

TOWN OF GROTON

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HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Peter Cunningham, Chair
Michelle Collette
Carolyn Perkins



Meeting Minutes

Date: May 28, 2019
Time: 3:30 pm
Location: Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA
Attending Members: Peter Cunningham, Carolyn Perkins, Michelle Collette
Others: Donald Van Dyne, Jr. (119 Partners LLC), Patrick J. Wood, Anna Eliot, and Fran Stanley (Housing Coordinator)
Meeting handouts: Agenda, 4 Concept Plans

Peter Cunningham called the meeting to order.

797 Boston Road

Donald Van Dyne explained that the parcel is zoned R-A although he attempted to rezone to B-1. He purchased the land in 2005 and would like to use the land for affordable housing. The residential home on the site is presently unoccupied. There are murals on some of the interior walls. Mr. Van Dyne noted that he had invited the Rufus Porter Museum staff to tour the property. He offered the murals to the Rufus Porter Museum and the museum declined the gift. He said that the museum staff did take photos and perhaps also measurements of the murals.

Donald Van Dyne presented four concept plans and asked the Housing Partnership what is in the best interest for the Town of Groton. All of these plans are dependent upon connecting to public sewer. Electronic copies will be emailed to the Town to be included with the minutes of this meeting.

Concept Plan 1: 20 units of homeownership housing in 2 story buildings. 10 duplexes. 5 units would be affordable. These would be 3 bedroom units.

Fran Stanley entered the meeting. Fran Stanley commented that the Town needs more rental units. And with funding from the CPC, the Groton Housing Authority may be able to purchase several affordable condominiums and use them as family rentals. The permitting and condominium documents would need to permit unit owners to rent out their units. Note that some condominium associations to prevent owners from renting out their units.

Concept Plan 2: 24 units of homeownership housing. 6 units would be affordable. These would be 3 story townhouse style units with 3 bedroom units.

Concept Plan 3: 48 units of rental housing. 12 units would be affordable but all 48 units would count on the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). 1 and 2 bedroom units anticipated. 2 buildings. The developer's parking calculations require a minimum of 1.5 parking spaces per unit which equals at least 72 parking spaces.

Concept Plan 4: 64 units of rental housing. 16 units would be affordable but all 64 units would count on the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). 2 bedroom units anticipated. 4 story buildings with elevators which improves accessibility for all units. The developer's parking calculations require a minimum of 1.5 parking spaces per unit which equals at least 102 parking spaces. The developer has planned for 108 parking spaces.

Housing Partnership members commented that the plans would need to allow for snow storage/snow removal and designed in a way that allows for fire department access to the site. Carolyn Perkins stated that she sees a need in Town for units with disability access and also family housing. Michelle Collette noted that this stretch of

Route 119 is a state highway and the Department of Transportation would need to approve any curb cuts and would likely require a MEPA filing.

Donald Van Dyne asked about monitoring for the project. Fran Stanley replied that the Town would monitor to attend to its own interests in the project but that the developer and the state sponsor would select their own preferred lottery agent. Fran Stanley added that established lottery agents who have a certain volume of listings tend to have better websites and prospective buyer lists that make it easier for those lottery agents to promptly fill the available affordable units.

Anna Eliot observed that there is a need in Town for age restricted housing as, currently, there are seniors who downsize and do not have choices for ownership housing in Groton that would allow them to age in place. A number of seniors have purchased market rate condominiums at Groton Residential Gardens even though that development is not age restricted. The lack of garaged space for vehicle storage can be an issue for seniors who spend the winter months in Florida. Developer David Moulton is building a number of age restricted market rate units that will be tied in to the Four Corners Sewer District. The group recalled that the Commonwealth's approval of the MassWorks grant for Four Corners was dependent on the inclusion of David Moulton's housing component.

Fran Stanley stated that there is little interest in the state level these days for age restricted projects because the state is trying to prioritize family housing. Anna Eliot noted that the state sees a need for all new residential housing.

Carolyn Perkins noted that this is a very busy intersection and we need to be concerned about the number of cars we will be adding to that intersection. Also, she stated that these residences are intended for families and is set between two busy roads. So, the developers will need to plan for areas that kids can play and be protected from traffic.

Michelle Collette referenced the Housing Production Plan and invited Donald Van Dyne to the kick off meeting for the new Housing Production Plan on June 27, 2019 at 7 pm. The Housing Partnership will post a meeting for that evening and all are invited to attend. As a part of developing the new Housing Production Plan, new demographic information will be prepared based on federal census data which will help define the relative needs for different kinds of affordable housing.

Peter Cunningham indicated he was inclined to prefer the 20 unit plan. He said that the 64 unit plan was out of scale for the neighborhood while acknowledging that rental is a need. Peter Cunningham asked about the price of the 3 bedroom homeownership units. Donald Van Dyne replied that there is a formula that sets these prices. Fran Stanley noted that two three bedroom units were sold in 2018 for just under \$200,000. Other two bedroom units at Academy Hill had prices set for just under \$160,000. Carolyn Perkins agreed with Peter Cunningham's preference and added that siting housing in that area is good as residents would have access to shopping, medical care and restaurants.

Carolyn Perkins asked who would manage the rentals if this turns out to be a rental project. Donald Van Dyne replied that a management company would be retained. Fran Stanley commented that the state required rental projects to provide a 40 year business plan to ensure viability. Also, MassHousing may help with financing if it is a rental project.

Michelle Collette stated that aesthetics, i.e., architecture, landscaping, and design, are important aspects and contribute greatly to the public's acceptance of any significant building project. The Carlisle Benfield Farms project was referenced as an example of a well-designed project.

Anna Eliot asked about the LIP (Local Initiative Project or friendly 40B) process for the Select Board's review. Peter Cunningham referred to the Select Board's 2017 Friendly 40B policy which lays out a process and indicates the Select Board's preferred way of receiving developer proposals. Cooperation with the Historical Commission's interest in documenting the existing historic building on the site, attention to accessibility features and allowing for the Groton Housing Authority to buy out affordable homeownership units are all elements which would improve the project from the Town's point of view.

Carolyn Perkins observed that sewer is essential to the project and that exploring that issue right away would be advisable. Michelle Collette suggested that the developer reach out to Town Manager Mark Haddad. Fran

Stanley stated that she would call the state but recommended that the developer reach out to MassHousing as well on this matter to see if the state had criteria for the project to meet in order to force a connection to sewer.

Donald Van Dyne and Patrick Wood left the meeting.

Minutes

Peter Cunningham asked members to review the draft minutes. He also noted that he recalls several additional Housing Partnership meetings that were more recent in time than November 2017.

Michelle Collette moved to approve the November 9, 2017 draft minutes. Carolyn Perkins seconded and the motion carried 3:0.

Carolyn Perkins moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:25 pm. Michelle Collette seconded and the motion carried 3:0.

Notes by Fran Stanley.