



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
Tel: (978) 448-1111
Fax: (978) 448-1115

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Peter Cunningham, Chair
Anna Eliot

Regular Session Minutes

Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025
Time: 10 am
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street
Members in attendance: Anna Eliot and Peter Cunningham
Others in attendance: John Sopka
Referenced documents: August 20, 2024 draft minutes, draft annual report

Peter Cunningham called the Housing Partnership to order at 10:10 am.

Discuss expected Town Meeting consideration of zoning bylaw to satisfy MBTA Communities requirement.

The group reviewed the present status of the law. The law survived legal challenge, but the Supreme Judicial Court held that the present guidelines are unenforceable. It follows that the deadlines contained in the guidelines for compliance with the law are also unenforceable. Anna Eliot commented that ideally the Housing Partnership will support the Planning Board's work and be proactive in informing the public.

The Housing Partnership may ask the Planning Board to discuss a timeline for the MBTA Communities zoning.

Review development progress on permitted 40B developments at Groton Farms and Heritage Landing.

Fran Stanley updated the group on recent outreach by developer representatives from Heritage Landing:

1. some fill generated by the Chicopee Row water line extension may be deposited and used at the Cow Pond Brook Road site;
2. developer expects to request modification of the permit to change building configurations and add several units;
3. developer asked for:
 - a. the Water Commissioners to waive connection fees,
 - b. the Housing Trust to apply for CPC funds for the project; and
 - c. the DPW to waive/relax repaving requirements associated with extending town water to the site.

Mark Haddad met with staff regarding the requests with financial implications. The developer will need to reach out to the Water Commissioners and the Housing Trust individually. The DPW is prepared to allow its own contractor to do road repair work. The developer would be expected to pay for the DPW contractor's work, but the costs are often lower than what private companies might pay for the same quantity of work.

Anna Eliot remains interested in using the hill (parcel 248-39) for fill which would benefit safety and parking improvements at the Cow Pond Brook ballfields. Anna Eliot noted that the Conservation Commission has allocated \$5,000 for an attorney to work on the Article 97 process associated with freeing up the use of the hill. Fran Stanley said that Natural Heritage approval of the proposed hill removal is critical. Anna Eliot noted that once certain issues are ironed out, then a firm like Activitus could produce an engineered plan to be reviewed by Natural Heritage. Peter Cunningham said that the issue needs research. After discussion, the group agreed to the following motion.

Anna Eliot moved to support the Conservation Commission's work to expend their allocated \$5,000 on the outstanding research into the issue of the use of Parcel 248-39. Peter Cunningham seconded and the motion carried unanimously (2:0).

Update on grant application for new Housing Production Plan.

Fran Stanley reported that the Town's grant application is on track. Both the Planning Board and the Select Board each approved a letter of support. The application will be submitted in late January. Peter Cunningham is the Town's representative on the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and he will attend the February 6 meeting where the funding award vote will be taken. If Groton wins District Local Technical Assistance grant funding, then MRPC anticipates that the work would be completed by November 2025.

Discuss Annual Report.

The group reviewed the draft annual report and approved it. John Sopka provided helpful edits to the document. Anna Eliot appreciated that Rick Perini's passing was addressed in the report.

Membership

The committee is now down several members. There are three openings on the committee. Peter Cunningham asked John Amaral to join, but he declined. Anna Eliot expressed an interest in recruiting younger residents to join. She has someone in mind who has an engineering background and she will approach that person.

If the Town sponsors another affordable housing summit or as a part of the expected Housing Production Plan outreach, this will be an opportunity to publicize committee roles and encourage volunteership.

Review draft minutes from August 20, 2024.

Draft minutes were reviewed.

Anna Eliot moved to approve the August 20, 2024 minutes as presented. Peter Cunningham seconded and the motion carried unanimously (2:0).

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.

Notes by Fran Stanley