

Final

CPA Project Application Form

[CPC Use Only: Date Received 2/12/24 By: Katie Berry
Assigned CPC #2025- 11]

If possible, use word processor to fill out form. Please answer all questions, use "N/A" if not applicable.

1. a.) Applicant Name and Organization: Last HADDAD First MARK
Organization(s) (if appropriate) TOWN OF GROTON

b.) Regional Project: Yes ? or No? X If Yes, Town/Organization: _____

2. Submission Date: February 12, 2024

3. Applicant Address: St. 173 MAIN STREET
City/ State: GROTON ZIP: 01450

4. Ph. # 978-448-1111 Email: mhaddad@grotonma.gov

5. CPA Purpose. Check all that apply:
Community Housing (Affordable Housing Historic Preservation* Open Space
Recreation

* As per MA General Law Chapter 44B, proposed historic projects that are not on the structures listed on the state's registry of historic places require a determination by the Groton Historic Commission that the proposed project is of historic significance.

6. Town Committee or boards participating: N/A

7. Project Location/Address: Town Hall, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450

8. Project Name: HOUSING COORDINATOR

9. Additional Responsible Parties (If applicable):

Role (specify)	Name	Address	Ph. (w) (cell)	Email
Property/Site Owner				
Project Manager	Mark Haddad	Town Hall, 173 Main Street	(w) 978.448.1111	mhaddad@grotonma.gov
Lead Architect				
Project Contractor				
Project Consultants				
Other:	Takashi Tada	Town Hall, 173 Main Street	(w) 978.448.1105	ttada@grotonma.gov
Other				

10. As appropriate, indicate if proposal requires P&S agreement Deed
Option agreement Other-describe: N/A

11. a.) Assessor info. (map/ block/ lot id.(s)): N/A b.) Tax classification type: N/A

12. Permits required: Zoning: N/A Historic Preservation: N/A Other: N/A

13. Historic Commission Approval signoff (when required): N/A Date: N/A

14 a.) Project cost \$ \$62,659.31 : Estimate Professional quote b.) Requested from CPC:
\$62,659.31 c.) Committed from other source: \$ 0 If applicable: annual anticipated total
income: \$ N/A Annual anticipated total expense: \$ N/A Anticipated net income
(loss): \$ N/A Name of Estimator name/company: N/A

15. CCP Objectives - use codes from **Section 5 of Community Preservation Plan** to indicate all that apply: 5.2.1

16. Project Timelines: Proposed Start Date: 07/01/2024 Projected Complete Date: 06/30/2025

17. Estimated Delivery Date of Completion Report to CPC: N/A

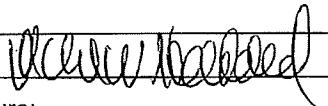
18. Project description and explanation (attach additional sheets as needed):
See Attachment A - Project Description

19. Feasibility: See Attachment A - Project Description

20. List of attachments: Attachment A - Project Description; Attachment B - FY25 Budget Estimate; Attachment C - 2023 Annual Report; Attachment D - Letters of support from the Affordable Housing Trust and the Planning Board.

21. Additional Information: _____

22. Management Plan: The Housing Coordinator position is managed jointly by the Town Manager and the Land Use Director. Budgeting, hiring, policy setting, and general oversight are the responsibility of the Town Manager. Day-to-day supervision is provided by the Land Use Director. The Housing Coordinator's workspace is situated in the Land Use Department on the second floor of Town Hall.

23. Applicant Signature:  Date: 2/15/24
Co Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____
Co Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

ATTACHMENT A
HOUSING COORDINATOR DESCRIPTION

18. Project Description

This application requests CPA funding from the Community Housing category to fund the wages and benefits of the Housing Coordinator position (25-hours/week). The essential job functions include:

- Coordinate the updating and implementation of the Housing Production Plan.
- Monitor affordable housing units to ensure that all deed requirements are met.
- Research funding sources available to help create affordable housing.
- Prepare and coordinate applications for state and federal resources, including housing grants and loans, assistance and public services, promote, monitor and oversee housing projects throughout the required community application process.
- Act as liaison to various housing groups including the Affordable Housing Trust, Groton Housing Authority, Housing Partnership, and regional housing coordinators group.
- Assist Town boards and committees, and private housing developers during the pre-application process for new affordable housing.
- Ensure the Town's housing interests are addressed during the review process for new affordable housing applications.
- Provide information, referrals and other support to members of the public seeking affordable housing.
- Conduct lotteries for affordable housing units.
- Assist in the preparation of Requests for Proposals for housing projects.
- Perform other similar or related work as required.

This application meets several CPC Added Value Criteria (7.5.2):

- a) *Proponent has a history of managing successful projects or can demonstrate their ability and competency to manage the project.* The Housing Coordinator position was added in 2009 and has enabled the Town to directly monitor the development and retention of its affordable housing stock. The updated Housing Production Plan 2020-2025 is an example of the Housing Coordinator's competency to manage projects. The Housing Coordinator helped the Town secure the technical assistance grant through the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to update the Housing Production Plan. The updated plan was approved by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development on August 3, 2020. Another example of the Housing Coordinator's competency is the successful establishment and implementation of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program that assisted low-income households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic from January 2021 through June 2022. The Housing Coordinator also provided a thorough review of the draft Comprehensive Permit for Groton Farms.

- b) *Acquires/conserves/protects/preserves/restores/reuses resources, buildings, history threatened by inappropriate development, damage, decay, loss, etc.* The Housing Coordinator position can support projects and initiatives that conserve, protect and restore existing buildings. For example, the Housing Coordinator position did support Town efforts to renovate the historic Kilbridge Antiques building (Calvin Boynton house) at 134 Main Street which resulted in three new affordable units.
- c) *Serves a currently underserved population.* The Housing Coordinator provides information, referrals and other support to members of the public seeking affordable housing. Those requests include low- and moderate-income people seeking rentals, moderate-income people seeking homeownership, and people with disabilities seeking supported or accessible housing.

Also, the Groton Housing Authority provides the majority of Groton's rental housing for residents with low and extremely low incomes. The Groton Housing Authority's state and federally funded budgets consistently underfund certain maintenance and capital improvement expenses. The Housing Coordinator position is charged with retaining existing affordable housing and so supporting adequate funding of the Groton Housing Authority is part of that charge whether those monies come from CPC grants or other Town appropriations.

- d) *Preserves the essential character of the Town.* The Housing Coordinator played a vital role in reviewing the Groton Farms application submitted pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40B, which mandates creation of ten percent of affordable housing by each municipality. As a result of Groton Farms, the Town will achieve the ten percent mandate through the redevelopment of an abandoned commercial property, thus preserving the essential character of the Town.

Communities who have not reached the ten percent goal are subject to development projects that override many elements of local zoning. The Town of Groton has relied on flexible development zoning provisions, housing trust investment in certain affordable housing developments, and the labor of the Housing Coordinator position to monitor the development and retention of the Town's affordable housing stock which allows the Town to assert its interests in a timely way. Directing and shaping development plans that include affordable housing can result in finished projects that consume less land, promote re-use of existing buildings, and align with the essential character of the Town.

19. Feasibility

The continuation of the Housing Coordinator position is feasible because it is an existing staff position that has been very beneficial to the Town since it was established in 2009. Expansion of the position to 25-hours per week in FY 2015 has enabled the Housing Coordinator to take on more projects and provide more services to those in need of housing.

**ATTACHMENT B
HOUSING COORDINATOR
FY 2025 BUDGET ESTIMATE**

WAGES			
FY 2024 HOURLY RATE	FY 2024 ANNUAL WAGES	FY 2025 ESTIMATED INCREASE (2.5%)	FY 2025 ESTIMATED ANNUAL WAGES
\$31.86	\$41,418.00	\$1,035.45	\$42,453.45
		Subtotal Wages	\$42,453.45
BENEFITS			
	FY 2024 HEALTH INSURANCE	FY 2025 ESTIMATED INCREASE (10%)	FY 2025 ESTIMATED HEALTH INSURANCE (at 62.5% for CPC)
	\$8,433.60	\$9,276.96	\$5,798.10
			FY 2025 MEDICARE (1.45% OF WAGES) (est. \$48 per quarter)
			\$615.58
			FY 2025 LIFE INSURANCE (at 62.5% for CPC)
			\$24.18
			FY 2025 RETIREMENT ALLOCATION (per Treasurer's report)
			\$13,768.00
		Subtotal Benefits	\$20,205.86
		FY 2025 WAGES & BENEFITS TOTAL	\$62,659.31

Disclaimer: Please note that this proposed budget is an estimate only.



Town of Groton
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

Fran Stanley
Housing Coordinator
fstanley@grotonma.gov
978.732.1913

ATTACHMENT C

Date: December 18, 2023
To: Russell Burke, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee
From: Fran Stanley
RE: Annual housing report

This report focuses on affordable housing activities in Groton for 2023. The Housing Coordinator is charged with supporting existing affordable housing and working to create new affordable housing.

This position provides administrative support to the Affordable Housing Trust and the Housing Partnership and advises other boards as needed on affordable housing matters.

Monitoring

The Town of Groton is the monitoring agent for some affordable units; however, as a municipality, the Town has some responsibility for all affordable housing in town.

As a part of monitoring, the Housing Coordinator tracks a number of affordable homeownership units to ensure that all deed requirements are met. For the units where the Town is specifically assigned as monitoring agent, monitoring tasks involve reviews of capital improvement requests, refinancing requests and assistance with resales. There have been several resales this year. There has been high demand for these units and the units have sold quickly.

For affordable renters, tenants from Groton Commons have reached out with maintenance issues and prospective tenants have shared concerns about administration of the wait list.

40B Comprehensive Permit projects

The highest profile affordable housing activity in Groton this year has been the Zoning Board of Appeal's (ZBA) review of two comprehensive permit projects.

The ZBA voted to unanimously approve the 200-unit rental project at 500 Main Street on November 1st. Known as Groton Farms, this development at the former Deluxe site will have 50 affordable apartments. The apartment complex will have many accessible elements and numerous amenities for its residents.

Groton has applied to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (HLC) to add all 200 units to the town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). When the Commonwealth credits Groton with these new units, the town will have reached its 10% goal and will be in safe harbor. The safe harbor status allows towns to accept new comprehensive permit applications but does not require the town to accept them. Having reached the statutory goal in the state statute, the town gains local control over this form of multifamily zoning.

The ZBA continues its review of the Heritage Landing project on Cow Pond Brook Road. The developer recently scaled back the size of its homeownership project from 40 units to 28 units. The reduction will reduce the affordable unit count from 10 to 7. The new plan calls for all detached single-family homes with 3 bedrooms and a garage.

The developer explained the revision as a change to increase the feasibility since it is expected that septic and Natural Heritage requirements can be satisfied on site. The developer had requested that the town allow them to purchase nearby town owned land for use as a nitrogen loading credit for the septic and to satisfy permit requirements related to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) since endangered Blanding's Turtles are present. At the public hearings, the ZBA has heard resident abutter concerns. Institutional abutter concerns from the MIT/Haystack Observatory have been expressed regarding light pollution and radio frequency interference (RFI).

Affordable Housing Trust

The Affordable Housing Trust continues to look at town owned parcels to determine suitability for siting affordable housing. The Hoyts Wharf parcel may support a single house lot. The Fieldstone Drive parcels have some promise and are also under review. Even so, the Trust is open to other opportunities beyond town owned land.

The Trust has provided a grant to the Groton Housing Authority to allow for the repair of a scattered site single family condominium. This 20-year-old unit was in disrepair due to deferred maintenance. The Groton Housing Authority did not have the funds to put the unit back in use. The housing authority suffered financial shortfalls during the pandemic years which depleted reserves. Also, this unit was created without state subsidy so there was no ability to approach the Commonwealth for help with capital improvements. The Trust used some of its own funds (not CPC funds) for the grant. The Trust welcomed the opportunity to help restore an apartment for low-income families. Unfortunately, low-income families experience the longest waits for affordable housing.

The Trust follows and offers support for other affordable housing initiatives in town including the comprehensive permit applications and MBTA Community zoning.

Housing Partnership

The primary role for a housing partnership is to assist developers seeking to build affordable housing in town. The Partnership has followed and offered support to both comprehensive permit projects.

The Partnership is attuned to the Planning Board's work on new multifamily zoning to comply with the Commonwealth's MBTA Communities law. Although not yet proposed, the goal is to create a zoning overlay that allows for by right development of as many as 206 multifamily units.

MBTA Communities Zoning

Both the Partnership and the Trust are focused on the affordability requirements and would like there to be a meaningful amount of affordable housing. The Commonwealth does not require any of the new zoning to require affordable housing. If the Town does not continue to produce new affordable housing, then the town's overall percentage of affordable units will slip.

Trend of housing insecurity for Low-income Seniors and Families

This year, there have been several Groton seniors facing eviction/homelessness. Zillow data sets the median rent across Massachusetts at \$3,100 a month¹. Groton has a small rental market since most of the town is homeownership. Groton's rental market has a combination of apartments in the \$2,100 to \$2,400 range and a few high cost rentals of single family homes starting at \$3,500. Apartments listed for below \$2,100 often have one or more substantial defects (illegal or do not meet state sanitary code).

Some younger families are also under pressure as renters. The supply of subsidized family housing is more constrained than senior housing and there are limits to the availability of family shelter. One household whose income is around \$30,000 (about 150% of the Federal Poverty Level) is considered over income and not eligible for family shelter which has a cutoff of 115% of the Federal Poverty Level (or \$22,680 in this instance).

The Commonwealth continues to offer emergency rental assistance for households with incomes up to 50% of the Area Median Income but this support is capped at \$7,000 a year and is insufficient to sustain a tenancy for a year. If a household has a short-term emergency, then this homelessness prevention program satisfies the need. If the household is going to remain very low income, such programs will be less successful. With the increase in rental costs, low-income households will find it increasingly difficult to find an apartment since landlords have the luxury of choice when filling apartments.

¹ Last year's report pegged the median rent across Massachusetts at \$2,000 a month.

December 18, 2023

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Homelessness is up 12% nationwide based on data from HUD's annual January point in time survey. The report indicates that people becoming homeless for the first time were behind much of the increase. While Massachusetts numbers have increased, the Commonwealth is among the states with the lowest percentage of 'unsheltered' homeless which indicates an ongoing commitment to assist. Notably, New Hampshire's homeless population increased over 50%.

The influx of refugee, asylum seeking and migrant families distort overall Massachusetts numbers (up 26.5%) as these families are new entrants to the country and our state; arriving with no financial resources. When the Commonwealth rents out entire motels and hotels for use as family shelter housing, other renter households (individuals and families) with limited means lose the option of short-term housing. The rental environment has changed and more households risk homelessness when their present tenancies end for whatever reason.

Thank you for your interest in Groton's affordable housing.

ATTACHMENT D
LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Affordable Housing Trust
Planning Board



TOWN OF GROTON
Affordable Housing Trust



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

January 8, 2024
Bruce Easom, Chair
Groton Community Preservation Committee

RE: Support for Housing Coordinator funding

Dear Mr. Easom and CPC members,

I am happy to offer this letter in support of continued funding for the Housing Coordinator position using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. One of the important tasks of the Housing Coordinators job is to serve as the Administrative Assistant for the Affordable Housing Trust (“the Trust”). Fran Stanley, the Housing Coordinator, has done an outstanding job in this role and without her knowledge, expertise, and assistance, the Trust’s organization and effectiveness would be greatly diminished.

Fran works directly with Groton residents on housing needs and questions.

She oversaw the Emergency Rental Assistance program intended to help Groton residents whose ability to meet ongoing rental costs had been affected by the COVID pandemic. The program made payments to landlords on behalf of struggling households who would otherwise be subject to eviction for up to 12 months. This program was very successful, and Fran oversaw the wrap-up of the program and the return of over \$100,000 from the program grant fund to the CPC when it closed at the end of FY2022.

Fran was vital in organizing the Housing Forum among all the Town’s housing committees last year and is a key component of organizing a Housing Forum in 2024 to help increase the information flow and knowledge about what each organization is focusing on for better continued [affordable] housing planning in Groton.

Using the Groton Housing Production Plan, Fran assisted the Trust in researching and investigating potential affordable housing land sites. Fran has contacted and spoken with state officials at the Mass Housing Partnership and other state agencies about ways the Trust could access funds and professional assistance from MHP or other agencies. She helped organize oversight and site evaluations for possible affordable housing locations on Town-owned properties, including at Hoyt’s Wharf Road and with organizing the materials and commentaries from the Trust regarding the two 40B applications at Heritage Landing and Groton Farms.

She has provided up-to-date information and highlights as the Massachusetts Housing Choice MBTA Communities legislation progressed throughout 2023, which allowed the Trust to understand the impacts it could have on affordable housing in Town and she assisted in drafting a letter of comments and issues regarding the draft legislation to the DHCD, which was also co-signed by the Groton Select Board.

Fran also brings a wealth of knowledge about previous and current activities by the Affordable Housing Trust and other Housing-related authorities in/around town and provides the Trust membership with appropriate advance notice of upcoming sessions by other committees that may be of interest/importance to the Trust. She provides information and links from other state organizations within the Commonwealth as well as media and consultant publications to ensure that the Trust members have the most current view of situations relevant to our mission.

The Housing Coordinator is an invaluable asset to the Town of Groton and especially to the Affordable Housing Trust. On behalf of the Trust, I urge you to recommend continued CPA funding for the salary to pay for this position.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Richard Perini

Richard Perini Member, for the Affordable Housing Trust



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450
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Fax: (978) 448-1113
Planning@grotonma.gov

Office of the
PLANNING BOARD

December 14, 2023

Mr. Russell Burke, Chair
Community Preservation Committee
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

RE: Support for Housing Coordinator Position – FY25 CPA Funding

Dear Mr. Burke and CPC members:

The Groton Planning Board voted unanimously on December 14, 2023 to support the Town of Groton's application for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding in FY25 to pay for the Housing Coordinator position. The Planning Board firmly believes the Town is well served by the Housing Coordinator, and the annual authorization of CPA funds to pay for this position provides an excellent return on investment.

In the past year, the Housing Coordinator ensured the Town's Affordable Housing needs and interests were factored into the review process for two separate Comprehensive Permit applications pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 40B (Groton Farms and Heritage Landing). In particular, the Housing Coordinator provided a thorough review of the Comprehensive Permit approval decision for Groton Farms, which represents a substantial boost to Groton's Subsidized Housing Inventory.

The Housing Coordinator provides guidance, as needed, to people in need of more affordable housing options. This vital role is often underappreciated, but will continue to be essential in the face of rising costs for housing. In addition, the Housing Coordinator provides valuable input to the Planning Board regarding compliance with the multi-family zoning requirements for MBTA Communities.

The Planning Board urges you to act favorably on the Town of Groton's application for CPA funding in FY25 for the Housing Coordinator position.

Sincerely,

Scott Wilson, Chair
Groton Planning Board