Town of Groton

Groton TREAD Committee

Minutes – March 15, 2023

**Committee Members Present**: Paula Martin

 Hannah Moller

 Louis Dimola

 Charles Vander Linden

Paula Martin opened the meeting at 1:03 p.m. on March 15, 2013. Hannah Moller distributed a brief Agenda, with only two items: (1) working meeting to discuss program guidelines, application requirements and donation request forms; and (2) approval of minutes from December 7, 2022 and January 11, 2023.

**Deposit of Funds**

Hannah Moller reported that the contribution in the amount of $5,000 from the Lowell Five Savings Bank had been deposited in the interest-bearing account that she described at the January meeting.

**Working Meeting: Application Procedures**

Paula Martin indicated that she believes that the application process should not be difficult. Hannah Moller noted that the application form used by the Green and Shepley Charity might be used as a model. She also noted that any eligibility guidelines that are adopted at the outset could later be modified and amended. Chuck Vander Linden indicated that he would prefer that the original application be comprehensive and that the TREAD committee not be in the posture of going back to applicants to obtain additional detailed financial information.

Lou Dimola indicated that we might be able to use information from eligibility applications submitted for the federal fuel assistance program as an indication of eligibility for TREAD. Ashley Shaheen indicated that the federal fuel assistance program has rigorous eligibility requirements and that it identifies members of the community that have real need. Nicole Boardman indicated that the federal fuel assistance program has comprehensive documentation requirements in terms of financial disclosures, bank accounts, etc. In some instances, the Friends of Groton Elders provides assistance for heating costs to Groton elders who do not meet the requirements of the federal fuel assistance program, but have demonstrated a need for financial assistance. Chuck Vander Linden asked about the potential for using application forms that are submitted to the Assessors for CPA funds. Hannah Moller indicated that hundreds of people apply for those funds and she recommended that the TREAD program application should be completely separate.

Chuck Vander Linden indicated that for purposes of streamlining the application process and avoiding unnecessary review and processing of applications, he believes that the committee should consider having all of those who qualify for the federal fuel assistance being deemed “categorically eligible” for the TREAD program.

**Working Meeting: Fundraising and Visibility**

Paula Martin indicated that she would contact Connie Sartini regarding a possible newspaper article describing the TREAD Program, the objectives of the program and the need for contributions from the community. She stated that an initial article might give the community basic information regarding the program and that a succession of articles later in the year could serve as reminders and emphasize the need for donations from the community. Committee members agreed that in addition to any formal descriptions of the TREAD program on the Town of Groton website, we should try to obtain favorable newspaper coverage.

**Working Subcommittees**

For purposes of investigating the details of fundraising, application requirements and eligibility requirements, the following subcommittees were appointed:

 Fundraising: Lou Dimola, Chair

 Ashley Shaheen

 Publicity: Paula Martin, Chair

 Hannah Moller

 Judy Anderson (proofreading & editing)

 Application Form: Chuck Vander Linden, Chair

 Nicole Boardman

 Pasqual Miller

The subcommittees will report at the next meeting.

**Additional Information**

Pasqual Miller provided information regarding the Commonwealth’s “Circuit Breaker” program, which can provide tax relief for some residents. He indicated that for those who qualify, it can provide $1,200 for real estate tax relief. Chuck Vander Linden indicated that it would be helpful to have more information regarding the number of residents who qualify for the Circuit Breaker program or the CPA program; that information might help the committee determine who most needs assistance from the TREAD program. Hannah Moller indicated that some residents do not file income tax returns and that prevents them from qualifying for the Circuit Breaker program. Pasqual Miller inquired about the availability of state funding or grants for the TREAD program. Hannah Moller indicated that although some ARPA funds might have been available in the past, she does not know of any state grants that are currently available. Pasqual Miller agreed to report to Lou Dimola if he learns of the potential availability of any state funds.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the TREAD Committee is scheduled for May 10th at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Vander Linden