

Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Minutes of January 17, 2017

Town Hall, 334 Main Street

Members present: Ed Abrahams, Jessica Dezieck, Jeremy Higa, Kathleen Jackson, Martha Fick, Bill Nappo, Karen W. Smith and Nan Wile.

Not Present: Thomas Blauvelt

Also present: Town Planner/CPA Administrator Chris Rembold

Call to Order 5:30 PM by Vice Chair Dezieck

Administrative Items

Abrahams moved to approve the draft minutes of December 6, 2016, Smith seconded, all were in favor.

FY18 Funding Recommendations / Conditions

The Committee reviewed the proposed funding conditions drafted by Rembold.

Smith read the restriction proposed for Berkshire Pulse. She said her concern is that this is a private property, these are capital improvements for a tenant, and the Town needs to be guaranteed we will get what we pay for. We need to make sure a public good is achieved.

Jackson arrived.

Higa arrived.

Attorney and Pulse board member Charles Ferris said the investment here is in something that serves the community. He said the State is insisting we need this elevator. He said also whether the owner sells the building is not Pulse's concern necessarily and should not be in the grant restriction. He said if the owner sells Pulse is still there still serving the community. He said they have a most of a 20-year lease remaining. He said the lease goes to 2034. He said it is better expressed as a repayment by Pulse if Pulse leaves the site in less than the 20 year period.

Abrahams said this grant is about the building, not about Pulse. He said if Pulse is gone then the elevator still there and the historic resource—the building—is still being served. Ferris said he might not be able to convince the landlord to pay this back. He said a historic preservation restriction is difficult for an owner.

Rembold noted that the Committee seeks an encumbrance on the deed, not a full preservation restriction. He noted to the Committee that a full preservation restriction is not required by CPA law. He asked the Committee if they wanted to proceed with the deed restriction as proposed, which is not a full preservation restriction.

The Committee agreed that a restriction, as proposed, was what they wanted. Fick said these are appropriate. Jackson concurred saying we need to see that the taxpayers enjoy this CPA benefit of historic investment for a certain amount of time. She said it is our obligation to impose something for a certain period and it has been our practice. She said each case needs to be taken individually however.

Dezieck suggested the length of time be discussed. Nappo, Fick and Wile thought 10 years was fine for this amount of grant. Abrahams thought it was ok but said this owner is for-profit, it's not a nonprofit like others before. Jackson said 20 years was better. Smith thought the lease term could be used.

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Diane Pearlman, chairman of the board at Pulse, said we have no reason to move out of here. She said we just \$300,000 into that space. We would like to attract other arts nonprofits to the building. Maybe we would buy it eventually. Our lease goes for next 17 years.

Higa asked of the repayment amount could go down over time. Smith suggested that if the building is demolished in 17 years or end of Pulse lease then the entire grant must be repaid, and if it is sold within 10 years then the grant must be repaid.

All generally agreed and asked Ferris to discuss with the Owner. Smith wanted to add that all other funding must be in place before CPA can be used.

The Committee reviewed the rest of the proposed grant conditions and were ok with all proposed.

Reports from Committee Members

Wile said the housing authority has two vacant seats.

Abrahams said the special town meeting this month has an item to approve formation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Jackson said she has heard a lot of buzz about the riverfront trail.

Higa said the Bostwick Gardens housing project got Planning Board approval.

Project Updates

Rembold reviewed the status of past CPA grantees and project budgets.

Upcoming Meetings: The next meeting was set for Tuesday February 7 at Town Hall

Citizen Speak Time: None

Adjourn 6:48 PM

Materials Presented/Distributed for this Meeting:

- Draft minutes of December 6, 2016 meeting
- Email from Chris Rembold to Committee dated January 12, 2017
- Draft of proposed general and special conditions for FY 18 grantees

Respectfully submitted: _____