



Grafton Affordable Housing Trust

Grafton Memorial Municipal Center
30 Providence Road
Grafton, MA 01519

Minutes of Meeting June 15, 2011

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A meeting of the Grafton Affordable Housing Trust was held on June 15, 2011 in Conference Room B at the Grafton Municipal Center, 30 Providence Road, Grafton, Massachusetts. Present for the meeting were Trust members: Chairman John Carlson, Member and Peter Adams.

Absent: Vice Chairman Deborah Kochevar, Member Charles Pratt

Also present were Ann Morgan, Assistant Planner

Chairman Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

1. ACTION ITEMS

A. **Reorganization – Election of Officers:** This item was tabled to the next meeting as there was no quorum present to vote.

B. **Open Session Minutes – March 16, 2011:** This item was tabled to the next meeting.

C. **Open Session Minutes – April 20, 2011:** This item was tabled to the next meeting

2. **PRESENTATION – Karen Sunnarborg; Homeownership Program Proposal** – Karen provided an update on her discussions with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) regarding a ready buyer list (see Exhibits). Her proposal met with some interest but she noted that DHCD is generally resistant to the type of highly flexible ready buyer list that the Trust and she had envisioned. DHCD noted that there could not be a single list used for multiple types of home ownership opportunities. The Trust would have to develop maintain separate lists for first time home ownership opportunities and a separate list for resale of affordable units. The reason being that there are separate guidelines and requirements for the affirmative fair housing marketing plan that is required for both types of transactions. DHCD has been working with other communities on ready buyer lists that are used for resale of units. It was noted that these lists need to be updated regularly and must be approved by DHCD as to having followed all the legal requirements for lotteries and affirmative fair housing marketing practices set out by the law.

The end result is that if the Trust opted to proceed they would need to develop and have DHCD approve an affirmative fair housing marketing plan, conduct the lottery and create a list of ready buyers. This would have to be done twice if the Trust were interested in two separate lists – new buyers and unit resale. In order for the lists to be a long term resource the Trust will need to commit to regular updates which include more affirmative fair housing marketing. She noted that there is significant expense in the marketing piece since it involves extensive advertising in local and regional newspapers.

The Trust reviewed the viability of this type of work in the context of need. It was noted that originally the Town had been seeing a lot of turnover at Hilltop Farms and that CHAPA, the monitoring agent, had been doing a good job of finding qualified buyers for the affordable resales despite the fact that one unit was recently sold at market rate and is coming off the Subsidized Housing Inventory. Karen noted that CHAPA was currently using a “first come, first served” model for qualified buyers and that they’d probably be thrilled to have the Trust pay for and maintain a ready buyer list. However, CHAPA has the

resources and is required to do this work. She noted that given the time, expense and the low affordable unit turnover in Grafton that this type of work may not be the best value for the Trust.

The Trust proceeded to discuss other options noting that there are Trust has been endowed with the affordable housing reserve CPA funds. It was noted that members of the Community Preservation Committee have been asking for more frequent updates on how the money is spent and that they are not required to transfer that money to the Trust. It can be held in reserve for other future proposals. It was agreed that forward motion was necessary. Peter Adams noted that there might be some opportunities to partner with the Housing Authority potentially on town owned land located at 25 Worcester Street. The GHA directors have indicated that there is a need for affordable housing for young families. There was some discussion about the nature of this type of partnership such as developing an RFP, transfer of ownership when the project is complete and the type of facilities management that may be required. Other discussion points included the types of constraints that the GHA may be under such as the nature of their federal funding and if they have the capacity to add additional housing stock to their management structure. It was suggested that one of the GHA directors attend the next Trust meeting to discuss potential project partnerships. Mr. Adams stated that he would contact someone from the GHA Board of Directors and extend an invitation to attend the July meeting.

Program Option – 40B Buy Down – In light of the information provided, Karen did note that there are a number of ways in which the Trust can utilize its funds while arranging for more units to be on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. One such program would be for a buy down program. The Trust would reach out to and work with a current 40B developer. Based on the market rate prices the Trust may be able to buy down the difference between the market and affordable prices thereby increasing the number of affordable units that the developer can market. She noted that it would be important to work with a developer in the early stages of permitting and development. Possible projects that fit that description include Fisherville Terrance, 123 Ferry Street and Providence Commons. Staff raised concerns about the post sale homeowner needs. Given the experience at Peters Way it was noted that the Trust would want to ensure that all qualified buyers had received first time homeowner training. Karen noted that CHAPA usually requires this but that the Trust could work with the developer to make sure that this training is part of the marketing program. At the Trust's request, Karen agreed to further investigate the details of this type of program and forward a proposal for review.

Housing Production Plan Update – It was reported that Grafton's Housing Production Plan is scheduled to expire in July 2011. Karen noted that it was important to have an updated plan on file with the State to ensure that all future units get included in the Subsidized Housing Inventory. Grafton's plan will be significantly altered by the new census figures which show a significant increase in population. However, a number of projects are coming on line that have units that will be eligible. The Trust asked her to forward a proposal and scope of services to update the plan. She noted that it would likely cost less than \$5,000. She further noted that the State is now requiring that the Planning Board must approve the revised Plan before it is issued to the State. John Carlson stated that he would reach out to the Planning Board Chairman to see if he would appoint a liaison to the Trust during the update process. The Trust agreed to take up the item for vote at their July meeting.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. **Dendee Acres Regulatory Agreement, Local Preference** – Staff noted that the Regulatory Agreement which includes the Universal Deed Rider has been signed and recorded at the Registry of Deeds.
- B. **Meeting with the Board of Selectmen** – This item was tabled to the next meeting.

- C. **Brochure** – A new set of photographs were taken and forwarded to Debbie Kochevar who has been coordinating the development of the brochure.
- D. **Planned Production Letter** – It was noted that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) had recently rejected a request from the Town Administrator to include a number of units on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. The wrong correspondence was included in the Trust member packets. Staff will forward the correct letter to the members.
- E. **123 Ferry Street** – Peter Adams noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals had closed the hearing on this 40B project. The number of units has been scaled back from 32 to 24 units of which 6 will be affordable.

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. **Membership Vacancy** – This is an ongoing discussion item in which the Trustees agree needs to be addressed. Presently there are two vacancies on the Trust and it was noted that either a real estate lawyer or real estate banker might be a good choice to round out the Trust's existing skill set. John Carlson asked that all Trust members work towards identifying potential new members.

5. **NEW BUSINESS** – None.

6. **Executive Session** – None.

7. **Adjournment**

No motion to adjourn was advanced due to the lack of quorum. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

EXHIBITS

- Draft Meeting Minutes, April 20, 2011, 2 pages.
- Correspondence from the Department of Housing and Community Development to the Town Administrator, Housing Production Certification, dated March 28, 2011, 1 page.
- Email correspondence from Janice Lesniak, Department of Housing and Community Development, Conceptual Proposal, April 28, 2011, 2 pages.
- Correspondence from Karen Sunnarborg to Janice Lesniak, Department of Housing and Community Development, Homeownership Opportunities in Grafton, April 4, 2011, 1 page.


