



TOWN OF GROTON

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HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Peter Cunningham, Chair
Anna Eliot
Richard Perini

Regular Session Minutes

Date: Tuesday, August 20, 2024
Time: 7 pm
Location: Virtual Meeting held via Zoom
Members in attendance: Richard Perini, Anna Eliot, and Peter Cunningham
Others in attendance: John Sopka
Referenced documents: 3 sets of draft minutes

Peter Cunningham called the Housing Partnership to order with all members in attendance. Peter Cunningham explained that he would need to step out of this meeting in 10 to 15 minutes to participate in a different meeting but that he would rejoin the Partnership meeting later. Fran Stanley had audio problems so was able to communicate through the Zoom chat feature.

Review draft minutes from August 30, 2023, January 3, 2024, and March 7, 2024

Anna Eliot moved to approve draft minutes from August 30, 2023, January 3, 2024, and March 7, 2024. Richard Perini seconded and the motion carried (3:0) by roll call vote of Perini – aye, Eliot – aye, and Cunningham – aye.

Discuss Planning Board's proposed age restricted bylaw changes (§218-3)

Housing Partnership members have read the Planning Board's proposed changes:

“Housing in which 50% of the dwelling units are subsidized under any program or plan that will result in the development of low- or moderate-income housing, such subsidized housing which qualifies for inclusion on the Subsidized Housing Inventory of the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and is in compliance with the provisions and regulations of the U.S. Fair Housing Act 42 USC 3601 and the Act's Housing for Older Persons exemption provisions for persons over 55 years of age or older.”

The group liked the fact that any affordable units will need to be SHI eligible and also appreciated that the age restriction was updated to reference the 1968 federal Fair Housing law as amended by the Housing For Older Persons Act (HOPA) (1995). HOPA allows designated senior units so long as units follow the requirements of one of the HOPA exemptions.

Anna Eliot moved to offer a positive recommendation for the Planning Board's proposed changes to the age restricted bylaw. Richard Perini seconded and the motion carried (3:0) by roll call vote of Perini – aye, Eliot – aye, and Cunningham – aye.

Update on the Affordable Housing Trust's Hoyts Wharf Parcel

Richard Perini described the potential building area which the Trust sited in the location that Natural Heritage indicated would be preferable. Preferable for Natural Heritage equates to least impact on the Blandings Turtle which is an endangered species that thought to be active in the area¹. The parcel may be used for veterans' housing, group home, or some other type of affordable housing. Richard Perini reported that the Trust has done engineering investigation of the parcel and that a Natural Heritage application is being assembled. All of that work is in process. If the Trust can produce a plan with defined metes and bounds in time for the Fall Town

¹ See Rare Species Habitat Assessment Report from 2021 posted on the Affordable Housing Trust webpage.

Meeting, then the Town Meeting will be asked to dispose of the parcel and allow the Town to transfer the land for use as affordable housing.

Peter Cunningham asked about abutter input. The Affordable Housing Trust met on August 15, 2024 and several abutters or neighbors from the Hoyts Wharf Road area attended. Richard Perini explained that the Trust is working with engineers to take care to have limited impact on the neighbors. For example, the concept plan is being revised to move the driveway so that its outlet is not opposite an abutter's house across the street. Also, the engineers are working to development back further to improve buffer for the neighbor sharing a lot line with the Hoyts Wharf parcel.

Anna Eliot noted that the Housing Partnership has not yet voted on this plan. Anna Eliot observed that the Park Commission will want to look at the Affordable Housing Trust's plans. Fran Stanley will share the concept plan with the Park Commission assistant and ask for the topic to be added to the Park Commission agenda.

Peter Cunningham left the meeting.

Gratuity Brook Farm Estates – proposed subdivision at 63 Gratuity Road

Housing Partnership members have received notice of a planned 28-unit subdivision. As proposed, the subdivision will have 14 duplexes, have an age restriction, and not require any affordable units. The development will have town water and onsite septic. A \$100,000 voluntary donation to the Affordable Housing Trust has been proposed by the developer. Under the zoning selected by the developer, there is no requirement to create affordable units.

Anna Eliot noted that the development is adjacent to Hazel Grove and the harness racing track specifically. It will be desirable to have screening between the track and the development. Richard Perini advised waiting to comment on the application until more is learned.

The Planning Board will hold its initial public hearing on this application on Thursday, September 12, 2024. A meeting will be posted for the Partnership to attend if members are so inclined.

At 7:40 pm, Anna Eliot moved to adjourn Housing Partnership in Peter Cunningham's absence. Richard Perini seconded and the motion carried (2:0) by roll call vote of Perini – aye and Eliot – aye (Cunningham absent).

Notes by Fran Stanley

Upcoming meetings: September 12, 2024 at 7 pm – attend Planning Board meeting regarding new subdivision at 63 Gratuity Road named Gratuity Brook Farm Estates.