



# THE CITY OF GROTON

Mayor Marian Galbraith

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Testimony of Marian Galbraith, Mayor of the City of Groton, in support of **Raised Bill No. 5179, An Act Authorizing Historic Properties Commissions to Charge Reasonable Fees for the Processing of Certificate of Appropriateness Applications.**

On behalf of the City of Groton, I am pleased to provide testimony in favor of Bill 5179. This act would allow municipalities like the City of Groton to charge reasonable fees to help cover those costs incurred by municipalities related to applications to Historic District Commissions.

The City of Groton is proud home to the Eastern Point Historic District. When property owners within the district wish to make an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, the City is required by statute to post a legal notice in the local newspaper. The cost of such a notice can run up to \$350 based on the length of the notice. Costs are exacerbated when an applicant fails to appear for the hearing and the legal notice needs to be posted prior to a subsequent meeting. Unfortunately, with no monetary responsibility on the part of the applicant, we have seen this happen far too often.

Unlike other land use commissions, such as Inland Wetlands Commissions, Planning and Zoning Commissions or Zoning Boards of Appeal, there is no statutory provision for the collection of reasonable fees to cover the costs incurred by the municipality. The cost, therefore, falls to the taxpayers. It should be noted that the taxpayers also bear the cost of staff time and possible legal fees.

This bill would allow Historic Properties Commissions to set reasonable fees just as other land use commissions are allowed. It would relieve the burden from the taxpayer of paying the cost of statutorily required processes, such as the cost of legal notices. It would also provide an incentive for the applicant to be more cognizant of associated costs and therefore appear at scheduled hearings.

At a time, when municipalities are struggling to balance budgets and contain the cost of unfunded mandates, this bill would allow relief to municipalities without adding to the budgetary burden of the state. I urge you to support Bill No. 5179.

Marian Galbraith  
Mayor, City of Groton