

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

Minutes of December 6, 2016

Great Barrington Fire Station, 37 State Road

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

Also present: Town Planner/CPA Administrator Chris Rembold

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

**Administrative Items**

Dezieck moved to approve the November 3, 2016 meeting minutes, Wile seconded. All were in favor.

Blauvelt reminded the Committee to complete their ethics test and open meeting law certification.

**Continued Review of FY18 Applications**

Blauvelt asked the members to focus on what projects merit funding, then determine how much to fund, and also discuss if we should set funds aside. He said Rembold provided an updated budget estimate: we are working with at least \$800,000.

***Berkshire Housing Development Corporation: Bostwick Gardens Expansion***

Blauvelt said Berkshire Housing is seeking \$200,000 for development of affordable housing. Smith asked for a project update. Elton Ogden of Berkshire Housing said predevelopment planning is progressing, and that they now own the land. He said that land allows them room to add onto the existing building with 31 units. He said they need to meet special permit requirements, and they will submit that application this month. They have met with local code officials and the town planner to review concept site and building plans. They are working on a funding application to DHCD due 12/15/16. He said it's a basic application and then the full funding application package is due in February. Allegrone is doing preconstruction and construction management. With regards to paying for costs incurred prior to a CPA award, he said they understand that cannot be done.

Smith asked how much the land cost. Ogden said \$300,000. Jackson what it appraised for. Ogden said between \$235,000 and \$265,000.

Smith asked about total project cost. Ogden said its over \$12 million. That includes a large addition with 31 new units plus some improvements to the existing building like code compliance and energy efficiency. Ogden noted that the tax credit finance climate is in flux now given the change in Washington. There is some concern that affordable housing financing will be less next year since tax credits will be less in demand by investors.

Fick asked about the ownership structure. Ogden said Bostwick Gardens is privately owned by a nonprofit now. To utilize tax credits there is a for-profit investor involved in the ownership. So, a new corporation will be set up and there will be two members. One is the for-profit investor and the other is the nonprofit, Berkshire Housing, which is the managing member responsible for day to day operations and insuring compliance with all funding requirements. He said there will be an operating agreement where Berkshire Housing has a right to purchase the property from the for-profit investor at the end of the tax credit period. That would mean it's owned eventually by a nonprofit.

Hearing no other questions, Blauvelt asked for a motion. Dezieck moved to recommend Town Meeting fund this project for the amount requested at \$200,000. Abrahams seconded.

In discussion, Smith said she was concerned about them getting the tax credit funding. Blauvelt said that is valid, but that gives more reason to try to fast track this now.

Vote: Fick, Abrahams, Higa, Blauvelt, Wile, and Dezieck in favor. Nappo, Smith, Jackson against.  
Motion passed 6-3.

***Town: Affordable Housing Trust Fund***

Smith moved to recommend Town Meeting fund this project for the requested \$50,000. Wile seconded. All were in favor.

***Town: Lake Mansfield Improvements Engineering & Design***

Smith moved to recommend Town Meeting fund this project for the requested \$106,400. Wile seconded. All were in favor.

***Berkshire Natural Resources Council: Thomas & Palmer Preserve Public Access***

Smith moved to recommend Town Meeting fund this project for the requested \$41,230. Abrahams seconded.

In discussion Smith said this is a great idea but she is concerned this is more of a want than a need. She said state CPA trust funds will decline in the next several years because the big cities have approved CPA. She said this is a great project but she is concerned that we will not have funding for things like housing.

Jackson agreed. She said we might have to say no to some tonight so we can keep funds in our bank. She adores this project but will vote no.

Fick said we have not talked about how much to give out this year. Abrahams said we will have some funds left even if we award all of these tonight.

Blauvelt asked if the Committee could move to projects that they all agree on. He said we will come back to discussing projects we are not sure about.

Smith withdrew the motion and Abrahams withdrew the second.

***Town: Town Hall Roof Replacement***

Dezieck moved to recommend Town Meeting fund this project for the requested \$150,000. Nappo seconded. All were in favor.

***Great Barrington Land Conservancy: Riverfront Trail***

Jackson moved to recommend Town Meeting fund this project for the requested \$58,000. Wile seconded.

In discussion Smith said she would like to fund it at least partially.

Abrahams said we have more in our budget than we thought. We would have a cushion of over \$131,000 left over if we fund everything tonight.

Wile said this is open space and an important corridor. Fick said this adds an asset to the whole community and to downtown. Jackson said when you read the Master Plan it's clear we want trails like this to connect to village centers and open spaces. The health and economic benefits of the connection are huge. She said it's not a town project in name but really the Town is supporting this.

Hearing no other discussion, Blauvelt called for a vote. All were in favor.

***Berkshire Pulse: elevator / access improvements***

Dezieck moved to recommend Town Meeting fund this project for the requested \$30,000. Wile seconded.

Andy Reynolds from Berkshire Pulse said they have discussed the historic restriction with the Owner and the Owner is willing to enter into a restriction.

Nappo asked where else funding is coming from. Reynolds said they have \$80,000 from the Fitzpatrick grant, and that is a matching grant. We're applying for Cultural Facilities Funds. He said the total cost of \$175,000 is for everything including contingency.

Rembold said they are required to upgrade the elevator per code requirements.

Smith said they are not asking for the full amount. This is a good one. Reynolds said getting CPA will help us get the rest of the money.

Fick said they have to do this upgrade, and that changes my mind. Jackson said it's not just about them; it's the whole building that needs it in order to be useable. Wile said it's an important asset.

Hearing no other discussion, Blauvelt called for a vote. Eight were in favor and one (Abrahams) abstained.

***Berkshire Natural Resources Council: Thomas & Palmer Preserve Public Access***

Discussion returned to the BNRC application.

Abrahams moved to approve the requested amount. Smith seconded.

Eight were in favor, with one (Jackson) against.

***Great Barrington Historical Society: Wheeler House Museum Accessibility***

Dezieck moved to recommend funding the full amount of \$33,000. Jackson seconded.

There was a discussion about historic restrictions. Fick said we have funded the Society before and there are two concurrent restrictions on the property. She said for the \$60,000 grant to the Unitarians we required a 20 year restriction. So with this application the Historical Society will be over \$100,000 total, so we need maybe a 30 year restriction. She said it will be up to their Board of course. Nappo said that might make sense. But we don't want to discourage applications.

Rembold said there are other possible restrictions to ensure that the public benefit continues. A historic restriction is just one option.

Jackson said this is a good question. She said there is no mathematical formula to apply in a neat way to all projects. She said small organizations may or may not be able to accept these restrictions. She said we have to take this case by case.

Nappo said they have applied for several amounts so far and this is probably going to be it. Rembold said the Society says project is needed to be able to open as a real museum.

Fick asked about the kitchen work. Bob Krol of the Historical Society said it's not like we're putting in a new kitchen. He said in order to install the handicapped bathroom they need to move the cabinets and sink to another area, so they need to recreate what was there. They may later add a stove and fridge but that's not with CPA money. He said it is not a kitchen remodel.

Hearing no other discussion, Blauvelt called for a vote. Seven were in favor, one (Jackson) was against and one (Wile) abstained.

#### **Funding Conditions:**

Blauvelt said we will discuss conditions of funding including possible historic restrictions at the next committee meeting in January.

**Upcoming Meetings:** The Committee will meet in January to finalize the funding conditions. Nappo asked Rembold to give an update on all existing projects.

**Citizen Speak Time:** None

**Adjourn** 6:45 PM

Materials Presented/Distributed for this Meeting:

- Draft minutes of November 3 meeting
- Email from Chris Rembold to Committee dated 12/2/2016
- Step 2 applications

Respectfully submitted:

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