

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

Minutes of August 7, 2017

Fire Station, 37 State Road

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

Also present: Town Planner/CPA Administrator Chris Rembold

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

### **Administrative Items**

Smith moved to approve the minutes of July 11 with one typo. Dezieck seconded. All were in favor with Blauvelt abstaining.

Smith moved to approve payment of dues to the Community Preservation Coalition in the amount of \$1,750. Dezieck seconded. All were in favor.

### **CPA Plan Public Hearing**

Smith moved to open the public hearing, Dezieck seconded. All were in favor.

David Magadini read from prepared comments he filed with the Town Clerk. His concerns included that CPA funds should not be used for condominiums but for affordable rental housing. He said that while CPA allows funding for units for households up to 100 percent of area median income the true need is for households 80 percent or less of area median income. He said there is a large need for single occupancy apartments.

Malcolm Fick spoke, saying he disagreed with the proposal to recommend 30 percent of funding to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, particularly if the Trust were to act as a project funder on its own. He said that this would take control of CPA funds for individual projects away from Town Meeting voters.

Michelle Loubert echoed that concern and said it seems like it is a taking away from Town Meeting's power to approve projects. She said she is uncomfortable feeling that Town Meeting would sidestepped.

There were no further comments from the public.

Committee members responded to the comments. Abrahams said he reviewed the draft plan with the Selectboard. They had three general comments, none of which were voted on or reflect the board as a whole, but rather are concerns from certain members. He said one member had a concern that funding the Housing Trust was taking the approving authority away from Town Meeting. Other board members thought that the Housing Trust is the housing experts and better suited to make housing decisions, rather than the CPC.

Abrahams said there was also a concern from one member that town projects should be a priority; rather, the priority should be the best projects regardless of ownership.

Abrahams said finally there was a comment about whether Open Space funds could be set aside in a fund, for purchase of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions for preserving farmland. The Committee had a brief discussion about this and decided that there is enough in the Plan about preserving farmland, and that the APR process usually has time for a CPA application to be made.

Higa said he shared the draft plan with the Planning Board. They had general support for the plan, except for Mr. Fick's comments regarding the Housing Trust funding, which he mentioned here tonight.

Higa said there was also a discussion by board members of giving some CPA funds to brownfield properties to encourage cleanup and reuse. Smith and other members questioned whether that would be a CPA eligible expense. Rembold said if the project served one or more of the three CPA purposes, then remediation a site for that purpose could be eligible.

The Committee discussed the comments about the Housing Trust and Town Meeting. Martha Fick said giving the Housing Trust that much money each year for unspecified projects could leave the rest of the CPA fund short, unable to fund other projects. Smith said she likes the idea of funding the Trust but not setting a fixed percentage. Higa said that 30 percent is a goal, not a given, and that Town Meeting would have to approve the appropriation. He said Town Meeting is not giving up power because they still have to approve it. Higa said the Trust is answerable when they apply to the Committee and when they are in front of Town Meeting. There was general consensus to remove the specific statement from the Plan.

Smith moved, Dezieck seconded, to revise the statement as follows, deleting the struck-through portions:

~~Recommend to Town Meeting that a minimum of 30 percent of annual CPA revenues be granted to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust each year. In this way, the Trust can undertake affordable housing projects on its own, or act as a funder for other organizations seeking to meet local affordable housing needs.~~

All were in favor.

There was a discussion about giving Town projects priority for historic preservation. The Committee generally agreed with the draft plan. Smith moved, Dezieck seconded, to approve this as written. All were in favor.

There was a discussion about the income levels for housing project. Rembold said the draft Plan targets housing funds to those with 80% or less area median income. He said rental assistance is possible with CPA funds. He also said that CPA funding of condominiums is possible as long as they are affordable.

Hearing no further comments, the public hearing was closed. The Committee approved the draft plan, with the amendments made tonight.

**Citizen Speak Time:** None

**Next Meeting:** October 11 (after Step 1 applications are due)

**Adjourn** 6:55 PM

Materials Presented/Distributed for this Meeting:

- Draft minutes of July 11, 2017 meeting
- Testimony from David Magadini

Minutes prepared by: 