

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, June 1, 2017**

**6:30 pm – GREAT BARRINGTON TOWN HALL, 334 MAIN STREET**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bill Cooke, Chairman; Fred Clark Vice-Chairman; John Katz; Bruce Marzotto

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Cara Davis; Jonathan Hankin; Samantha Homeyer;

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jane Ralph, Exec. Dir. and June Wolf of Construct; Shep Evans, Administrator

**CALL TO ORDER**

Bill Cooke called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM

**MINUTES**

The Minutes of May 4, 2017 had previously been circulated. Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Katz, to approve the minutes as circulated. Unanimous approval.

Mr. Cooke started the discussion asking about people's reactions to the day-long "Housing the Berkshires" program held at Shakespeare & Co.

Mr. Clark felt it was time well spent, and that the success story of Williamstown was inspirational.

Mr. Cooke had some unanswered questions: If CPA dollars are used to buy property and additional cash is used from other sources, then wouldn't the Trust be subject to "30B"?

Also, with regard to Construct's operations, if they have a waiting list of 357 families, do all of these families want to be in Great Barrington? The answer from Ms. Wolf was affirmative, but with a caveat that the list gets updated periodically, some people find housing elsewhere, some move away, some drop out, and new people come on.

Mr. Clark addressed Ms. Ralph and Ms. Wolf saying that the Board was interested in knowing more about Construct, keeping in mind that the Board is interested in not duplicating what Construct or others are doing.

Ms. Ralph indicated that Construct has 55 units of permanent Housing; a few Congregate Housing units and some Transitional Housing, which involves lots of counseling and education. She said June Wolf has become expert in sourcing money to add into what Construct can do on its own. Different sources look for different qualifying standards in terms of % of median income. Some look to serve applicants at 60% of median income, while others look for 80%, or Market Rate housing.

Mr. Clark sees the Trust's function also as being an advocate for affordable housing, perhaps developing a comprehensive housing plan. Working with the CPC, the dollars allocated for affordable housing can be distributed without a town vote on individual project proposals.

Instead perhaps the Trust should seek a regular annual lump sum contribution. Mr. Katz would like to secure \$400,000 next year.

Mr. Cooke felt that if the Trust could get a lump sum like Mr. Katz suggested, then it could buy land to hold, and have a developer build it out. He would like to see a bylaw to enable the Town to convey property taken for taxes to the Trust.

Mr. Clark sees the Trust's affordable restrictions as being automatically perpetual. Once created as affordable housing, a unit would always be an affordable unit. Ms. Wolf acknowledged that perpetual affordability would facilitate demographic life cycle relocation: where oldsters eventually move out making room for younger families.

Mr. Clark suggested looking into mortgage buy-downs or rental subsidies. In such cases, \$200,000 might be spread or leveraged to stimulate 4, 5 or 6 families.

Ms. Wolf said there was a need to be able to spread the available money around. It is important to identify targets. For example, is one trying to keep people in their existing housing or trying to get new people into new or existing housing. Keep in mind also that when seeking outside grant money, there is a need to demonstrate local financial support as well.

Ms. Wolf reminded that growing affordable housing must increasingly be Smart Growth. Land acquisition needs to be Smart. The trend is toward an affordable site – close to public transportation, town water & sewer, etc., etc. We need to create affordable units. Supply is an issue. Anything that gets built or rehabbed will get used. If one includes market rate housing and 80% units in projects, financing will be made easier.

Monterey is using Community Development Block Grant money to buy into the equity of homes.

Ms. Ralph indicated that Construct is creating a Strategic Plan for itself. The plan will be partly based on the GB Masterplan and will be setting targets for two years ahead. Construct is willing to share its strategic plan including its targets with the Trust.

Mr. Cooke and Mr. Katz set a target for raising CPA money at \$400,000 for next year for the purpose of buying properties as they become available.

Mr. Cooke indicated that whether buying land or existing residences, the real estate should be on a bus route and should have ready access to sewer and water.

Mr. Cooke said that the Board needed to have a Declaration of Trust prepared and that the Board needed legal help to accomplish this.

**MOTION by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Marzotto, to have the Declaration of Trust produced by Town Council, and that the funds for this legal work were to come from the Support Services Account. Unanimous Approval.**

Mr. Cooke expressed his desire to create a draft bylaw with regard to the Town taking property to convey or give to the Trust for promotion of affordable housing. He will check with Town Council to see if this is doable.

Finally, Mr. Cooke expressed that he thought the Trust should be more interested in getting new young families into Town to stay – rather than making down-sizing affordable for old people. He mentioned also that there is a local developer who is interested in doing in-fill housing.

### **PUBLIC SPEAK TIME**

### **NEXT MEETING**

Next Meeting will be Thursday, July 6, 2017 at 6:30 PM at the Great Barrington Fire Station. Elton Ogdon of Berkshire Housing Development Corp. and Tim Geller of the CDCSB will attend. Mr. Cooke also expects the Board to talk about shaping a proposal to access CPA funds.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Katz, to adjourn. Without objection the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully,

Shepley Evans  
Administrator