

Grafton Affordable Housing Trust

Grafton Memorial Municipal Center
30 Providence Road
Grafton, MA 01519

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 20, 2014
7:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Grafton Affordable Housing Trust was held on August 20, 2014 in Conference Room A at the Grafton Municipal Center, 30 Providence Road, Grafton, MA.

Present: Chairman Edward Prisby, Vice Chairman Deborah Kochevar; and Members Peter Adams, John Carlson and Daniel Crossin

Absent Clerk Charles Pratt

Also Present: Ann Morgan, Assistant Town Planner

Chairman Prisby called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Action Items

a.) Open Session Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept the following meeting minutes as drafted made by Deborah Kochevar, seconded John Carlson. Motion passed unanimously.

- March 20, 2013
- April 17, 2013
- May 1, 2013
- May 8, 2013
- May 23, 2013
- June 19, 2013
- January 15, 2014
- February 19, 2014
- June 18, 2014
- July 16, 2014

b.) Request for recommendation to Board of Selectmen re: 11 Buttercup Lane

The Trust reviewed the letter submitted from CHAPA noting that this was the standard correspondence when one of the Hilltop Farms affordable units was going to be going to put on the market for sale. Mr. Adams noted that language in the fourth paragraph noted a change in protocol from the past resale of the affordable condos. The language references "preference" which was confusing since CHAPA is required to find an affordable buyer. Mr. Adams requested that staff look into the issue and find out what that language means for this unit and for the future marketing and sale of affordable units in the future.

Motion to recommend that the Town opt to exercise its right of first refusal in accordance with the correspondence received from CHAPA and to direct staff to report the Trust's recommendation to the Board of Selectmen made by John Carlson, seconded by Peter Adams. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Kochevar raised the question informing the public about affordable units that are available locally. Social media is a good way notify people including email contact to such organizations at the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, church bulletins, senior center, Grafton Community Cable TV, etc.

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2. New Business

a.) "Grafton Hill" Subdivision, off North Street and Worcester Street – Westerly Side LLC – affordable housing proposal

Brian McCann of the Westerly Side LLC development team called the office to request a postponement of the scheduled discussion until the next meeting. Staff was directed to add this item to the September agenda.

b.) Grafton Housing Authority – Jim Gallagher

Mr. Gallagher stated that he was at the meeting for two purposes – to gain an understanding of the Trust's work effort as it relates to the Community Preservation Committee of which he is a member and potential joint ventures between the Trust and the Grafton Housing Authority of which he is the current Board president.

Mr. Prisby reviewed the work effort and outcomes related to 30 Tulip Circle, 293 Providence Road and 11-13 Suzanne Terrace. As they were now complete, the Trust is looking for new projects would produce affordable units. Mr. Gallagher stated that he and a number of people really appreciate the work of the Trust and recognized that this work was important to the community and is not quickly and easily realized. He encouraged members to continue in their efforts knowing that there is community support.

Mr. Gallagher discussed of ways that the Trust could partner with the Housing Authority (GHA) noting that the Trust would have the capacity, through CPA funding parameters, to have affordable units built and the GHA has the capacity to own and manage the units which is not allowed by CPA guidelines. As built plans of several GHA unit types could be made available which the Trust could spec out to determine costs. Then, working together, the Trust and the GHA would approach the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting for a parcel of Town-owned land. He noted that EOHED could partner with the Town, Trust and GHA to facilitate future projects by providing additional resources based on a sound proposal. The Trust would need to get buy in from DHCD who is responsible for approving units for the Subsidized Housing Inventory. Mr. Gallagher suggested that the Trust reach out to Paul McPartland at DHCD (617-573-1219; paul.mcpartland@state.ma.us). Mr. Prisby noted that he would contact Mr. McPartland at Mr. Gallagher agreed to work with the GHA Executive Director, Barbara Marsden, to have the as built plan sets copied which can be done at the Municipal Center. Ms. Kochevar noted that there needs to be more information about costs related to new construction. Mr. Carlson noted that any viable options need to be explored.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to enter into discussions with DHCD about the viability of a joint venture made by Mr. Carlson, seconded by Ms. Kochevar. Motion passed unanimously.

c.) Meeting with Finance Committee on September 10, 2014

Mr. Prisby informed the Trust that he had been asked to attend the September 10th meeting of the Finance Committee to discuss the work of the Trust. He will provide an update at the next Trust meeting.

d.) Tax Title Takings

Email correspondence from the Town's Treasurer / Collector's office regarding tax title takings was review. A list of several properties was provided. Ms. Morgan spoke with the Treasurer/ Collector's office and relayed information about the process of takings. This list is the first of many steps required to foreclose on properties due to failure to pay taxes. Many times the property owners are able to resolve the issue before the property is taken.

The property at 121 North Street was discussed. The Trust had approached the property owners a number of years ago. At the time the owners weren't interested in selling. Since receiving the current Town notice, the owner has begun cleaning up the property. The Trust reviewed some of the constraints associated with the property including utilities, topography and surrounding wetlands.

Mr. Adams noted that there was a property on Pullard Road that has become available for sale that might make a good project for the Trust. The house is connected to Town sewer but not to the Water District services. He also noted that there was a property on Snow Road that may become available due to an impending foreclosure. Mr. Crossin stated that the foreclosure process was long and involved and that the Trust should be thoughtful when pursuing foreclosure properties.

On a related note, Mr. Crossin noted that he had been made aware of a bank owned property in North Grafton that might be considered by the Trust for redevelopment into an affordable unit. The interior of the house has been stripped down to the studs and would require a full rebuild. He noted that he would investigate the situation further and would arrange for a site visit by the Trust if it worth pursuing.

Motion to authorize Mr. Crossin to enter into preliminary discussions with the Grafton Suburban Credit Union regarding the bank owned property on Nelson Street made by Mr. Carlson, seconded by Mr. Prisby. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Old Business

a.) Hilltop Farms – Litigation Discussion

Mr. Prisby noted that it was public information that the Town has been scheduled to enter into mediation with Pulte regarding the Hilltop Farms lawsuit. Concern was raised that the Trust has not been a involved in the process which is concerning since the State requires any proceeds from litigation to be used for affordable housing. He noted that it was important that the Trust remain informed and that there be a discussion about plans for any future proceeds. The Trust directed the Chairman to obtain an update from the Town Administrator on the progress of the litigation and what percentage of the proceeds will be directed to the Trust.

Motion to direct staff to submit a memorandum to the Town Administrator requesting a meeting with the Trust Chairman to discuss the Hilltop Farms litigation made by John Carlson, seconded by Deborah Kochevar. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Executive Session – none.

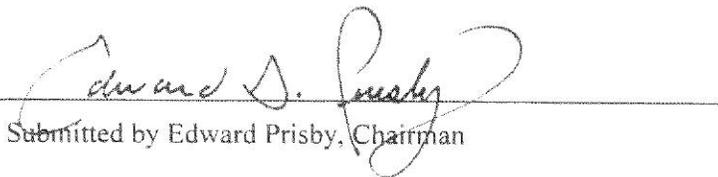
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5. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Peter Adams and seconded by Deborah Kochevar. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

EXHIBITS

- Draft Meeting Minutes:
 - March 20, 2013 – 3 pages
 - April 17, 2013 – 1 page
 - May 1, 2013 – 1 page
 - May 8, 2013 – 3 pages
 - May 23, 2013 – 1 page
 - June 19, 2013 – 1 page
 - January 15, 2014 – 4 pages
 - February 19, 2014 – 1 page
 - June 18, 2014 – 3 pages
 - July 16, 2014 – 1 page
- Copy of correspondence to the Board of Selectmen from CHAPA regarding 40 Buttercup Lane; dated July 28, 2014; 1 page.
- Email correspondence from the Town Treasurer / Collector regarding Land Court Filing; dated July 24, 2014; 1 page.


Submitted by Edward Prisby, Chairman