



TOWN OF GROTON

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HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Peter Cunningham, Chair
Anna Eliot

Regular Session Minutes

Date: Tuesday, October 7, 2025
Time: 2 pm
Location: Virtual meeting held via Zoom
Members in attendance: Anna Eliot and Peter Cunningham
Others in attendance: Neal Howard (partner at Transom Real Estate), John Amaral (partner at Omni Properties), John Sopka

Peter Cunningham called the Housing Partnership to order at 2 pm.

Meet with developer of proposed 200-unit rental development at 500 Main Street.

Peter Cunningham and Anna Eliot welcomed Neal Howard and John Amaral and thanked them for coming to discuss their proposed development at 500 Main Street. Neal Howard said that the name of the development will be Fox Howe Groton. Transom Real Estate was founded about 10 years ago in Boston to do multifamily housing. So far, they have built 600 units. Factors like steel and parking have made it hard to do projects in Boston. In Framingham, the company built a project similar in some ways to Groton. As with here, the Framingham project was also re-permitted. They broke ground in 2022 and received certificates of occupancy in 2025. The development also has 1, 2, and 3 bedroom apartments.

Both Anna Eliot and Peter Cunningham attended the September 25, 2025 Planning Board meeting where the developers described their project in detail in connection with their Major Site Plan Review application.

Anna Eliot asked about the possibility of installing a traffic circle on the stretch of Main Street in the Mill Run Plaza area. She has seen traffic circles installed that have allowed for the flow of traffic while also having traffic calming effects. She said that she wants this project to succeed as well as this place to succeed. She asked if there is anything that can be done to push back on the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT).

John Amaral said that the recent traffic study performed for the emergency room project had to consider the permitted 200-unit development at 500 Main Street. John Amaral explained that Mass DOT would not allow them to install a flashing light, a slip lane or even to lower the speed limit. However, Mass DOT did allow a change to a no passing zone for this stretch of road. The Mass DOT process took 8 months which was even longer than the comprehensive permit process. The current permit from Mass DOT is transferable for use by Fox Howe Groton.

Omni Properties will be keeping the 2-acre parcel to the west of the 500 Main Street driveway. Transom Real Estate will be acquiring the driveway. And Omni will be keeping the 7-acre parcel to the east of the driveway. John Amaral said that he is not willing to go back to Mass DOT now as that would create at least a year's delay for the project, but he said that his company will look at traffic in the future.

Anna Eliot referenced the 500 Main Street project as the largest development the Town has ever seen and John Amaral noted that NEBS (the check manufacturing plant that was previously operating on the site) was a larger impact both in terms of traffic and environmentally. He added that we are interested in creating a beautiful mixed use community. Peter Cunningham commented that he finds Mass DOT intractable based on his experience with them in the context of the Town's complete streets efforts.

Peter Cunningham drew the conversation back to the topic of affordable housing. He noted that the 40B comprehensive permit project would have created 50 affordable units and using MBTA Communities zoning will

result in 20 affordable units. Neal Howard said that MBTA Communities requires 10% affordable housing. He added that 40Bs are not feasible in places where rents are lower.

John Sopka asked about whether additional development would use the same curb cut or a new one. John Amaral responded that though they have not started looking at it yet, the 7-acre parcel may use the same curb cut and the 2-acre parcel might be accessed with a right turn only entrance and a right turn only exit. Peter Cunningham stated that traffic issues are compelling but this is not the right venue for that.

Anna Eliot asked about the number of bedrooms and how many affordables of each sized unit. Neal Howard said that the affordables would be distributed pro rata meaning 10% in each category. Fox Howe Groton is planned to have 89 one-bedrooms, 87 two-bedrooms, and 24 three-bedrooms. There will be more two bedrooms and larger units than is typically seen in similarly sized developments. Usually, there are many more one-bedroom units. There will also be some covered parking which is a desired amenity. Fran Stanley commented that the 'plus' units described in the Planning Board presentation – some units with extra though non-bedroom space -- will be popular with people who work from home and also downsizing seniors who may not want to fully pare down their belongings.

The project is all rental. The affordability restrictions remain but the developer has the option of creating future conversion to homeownership. However, due to the number of one-bedroom units, a condominium conversion may be unlikely. John Amaral noted that the impact on town facilities for a multifamily development is less per unit than with single family homes. Recent studies estimate that there will be .22 children per unit which with a 200-unit development might result in 44 children.

John Amaral concluded his remarks stating that this is our last and best opportunity to do housing here. This is something that will be good for the community.

Peter Cunningham thanked the Neal Howard and John Amaral for their time and the meeting adjourned at about 2:40 pm.

Notes by Fran Stanley