



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
Park Commission  
Town Hall  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room

**PARK COMMISSION**  
Brenden Mahoney, Chair  
Anna Eliot, Vice Chair  
Mary Jennings, Member  
Jeffrey Ohringer, Member  
1 Vacancy

Park Commission

Regular Session Minutes

Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Time: 4 pm

Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street

Members in attendance: Brenden Mahoney, Anna Eliot, Mary Jennings, Brian Edmonds

Housing Trust Members in Attendance: Richard Perini, Charles Vander Linden, Carolyn Perkins, Phil Francisco, and Becky Pine

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Becky Pine called the Affordable Housing Trust to order at 4 pm with herself, Carolyn Perkins, Richard Perini, and Charles Vander Linden in attendance. Brenden Mahoney called the Park Commission to order at 4:03 pm with himself, Brian Edmonds, Anna Eliot, and Mary Jennings in attendance. Phil Francisco joined the meeting at 4:05 pm.

Becky Pine provided an overview of the housing trust's investigation of the Hoyts Wharf parcel (249-51) property and the adjacent parcel (249-57). The Hoyts Wharf parcel is called out in the 2020 Housing Production Plan as a town owned parcel that may have some development potential. Members of the Trust held a meeting with Jesse Leddick from Natural Heritage in late 2021 and were told that, despite the almost 33 acres, Natural Heritage would allow only a single house lot with a driveway from Hoyts Wharf Road. The Housing Trust obtained a wetlands delineation, a rare species habitat assessment, and soils tests in upland areas.

Brenden Mahoney asked about the timelines for each committee's investigations. Anna Eliot said that Bob Pine started looking at the whole Cow Pond area circa 2015-2016. She said that the Park Commission obtained a feasibility study from Matt Waterman of LandTech. Representatives of the Park Commission have been in ongoing communication with Misty Ann Marold of Natural Heritage. To facilitate that conversation and satisfy a request from Natural Heritage, the Park Commission obtained a botanical study from Oxbow Associates.

Anna Eliot explained that Misty Ann Marold has told the Park Commission to "push everything up", i.e., north, and away from the undeveloped portions of parcels 249-51 and 57. The idea emerged to forfeit use of the Hoyts Wharf Parcel to allow the Park Commission use of the northern portion of the ballfield area and parcel 248-39 (the "hill"). There was mention of a land swap between the Conservation Commission and the Park Commission to swap some of the wetlands closer to Cow Pond Brook that are deemed more environmentally sensitive in exchange for the Town to have the ability to use parcel 248-39. Anna Eliot suggested surveying the entire set of adjacent town owned parcels. All agreed that some surveying would be needed for an ANR (Approval Not Required) house lot. Anna Eliot said that in the Park Commission's discussions, they have backed away from the new ballfield plan and cart path driveway but we

want to leave everything on the table. Charles Vander Linden noted that parcel lines are arbitrary when all this land is in common ownership.

The conversation progressed to a discussion of potential conflicts with the primary conflict being a matter of competing offsets. Richard Perini said that he is experienced with Natural Heritage. They do not act in a timely fashion and they change personnel frequently. Their practice is to never commit in writing at these pre filing consultations that the Park Commission and the Trust have had. And, again, never in writing until the final conservation and management permits are completed.

Fran Stanley said that the Park Commission has had a long-time interest in safety improvements for the Cow Pond parking area. Also, Misty Ann Marold described a plant so fragile and rare that if it is seen on any of these parcels then perhaps no development will be allowed.

Richard Perini stated that historically Natural Heritage has not cared about the type of land received in offset and offset can even be for land well away from the subject property.

Brenden Mahoney said that data does not lie and proposed that the Town look at data over 10 years to see if the town even needs a new ballfield.

Brian Edmonds leaves the meeting at 4:53 pm.

A consensus emerged to have each committee proceed on parallel tracks with Natural Heritage. The Housing Trust will mark out a potential house lot, present that, and see what offsets are requested. The Park Commission will do the same with its preferred development plans for the areas closest to the existing ball fields. Ideally, neither committee will commit to offsets that foreclose the other committee's plans.

Meeting adjourned. Notes by Fran Stanley

**APPROVED: 4/9/24**

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