

Review draft regular session minutes for May 2, 2024.

Richard Perini moved to approve the May 2, 2024 regular session minutes as corrected. Charles Vander Linden seconded and the motion carried (3:0) (Francisco abstained and Perkins absent).

Discuss outcomes and ramifications of the May 18, 2024 Special Town Meeting.

Trust members briefly discussed the positive affordable housing news – the Trust received \$400,000 in CPC funds and residents voted to add 797 Boston Road to the sewer district thereby benefiting the proposed senior rental project at that location).

Housing coordinator update on possible fundraising/help for Groton Housing Authority.

According to M.G.L. c. 121B, sec. 11(c) states that local housing authorities (such as Groton Housing Authority) have the power: "To receive loans, grants and annual or other contributions from the federal government of or from any other source, public or private;". Housing Authority board member Dan Emerson is interested in securing more funds to address capital improvements and deferred maintenance at the housing authority. The housing authority board will need to discuss the matter and perhaps learn about best practices from other housing authorities' fundraising efforts.

Trust members discussed and the idea was raised to include a check box on tax bills to allow residents to send donations for a maintenance fund for existing housing authority units. Richard Perini said that he would have more confidence in this endeavor if we can ascertain how much does the housing authority need to maintain the unsubsidized units (ex. Sandy Pond and Nashua Road).

Volunteer carpentry work was mentioned. Carpenters like Jim Hubert have undertaken projects for low-income Groton homeowners in the past. Is the housing authority allowed to accept free labor?

Discuss recent news reports about pro housing organizations and whether such efforts may be advisable or feasible for Groton.

The group discussed recent YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) efforts covered in the *Boston Globe*. The *Globe* coverage mentioned the groups Norwood for All and Acton Housing for All. These non-municipal groups represent a core group of people who undertake to promote affordable housing in town. Phil Francisco said that more businesses are getting behind this effort because they need workers who need housing to get to work.

Becky Pine said that while there are volunteers in town government committees related to affordable housing there is not a nonprofit or other local group that concentrates on affordable housing. It was also noted that there is still a vacancy on the housing authority board.

Other items

Massachusetts Housing Partnership is holding its annual housing institute on June 12th and June 13th. The location is Worcester and there will be a field trip to view two new housing developments: District 120

