



TOWN OF GROTON

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HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Peter Cunningham, Chair
Anna Eliot
Jeffrey Wallens

Regular Session Minutes

Date: Thursday, January 8, 2026
Time: 2 pm
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street
Members in attendance: Anna Eliot and Peter Cunningham
Others: Jeffrey Wallens
Referenced documents: Draft letter of support for Housing Trust CPC application

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

Review draft minutes from December 15, 2025.

Anna Eliot moved to approve the December 15, 2025 draft minutes as presented. Peter Cunningham seconded and the motion carried (2:0).

Meet with Jeffrey Wallens to discuss interest in joining the Partnership.

Peter Cunningham and Anna Eliot welcomed Jeffrey Wallens. Jeffrey Wallens said that he served as one of the original members of the Housing Partnership. Back then, Teri Ragot, Carline Owen, Dan Emerson, Kathy Ramsey, and, later, Brooks Lyman were involved in the Brookfield Commons development. Groton resident Donald R. Desrosiers was the developer. At the time, mortgage rates were a significant impediment. The Commonwealth provided cash to help fund the affordables in the 36-unit project¹.

Jeffrey Wallens said that he originally became involved because there was a 40B project next to him but it turned out that that project had already been permitted. Jeffrey said that he served on the Groton Housing Authority board as well. He was particularly involved with the Winthrop Place rental housing². Developer Dementian Guschov approached the Housing Partnership with this proposal. The project was subsidized by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) as rural multifamily housing. The DOA's projects elsewhere in Middlesex County were all senior only (see Carlisle, Littleton, Pepperell, Shirley). Advocates including Teri Ragot, Chet Atkins, and Edna White wanted to push for family rentals as this was an outstanding need. To accomplish this, Jeffrey Wallens approached Ben Hammer, a prominent local Republican, and together their support helped carry the day that if Republicans gave support, then there would probably be sufficient townwide support for family housing.

Jeffrey Wallens said that he was not concerned about the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) scoresheet. Instead, his biggest concern is the need for multi-family housing. He added that the basic tradeoff seems to be allowing higher density for smaller housing.

Jeffrey Wallens noted that Littleton is slated to build about 1,000 units of new housing associated with the redevelopment of the former IBM complex. About 600 to 700 new units are planned for Westford. And Devens is allowing some new housing as well. Fran Stanley commented that Devens has just issued 2 new requests for proposals (RFPs) to build new housing there.

¹ 5 homeownership affordables were subsidized through the Homeownership Opportunities program (HOP), 3 homeownership affordables were subsidized by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA), and 2 rental units that were transferred to the Groton Housing Authority were also subsidized through MHFA.

² 24 units of low-income rental housing.

The group discussed current events and where they may want to focus their energies as a group. The group discussed Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and how the 2024 state zoning allows ADUs into some subdivisions that were previously limited to single family housing only. The Housing Partnership may want to help educate residents about the ADU zoning. Anna Eliot expressed interest in proactive efforts like Richard Heaton's 2008 housing study. The Town is getting a new Housing Production Plan written by the planners at Montachusett Regional Planning Commission.

The 6-unit apartment building at 117 Main Street is up for sale and presently under agreement. The building is in the historic district and is also a notably historic home recommended for National Register of Historic Places.³ The property is rundown and will require a lot of renovation to bring it back to full working order. It is not known whether the new owner will want to restore the multifamily or even add an additional structure in the rear of the property.

Anna Eliot moved to recommend the appointment of Jeffrey Wallens by the Select Board. Peter Cunningham seconded and the motion carried (2:0).

Discuss 2025 Annual Report

The group discussed the annual report and what changes should be made. Fran Stanley will send a draft report for Peter Cunningham's review.

Revisiting request to support Affordable Housing Trust's CPC application.

Housing Partnership members revisited the topic of whether to offer support for the Affordable Housing Trust's CPC application. The Trust applied for \$300,000 of CPC funds. Anna Eliot noted that she does have a competing CPC project that she supports. Anna Eliot said that she would want to restrict the Trust's to the amount that is in the Community Housing bucket (approximately \$113,500). Peter Cunningham agreed that the size of the kitty is a question. The Partnership took a decision to decline to support the Trust's application. The outstanding concern was that they were not supportive of an award for the full \$300,000 amount. This despite Peter Cunningham's stated understanding that Trust will want to have some funds available to stimulate a nascent project that may be in the early planning stages.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Notes by Fran Stanley

³ See Brown Store – Dix House write up https://gpl.org/uploads/pages/img/Documents/MainStreet_117.pdf.