

Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Minutes of October 27, 2015
Great Barrington Fire Station

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM by Chair Karen W. Smith.

Members present: Ed Abrahams, Thomas Blauvelt, Jessica Dezieck, Martha Fick, Suzanne Fowle, William Nappo, Deborah Salem, and Karen W. Smith
Also present: Town Planner/CPA Administrator Chris Rembold
Members absent: Kathleen Jackson

Administrative Business

Several typos were corrected in the October 20 minutes. Dezieck moved to approve the minutes of October 20, 2015 as amended, Blauvelt seconded. All were in favor.

Review and Evaluation of FY17 Step 2 Applications for Historic Resources

1. Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire

Peter Bluhm and Bill Young were present for the applicant. They addressed the six questions the Committee raised at the last meeting, including providing resumes for the engineers they have retained. They have not selected contractors yet; they will not go out to bid until they have the funds. Regarding a proposed deed restriction, they have used sample language that calls for a 10 year restriction. Demolition or sale would trigger a recapture of the CPA funds. Smith asked the Committee if this was enough time. She thought it should be longer. Bluhm said their Board has approved this sample language and are willing to put it to the congregation. Of course they will consider anything the Committee thinks reasonable. He said they of course want to preserve it the structure forever. The Committee will decide terms and conditions if it decides to fund the project.

Nappo will check to see if there are federal regulations on this subject. Chris will check with the CPA Coalition.

Young pointed to the supplemental information provided tonight to the Committee. The matching funds analysis is on the last page. They have a 4-year plan based on capital pledges from congregation members. Smith said this is a 42% church, 58% CPA split for the project.

Bluhm said the cost has gone up since their initial projects earlier this year. They reason is they have discovered the need to address stormwater running into the basement. The north end of the building is more substandard than they thought. They need to address these issues for the structure. Curtain drains and waterproofing on the foundation is needed. Young said this is where the engineering firm has provided us important information. Bluhm said if bids come in higher than their estimates, they'll hold off on some items.

There was a question about what elements are structural and needed to preserve the building, and how they would deal with only partial CPA funding. Bluhm said of course they are seeking the full CPA amount. If they had to, they might not do the windows and doors. The basement they would take care of. Some things make sense to do in sequence, like when the foundation is open you take care of that at one time. Nappo said he agreed. Fowle asked the applicants to be sure that windows, doors and siding are not important to preserve the building.

Young said the church provides donations to community organizations. He said this money is not taken from the building money or from their savings. It is part of the monthly collections. There are separate pledges to the capital fund. Young said they provide community organizations with no rent or low rent space, and that the space is getting used a lot. He said The Festival of Women Writers is now booking dates in the winter.

Fowle asked what the siding work entailed. Bluhm said some shingles and clapboards are 100 years old. So far they are not finding rot behind them in the structural components, but they can never be sure. They are replacing the siding with the type of materials.

2. Great Barrington Historical Society

Debbie Oppermann was present for the applicant. There were no questions from the last meeting, except to ask how the applicant would cope with only partial funding. Oppermann said they remove and replace all the knob and tube. She said that must be done. They might have to cut back on the amount of new lighting and the types of lighting to be installed, which is not ideal since this is a museum and collections need to be lit for people to see.

Fick asked what would happen if the money was awarded the following year. Oppermann said other building projects hinge on getting the electricity done. While they are working in the walls they want to get things done in sequence. She said the electric is also a safety issue.

Smith said our CPA budget is not enough for everybody this year and we might need to scale back awards. Opperman said they would have to cope, but they put this project together as a discrete package that needs to be completed.

Oppermann gave an update on the wagon house project, awarded CPA funds last year. She said new foundation cribbing is installed and they have excavated for new foundations. They hope to pour the foundation soon.

3. Town Historical Commission

Paul Ivory and Malcolm Fick were present for the applicant. Ivory gave a brief overview. He said a survey will help the Town know what historic resources there are. This is part of the Master Plan. The budget is \$36,000 budget. Of that, \$15,000 is from MHC, \$6,000 in-kind, and the CPA request is \$15,000. They are applying for the MHC grant now. It is not committed yet. MHC requires a local match of their grants.

Ivory said this is a three-phase project. This budget is for the first phase. It would survey the first third of more than 460 sites in Town. Some are existing and need updated. We might add new sites to that total through new research. If this is funded, they will get one-third of the total work done. If it is funded at less than this amount, they can do less work. It can be done on a piece work basis. But it's too much to do all properties in one effort. MHC advised them on that.

Nappo said this was last done in 1985. Ivory said he thinks at the time it was done by local historian being paid by the county. Malcolm Fick said the main mission of the Historical Commission is to do inventories like this. The Commission had been dormant for years until recently when Ivory revived it.

Martha Fick asked if they needed this \$15,000 in order to get \$15,000 from MHC. Ivory said to get the MHC grant we need to get matching funds.

Smith asked if they have you asked for town financing for this. Ivory said no. CPA is the obvious source. We have not asked for this in the regular budget.

Martha Fick asked Ivory how this survey relates to recent events. Ivory said the survey is important. The Town needs to have fully documented properties to be used in response to a threatened property. And it is always useful to document the historic and cultural significance of any building. This is the basis for listing on national register, local district, and demolition delay bylaws.

Blauvelt asked which properties get surveyed. Ivory said both public and private properties. Blauvelt asked if it takes away ownership rights. Ivory said no, it's just a list.

Nappo asked if they had to take a cut, could they just research the new properties that have not been done before. Ivory said the amount we get from MHC depends on the match we had. He said less funding would prolong the project. He said buildings that are threatened need documentation.

4. St. James Place

Sally and Fred Harris were present for the applicant. They presented a revised budget, which eliminates the item for the electronic bell sounds. Fred Harris said that system is a faux bell system and is not a restoration component. The new CPA budget would be \$81,510.

Fred Harris said they need to get at least the first three items on the list done. And we need to get the finials done too. Sally Harris said they still have to raise funds also. It is not easy to suggest any cuts. She said this has been a great deal of work.

Fick asked if a bell will ring. Fred said yes an actual bell will ring. This will also hook up the bell chimes to the clock, to chime the time.

Fred said the wiring needed is for lights inside the tower. There is only temporary lighting inside there and it needs to be lit properly for future access and maintenance work. Sally said the wiring is a priority item as well.

Nappo asked if the clock hands and bezel are being restored or replaced. Fred said the hands might be saved but the bezel and inside mechanicals need to be replaced. They are original from 1857.

They gave an update of the existing project. They have not spent funds yet. They had some delays but they are poised to begin the roofing in next few weeks. They would stop for the winter and resume again in spring.

Preparation for Thursday's Meeting

Rembold confirmed the estimated \$800,000 is the total. It's not been reduced to account for last year's soft commitment to 100 Bridge St.

The Committee asked for an update on the open space at 100 Bridge.

Smith said members should rank the projects, and be prepared to discuss thumbs up or thumbs down, partial or full funding, for the next meeting.

Fowle said applicants asking for less money have put just as much effort into their applications as the larger projects. She might be more inclined to fully fund the smaller projects.

Rembold reminded the Committee they should take time for these decisions. It does not need to be settled on Thursday night.

Committee Member Reports: None

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 29

Citizen's Speak Time: None

Adjourn: Dezieck moved to adjourn, Blauvelt seconded, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Materials presented or distributed for this meeting:

- Draft minutes of October 15 meeting
- Step 2 applications from
- Supplemental materials from UUMSB, dated October 27, 2015
- Revised budget from St. James Place

Respectfully submitted:

