



TOWN OF GROTON

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HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Peter Cunningham, Chair
Anna Eliot
Richard Perini
Carolyn Perkins

Regular Session Minutes

Date/time: Tuesday, March 29, 2022 at 5:30 pm
Location: Virtual Meeting
Members in attendance: Peter Cunningham, Anna Eliot and Rick Perini
Others in attendance: Jeffrey Brem, Richard Harrington, John Sopka and Judy Anderson

Peter Cunningham called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm with a quorum in attendance. Cameras for Housing Partnership members were turned on.

Agenda item: Review draft minutes from March 15, 2022. Votes may be taken.

Anna Eliot moved to approve the March 15, 2022 regular session minutes. Rick Perini seconded and the motion carried 3:0 by roll call vote of Perini – aye, Eliot – aye, and Cunningham – aye (Perkins absent).

Agenda item: Discuss citizens petition for changes to the age restricted multi-family bylaw to include conversation with developer Richard Harrington (91 Gratuity Road) and citizens petition proponent Jeffrey Brem (468 & 478 Main Street plus parcel 216-101 on Taylor Road). Votes may be taken.

Peter Cunningham recounted the recent history of the citizens petition from the March 14, 2022 Select Board meeting to the March 24, 2022 Planning Board public hearing. Peter Cunningham said that Jeffrey Brem heard feedback he received in Select Board meeting and made favorable changes to the age restricted definition that he presented at the Planning Board public hearing. Specifically, the bylaw now calls for 15% affordability and defines the age restriction in a way that is acceptable to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for allowing affordable units on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. The Planning Board's public hearing was on the topic of the original citizens petition language.

Peter Cunningham reported that the Moderator was not comfortable with accepting the edits to the citizens petition and so Jeffrey Brem will circulate revised language and gather the exact same ten (10) original signatures for the revised language.

Jeffrey Brem addressed the group. He said that he listened to Becky Pine's comment that his bylaw language was moving in the right direction but was not sure if that is enough. Accordingly, Jeffrey Brem said that he is now proposing 20% affordability for the bylaw. He thinks that with 35 ft. width units (versus 40 ft. width units) he can site a 30-unit development that would have 6 affordable units. Jeffrey Brem said that the math works for him and he is willing to do that.

Fran Stanley asked about how the citizens petition will address rounding when the percentage affordable results in a fractional unit. Jeffrey Brem said that he has thought of that and this is why the language reads "at least" x percentage affordable. With that language, the computed affordable fraction would be rounded up to the next whole number. Peter Cunningham expressed his support for this citizens petition. He said that the pursuit of perfection should not be the enemy of the good. If the Planning Board prefers different language, then they can propose a fine tuning or revision in the future. Jeffrey Brem reminds the group that he needs the resolution of this matter now.

Rick Perini said that the revised petition is excellent. He was impressed with the turnaround and he looks forward to supporting it. Anna Eliot said that she supports this bylaw at this time. She likes this location for multi-family housing. It is almost as though the prospective development is creating MBTA Communities before we have zoned for it. She said that the dilemma is that future locations for development may not be as suitable. She wondered if this project in this location might trigger the Town to accept MBTA Communities and therefore not be threatened in the future by other locations.

Richard Harrington (co-owner of 91 Gratuity Road) has considered 20% affordability for this site if the age restricted bylaw passes. He agreed that the 20% affordability requirement was doable and estimated that it would be a good fit for his project.

Agenda item: Consider MBTA Communities statute from perspective of Groton's position as an Adjacent Community. Votes may be taken.

The joint comments letter from the Select Board and the Affordable Housing Trust was submitted today. Fran Stanley will email a copy of those comments to Housing Partnership members.

Anna Eliot asked Fran Stanley about the habitat assessment for the town owned Hoyts Wharf Rd. parcel. The Affordable Housing Trust recently voted to bring the Hoyts Wharf Rd. parcel matter out of executive session.

Meeting adjourned at 6 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, April 28, 2022 – attend Planning Board public hearing

Notes by Fran Stanley