

Town of Great Barrington, Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Minutes of December 18, 2014
Great Barrington Fire Station

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chair Karen Smith.

Members present: Thomas Blauvelt, Jessica Dezieck, Martha Fick, Suzanne Fowle, Kathleen Jackson, William Nappo, Deborah Salem and Karen W. Smith.

Absent: Ed Abrahams

Also present: Town Planner Chris Rembold.

Administrative Business

Minutes of December 16, 2014: Fick provided minor typo corrections. Not all members had read the minutes so action was postponed until the next meeting.

Evaluation of Step 2 Applications, Continued from December 16

DPW for Mason Library

DPW Superintendent Sokul said the contractors who rebuilt the columns and balustrades at Town Hall last year gave him this estimate for Mason Library. Sokul said if he did not receive CPA funding he would have to take this project to get capital budget approval. He said it is a worthy project for CPA.

Smith asked at what point deferred maintenance becomes a capital expense. Sokul said he cannot say can't say but he is picking up the pieces and thinks this is a problem that needs to get repaired.

Smith asked if there was any possibility of phasing the construction work. Sokul said no, once the project is ready it should be done all at once.

Fowle thought there might be an issue at Town Meeting of spending on Mason but not on Ramsdell. Sokul said this year there was about \$62,000 spent on Ramsdell so not to worry, both libraries get attention. Nappo said that regardless, this issue at Mason is structural and is an immediate need.

On a straw poll, nobody wanted to drop the project. It remains in consideration.

DPW for Town Hall

Sokul provided photos of the outside eaves of Town Hall showing existing damage that needs further investigation, and then repairs. He said this is the beginning of the process for these long term repairs. The budget for this project is based on a construction cost of at least \$100,000, estimated by the contractors who did the work on the columns and balustrades last year. He said basic architectural and engineering is usually 8-12% of construction. With oversight and contingencies he is anticipating it will be more like 20% of a total of at least \$100,000. Town Hall is experiencing leaks that Sokul said need to be investigated and repaired. This proposal will get DPW to a point where they put the job out to bid. He said he will look into state historic preservation grants for a portion of the construction costs next year.

On a straw poll, nobody wanted to drop the project. It remains in consideration.

DPW for Wetherbee Vault

Smith asked is the estimate covers all of the work. Sokul said a mason who specializes in this type of restoration did the estimate and it will yield a vault that is secure and safe for a long period of time. Sokul said he trusts the estimate. Sokul said if more money is needed he would seek cemetery perpetual care funds. Sokul said the Cemetery Commission discussed the project for several years and earlier this year voted to support funding the repairs.

Fick asked if it was in dangerous condition. Sokul said it is unstable and he will get it fixed.

Dezieck asked about ongoing maintenance. Sokul said it will be part of the regular repair cycle in some locales in town. Dezieck asked how it got this bad. Sokul said it never appeared to be an issue. When it was discovered and estimated for the capital plan, it did not advance in that funding process.

Smith asked why the Cemetery Commission has not funded it. Sokul said it never made it past the cuts. While the Commission recently voted for it, it still needs to go through the budget process and Town Meeting.

Salem asked what it would take to tear it down and reinter the remains. Sokul said it was be expensive, about \$5,000 just for funeral home costs, not including the demolition work. Sokul added that the goal should be preservation since it is a beautiful structure and supports the historical nature of Mahaiwe Cemetery. He said there is a lot of Great Barrington history in that cemetery. Fowle said repairing it shows the sensitivity on Sokul's part.

On a straw poll, Jackson, Fick, and Blauvelt were in favor of dropping the project from consideration. Fick said she wanted to see how much the Cemetery Commission can put towards it. Sokul said he would find out the other funding that is available. The project remains in consideration.

GB Historical Society

Debbie Oppermann described the project and that is phase 1 of the overall project. She said this will fix the wagon house which is now supported by trusses and cribbing. She said it needs to be restored soon or they will lose it.

Smith said she appreciated the number of letters and good leverage. Fowle said the letter from the school teacher shows concern for and involvement of the next generation. Smith said it is a very good application with current quotes and the right details.

Nappo asked about the statement that says the wall system will be reproduction infill. Oppermann said they will be reusing as much material as they can and reproducing anything they can't use. Nappo asked about historical society storage of archives from Ramsdell. Oppermann said they will have some space but it will be limited due to space.

Jackson asked how many phases the overall project would be. Oppermann said it would be three phases. She said the first phase has been thought through and will lead into the next phases. They have prioritized work such as roof fixes and structural stuff. What they do in phase one will not have to be undone later.

On a straw poll, all were in favor of keeping the project in consideration.

St James Place

Fred Harris summarized the roof repairs. He said church roof is slate and the parish house is both asphalt shingle and slate. He said the roof on the church has been opened up in order to do structural repairs—to get beams and support trussed inside. Fick asked what materials will be used for the repairs. Harris said they will replace the slate where it is slate, and asphalt where it is asphalt. He said they will be historically accurate.

Jackson asked if this component will result in complete repairs. Harris said yes.

On a straw poll, all were in favor of keeping the project in consideration.

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center

Blauvelt recused himself.

Tim Schroepfer from the Mahaiwe was present. He said the proposal will result in a permanent fix. He has talked to the contractors and they confirmed this. He said there are other areas in the basement where this has been done, but this area did not need to be addressed back then.

Nappo asked where the water is coming from. Schroepfer said it is up from the ground and runoff.

Smith asked if this issue arose because of lack of prior maintenance. Schroepfer said he did not know what the deferred maintenance would have been. They have gutters and sumps. But this groundwater now needs to be addressed. Schroepfer said this is to fix the issue once and for all.

Fowle said the Mahaiwe provides public benefit and this is fitting with CPA. Their programming is wonderful for the community. They coordinate with the school district and that is great. This is an unseen issue but it still has to be done to keep things going. Jackson agreed.

Jackson and Nappo both asked if the project should or could be phased, or done in conjunction with repairs to the old fire house, especially if in the process of digging the alley way they would get a better fix. Salem said this sounds like a good project on its own. Schroepfer said this can stand alone.

On a straw poll, all were in favor of keeping the project in consideration.

Discussion of Next Steps

Smith said she will work with Rembold and they will prepare information for the next meeting, including having sample contracts.

Rembold summarized the CPA budget. He said there were now 11 finalists, totaling a little more than \$956,000, assuming the CDC housing is funded at only \$200,000 this round.

Smith read an email from Ed Abrahams dated December 18. The email questioned when deferred maintenance becomes a capital repair, and whether CPA funds set an incentive to defer maintenance. The email also discussed the CPC getting beyond their expertise, and being too critical of applicants. Smith responded and said we are entrusted with public funds, so we cannot be less than picky.

Fick suggested next time the scoring categories be made more clear. Fowle said we have been fair, and we have not used the scores to rank the projects, just to discuss them. Jackson thought a scoring system should be written into the application. Dezieck said the categories were in the CPA Plan and application and none of this should have been a surprise.

Next Meeting

Rembold said on December 30 the Committee should be prepared to say who will get full funding, no funding, and partial funding. He said you'll probably be able to make the first two decisions easily, but partial funding will take more discussion time. He will bring sample funding conditions as well.

Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:55 PM.

Materials presented or distributed for this meeting:

- Draft Minutes from December 16, 2014 meeting
- Email from Ed Abrahams of December 18.

Respectfully submitted: _____

