



City of Groton
Office of the Mayor
Mayor Keith Hedrick



Town of Groton
Office of the Town Manager
Town manager John Burt

June 28, 2022

Via email:

Matthew Finkle, President of Related Affordable
Brian Mayer, President of Related Management
Zack Simmons, Senior Vice President of Related Affordable
Related Companies
30 Hudson Yards
New York, NY 10001

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Re: Tax Abatement Agreement – Branford Manor

Dear Gentlemen:

Thank you for attending the Town of Groton Committee of the Whole meeting on June 14, 2022, outlining your roles and responsibilities as they relate to Branford Manor, and answering questions from Town of Groton Councilors concerning the health and safety of Branford Manor residents, as well as involving the Tax Abatement Agreement ("Agreement") entered into between the Town of Groton ("Town"), City of Groton ("City") and your companies (for the purposes of this letter jointly referred to as "Related").

The Town and City remain committed to ensuring that Related complies with the terms of the Agreement and provides Branford Manor residents with clean, safe housing in an environment that supports and fosters communication and collaboration between Related, Branford Manor residents, the Town and the City. To these ends, and without waiving any rights to default Related under the Agreement, the Town and City are focused on pursuing better living conditions for Branford Manor residents through an amendment to the Agreement (re-confirming Related's commitment to the expectations below which flow from the Agreement) and by affording Related the opportunity to remediate the current deficiencies in the living conditions at Branford Manor. We trust, in light of your collective statements on June 14, 2022, and communications before and after, that Related will in fact take all appropriate actions to ensure the health and safety of the residents during mold remediation efforts and beyond, and will re-confirm that it will undertake the following:

Communication with Town and City:

1. Provide the Town and City with documented proof that the "Improvements" and "Ancillary Improvements" (set forth in Exhibits 1 and 4 to the Agreement) have been completed as set forth in the Agreement.

Of note, since June 14, 2022, Related has provided, and the Town and City have accepted, documentation regarding more than \$18.5 million in expenses, relating primarily to the items on Exhibit 1. Please submit documentation further establishing that the playground (identified in Exhibit 1 to the Agreement), meets or exceeds all safety requirements. Please indicate the status of all Ancillary Improvements (including various trails) in Exhibit 4, and the timetable for completion of the same.

2. To the extent legally permissible, authorize outside entities and contractors assessing mold and other potential damage to any apartment and basement at Branford Manor; evaluating remediation plans; and/or engaging in remediation work to submit their assessments, remediation plans and remediation outcomes directly to the Town (care of the Town Manager) and the City (care of the City Mayor). If such direct communication is not legally permissible, then Related will provide any draft or final assessments, remediation plans and/or reports from the outside entities and contractors *immediately*

upon receipt. These outside entities and contractors may include, but are not limited to, Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC, Ledge Light Health District, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"), D/E/F, etc.

Of note, since June 14, 2022, Related has provided, and the Town and City have accepted, copies of the HUD REAC inspection report from their inspection of June 22, 2022 and June 23, 2022; and the Atlas visual inspection results of the basements/units conducted May 25, 2022 thru June 10, 2022.

3. Keep the Town and City apprised of the progress in addressing mold remediation (through brief, weekly email updates) and the resolution of other, on-going maintenance issues (through a maintenance log by building or apartment number, which is regularly updated and shared with the Town and City).
4. Complete required reporting under the Agreement no later than 1/1 each year, including, but not necessarily limited to:
 - a. Evidence of Social Services provided in the previous 12-month period
 - b. Evidence of at least \$15,000 spent on Social Services in the previous 12 months
 - c. Evidence that the HAP Contract is still in place
5. Coordinate site visits for Town and City staff for some of the apartments with maintenance complaints, especially mold, on file, within the next 10-30 days. Coordinate future, annual inspections for Town and City staff to apartments selected by the Town and City (and with resident consent).

Of note, since June 14, 2022, Related has provided access to the Town and the City to inspect some of the requested residences on June 28, 2022 and are coordinating further visits. Following each of the unit inspections, the Town and City will compile notes of items that need to be addressed by Related.

Communication with Residents:

1. Develop and carry out a plan for improved communications in general with the residents regarding all aspects of the landlord / tenant relationship, including, for example, identifying and promoting the manners in which residents may safely raise questions, concerns or complaints.
2. Notify residents that Related will relocate them and provide hotel rooms with kitchenettes during the remediation of their apartments for mold and/or during times when other health and/or safety reasons require the same.
3. Make a direct apology to residents for the conditions of their apartments (preferably during a June 29, 2022 meeting with residents), explain Related's position that it has not taken any retaliatory actions against the residents to date for reporting any issues, and re-commit to a retaliation-free living environment for reporting any issues.
4. Take all reasonable steps to address remaining issues, if any, with the 28 (and possibly more) residents receiving notices to quit in the time frame when complaints were made about the living conditions. Conduct full or spot audit of remaining residents' accounts to confirm accuracy of Related's recordkeeping and residents' status (e.g., delinquent, up to date, etc.)
5. Work with residents to educate them on the importance of being present during any apartment inspection completed by Related or outside entities or agencies. Provide ample notice to residents on inspection/repair plans and the opportunity to be present. Work as best possible when scheduling activities to consider residents' schedules (with reasonably narrow timeframes for the inspection activities to better support resident attendance).
6. To the extent legally permissible, support the creation of a tenants' association. In the absence of a tenants' association, otherwise hold quarterly (if not more frequent) meetings to share information and to allow for resident input, questions and concerns.

7. Place information on residents' rights and resources on bulletin boards in common areas and/or heavily trafficked areas within apartment buildings and on Branford Manor's website.

Basements:

1. Verify that leak detection monitors have been installed in all affected basements.
2. Indicate whether basement spaces are included in any of the residents' rental agreements. Allow residents, once basement remediation is completed, to use basements (or designated portions of basements) for *storage* (not for living/playing space), and review provision(s) of lease, rules or policies with residents that limit their use of basements to storage.
3. Inspect all basements once per month for at least twelve (12) months to confirm the absence of moisture or mold issues. Request that resident(s) participate in inspection (allowing them to be more informed about conditions that are or are not problematic). Document whether resident(s) participated, and if not, indicate the efforts to encourage them to participate.

Staff:

1. Evaluate existing personnel.
2. Hire a new Senior Vice-President of Operations to improve the overall culture and community at Branford Manor, and a Resident Services Coordinator, dedicated to fielding resident concerns and working with residents to implement solutions.
3. Ensure maintenance staff are adequately trained, skilled and experienced to handle the range of maintenance issues that occur at Branford Manor.

Social Services:

1. Communicate regularly to residents what types of social services currently are available on-site and how to access them. Survey residents as to what other or additional social services they would like on site, and notify the Town and City of the same.
2. Provide confidential space with internet access for Town Human Services staff to meet discreetly with residents.
3. Provide copies of notices to quit to Human Services staff.

Miscellaneous:

1. Reach out to Groton Mystic Falcons Youth Football concerning potential funding through Related's nonprofit grant program.

Meeting the above expectations is one part of ensuring clean and safe housing. The vast majority of the above expectations either are referenced in the Agreement or flow practically from the Agreement or comments that you shared on June 14, 2022. Please kindly confirm that Related agrees with the expectations set forth above, and we will move to convert the contents of this letter to a formal amendment. In the meantime, we ask that you share with us the current status of mold testing and remediation.

Sincerely,



Keith Hedrick
Mayor
City of Groton



John Burt
Town Manager
Town of Groton