

## **Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)**

Minutes of October 28, 2016

Great Barrington Fire Station, 37 State Road

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Members present: Ed Abrahams, Thomas Blauvelt, Jeremy Higa, Kathleen Jackson, Martha Fick, Bill Nappo, and Nan Wile.

Absent: Jessica Dezieck and Karen W. Smith

Also present: Town Planner/CPA Administrator Chris Rembold

**Call to Order** 5:30 PM by Chairman Blauvelt

### **Administrative Items**

Blauvelt announced that the Town Manager has withdrawn the CPA application for Housatonic School.

Jackson moved to approve the October 18, 2016 meeting minutes, Nappo seconded. Jackson made an amendment to what she had said regarding the Housatonic School. All were in favor of the minutes as amended.

### **Continued Review of FY18 Step 1 Applications**

#### **Berkshire Pulse Elevator Access**

Bettina Montana, founder of Berkshire Pulse, and Andy Reynolds were present for the Applicant. There was a site visit this afternoon which some members attended.

Wile said her concern is that the owner is not contributing to this project. Montano said that the owner is essentially donating the elevator in its current form, which is a savings to us. It is Pulse's responsibility for retrofitting that. Otherwise we would have to construct a whole new shaft inside or outside, which would be very expensive. And the current owner allowed them rent-free space for three years.

Fick suggested if this is funded there should be a historic restriction to the building.

Rembold explained to Montano and Reynolds what a restriction could cover. He suggested that the applicants discuss a possible restriction with the Owner.

Blauvelt related two questions that Smith had emailed to him for tonight. One was about a possible restriction. The other was whether the Owner has proper insurance coverage. What if something happens and there is not enough insurance to keep the building standing?

Nappo asked if the passenger elevator precluded freight, and whether they still need a freight elevator in the building. Reynolds said this question has not come up with our architects who have been working on it for some time. He assumes the architects will make sure this will not be an issue.

There were no further questions from the Committee.

#### **Berkshire Housing / Bostwick Gardens expansion**

Elton Ogden was present from Berkshire Housing Development Corp. (BHDC) along with Lynn Wood and Don Goranson from St James Community Housing (SJCH).

Blauvelt said last time we had some concerns about how and when the CPA funds would be spent. Ogden said we understand we cannot use CPA on previously incurred expenses. He said while some predevelopment expenses have been incurred, there will be more to be done. They will not have any difficulty identifying uses for the CPA funds.

Fick asked if they had specifics, or if this would be a general pot of money. Ogden said we would prefer that it not be specific but be available for any predevelopment costs not previously incurred. Rembold said this flexibility would be consistent with the predevelopment funding awarded previously to the CDC and Construct, which were not tied to specific predevelopment expenses.

Nappo asked what funding they had for other predevelopment costs. Ogden referred the Committee to the budget shown in Exhibit B of the Step 2 application. He said we have already committed \$300,000 to buy the property. We have a loan commitment and we plan to close this coming month. We are incurring architectural costs and environmental assessment costs. The Berkshire Fund, our affiliate, has committed \$65,000 to cover up front costs and Berkshire Housing will front the money for anything more than that.

Blauvelt asked if the housing would be limited to certain people since it is part of the SJCH group. Ogden said no; when Bostwick was developed it required a nonprofit sponsor, but that has not limited who can live there. It is not limited or faith based.

Rembold asked about land ownership and SJCH. Ogden said this project is supported by SJCH. Eventually part of the project will be owned by a for-profit for tax-credit financing purposes in which would be a partner.

Ogden provided some detail from the application about unit counts and sizes. He said there will be 25 one-bedroom units at about 625 square feet each, and 6 two-bedroom units at about 850 square feet each. He said 6 to 8 of the 31 units would be Section 8 subsidized limited to 30 percent of area median income which would equal \$17,490 for a single person and \$19,980 for a two-person household. He said the other apartments would have rents that range from \$561 to \$970 per month and people would have to make less than 60 percent of area median income, which would equate to \$34,980 for a single person and \$39,960 for a household of two.

There were no further questions from the Committee.

#### **GBHS Museum / Wheeler Farmstead Accessibility**

Bob Krol was present for the Historical Society (GBHS). He gave a brief overview of the proposed work.

Fick asked if the kitchen is part of the historic project. Krol said the walls and plumbing need to be moved and that is right in the kitchen.

Fick asked if GBHS has contributed funds. Krol said yes, everything so far on this project has been paid by us including getting designs ready.

Fick asked how much more work is needed at the property. Krol said the GBHS has rescued one of the oldest properties in south county and has put a great deal effort into the restoration. He said their first job is preserving what is here. He said the Wagon House was part of that. He said next is the restoration and opening as a museum, to increase use and visibility. The electric project and accessibility are part of that effort. He said what will be still left to do is the second floor of the Wheeler House. He said that will become a research center and archive space. They have made a commitment with the Ramsdell Library to move town history collection to the Wheeler House. There will also be storage in the Wagon House and

meeting space in the Wagon House. But he said this is an old property and the barns are integral to its history. They are large and need some work. He said they may never be done but with the CPA the museum is achievable. Krol said with this accessibility we will be able to officially be open to the public as the town museum.

Nappo asked for an update on the Wagon House project. Krol said the roof is on and walls will be one before winter. He said the electricity project starts this coming Monday. He said they got a grant for the lighting fixtures.

Nappo asked if there were other sources for accessibility. Krol said they have applied three times for Cultural Council grants but have not gotten the funds. He said the feedback from MCC was a standard answer—that it is a worthy project but there is not enough money to go around.

Rembold asked why the kitchen is part of this CPA project. Krol said the only feasible place on the first floor to put the required handicapped bathroom is to put it where the cabinets are located. That involves demolishing the kitchen space and we need to then rebuild it. Rembold noted the CPA category of “restoration” states “Make capital improvements, or extraordinary repairs to make assets functional for intended use” as well as “improvements to comply with federal, state or local building or access codes or federal standards for rehabilitation of historic properties.”

There were no further questions from the Committee.

**Reports from Committee members** None

**Upcoming Meetings:** November 3, November 7

**Citizen Speak Time:** None

**Adjourn** 6:36 PM

Materials Presented/Distributed for this Meeting:

- Draft minutes of October 18 meeting
- Step 2 applications

Respectfully submitted: 

