



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
Jeffrey Wallens

Regular Session Minutes

Date: Monday, March 23, 2026
Time: 3 pm
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street
Members in attendance: Anna Eliot and Jeffrey Wallens
Referenced documents: Draft minutes from January 8, 2026
Chapter 40Y Highlights
"Accessory Dwelling Units Accounted for at least 10 Percent of New Homes Permitted in Massachusetts in 2025" *Pioneer Institute* March 2026

Anna Eliot called the Housing Partnership to order at 3:15 pm. Peter Cunningham was absent.

Discussion of Chapter 40Y Starter Homes Zoning and other zoning to encourage construction of smaller, more affordable housing

The Commonwealth recently issued regulations for its new Starter Homes Zoning District law. The law enables municipalities to create zoning overlays to allow for by right construction of single-family homes. The minimum allowed density for this overlay is 4 units per acre with a goal of creating more so-called starter homes. The law provides for some affordable units (110% AMI) but the hope would be that even the market rate homes would be more affordable than the price points of large single-family homes built on larger lots which is what the market tends to produce.

Both Jeffrey Wallens and Anna Eliot had read about the provisions of Chapter 40Y and so the group now discussed the details. The main impediment for adoption in Groton seems to be the exclusion of land that is potential rare species habitat. 88% of Groton is in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) with much of that land flagged for the presence of rare species or endangered species habitats.

The conversation turned to other zoning efforts that might accomplish some of the same goals and be feasible for Groton. Anna Eliot is interested in increasing housing density and overall viability of Groton's village centers where some density is already present. In Groton, the identified village centers are Town Center near Town Hall (a part of which is included in the Town Center Overlay District) and in West Groton near the bridge to Shirley. And there are areas of concentrated business at Four Corners and the Mill Run Plaza area (also the area for the Town's MBTA Communities district). She added that senior multifamily housing could be sited in village centers too.

The group discussed 797 Boston Road located on the so called fourth corner of the Four Corners intersection. Owner Donald Van Dyne permitted through the senior multifamily bylaw but that project has not been built. The bylaw requires 50% affordability which is a steep requirement that may have been too heavy a burden for the developer given that the entire project was only 24 units. For comparison, 500 Main Street (former NEBS or Deluxe property) found the 25% affordability along with other costs not economically feasible for a 200-unit project. 500 Main Street has since been re-permitted under MBTA Communities zoning which lowered the affordable requirement to 10% and removed profit restrictions.

Discuss education outreach to the community regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Jeffrey Wallens raised the topic that the Housing Partnership might engage in advocacy in general and in support of ADUs in particular. Jeffrey Wallens suggested that the Partnership look at the choke points for ADUs whether it is due to septic or financial and organize a home show. Fran Stanley suggested updates to the Town website –

perhaps linked to the current Building Department webpage to make information available there. The Building Department already has an extensive FAQ list for residents looking to build fences, sheds, etc. The group agreed that septic considerations are a cost and can be a constraint for adding ADUs or any multifamily development. Anna Eliot said that there are package treatment plants that can be a modern option.

Fran Stanley recommended a recent webinar sponsored by the Pioneer Institute on ADUs. That webinar included a planner who has studied ADUs, an active builder of ADUs on the Cape, and a representative of a modular ADU builder who is building modular ADUs off site for delivery to Massachusetts sites. Perhaps Groton could partner with neighboring towns and pull together an event in Groton where qualified engineers and builders could address the public. The event could be taped by Cable Access and made available for later viewing.

The group briefly discussed updates to Title V to update effluent estimates (gallons per day per bedroom), changes to the state building code with respect to stairs and elevators which could reduce costs without reducing safety.

Review draft minutes from January 8, 2026.

Anna Eliot moved to approve the January 8, 2026 draft minutes as presented. Jeffrey Wallens seconded and the motion carried (2:0) (Cunningham absent).

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.

Notes by Fran Stanley