

**GREAT BARRINGTON
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 18, 2022 @ 6:30 PM via ZOOM video conference**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Fred Clark, Bill Cooke, John Katz, Garfield Reed, Krysia Kurzyca and Ananda Timpane.

OTHERS: Erin O'Brien and Carolyn Valli from Habitat for Humanity and Shepley Evans.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM and read the Governor's Order of March 12, 2020. He announced that all votes during this meeting would be by rollcall.

Mr. Clark called for votes of approval for the minutes of December 1, 2021, February 1, 2022 and March 8, 2022. Approval by rollcall for all three: Clark, Cooke, Katz and Reed all "aye" with Kurzyca abstaining.

Mr. Clark introduced and welcomed a newly appointed Trustee, Ananda Timpane.

Mr. Clark called for an update on Habitat projects at 40 Grove Street and on North Plain Road.

Ms. Timpane inquired about the degree of community involvement in such projects.

Mr. Clark opined that designs are responsive to demand.

Ms. Valli indicated that Habitat has learned from other communities' experiences, and there was an extensive free-style discussion about the merits of the Habitat program.

Ms. Timpane inquired about which segments of the community were being served by Habitat and how Habitat was able to respond to current economic challenges.

At 40 Grove Street, **Ms. Valli** reported that the re-design of the inside of the house was moving along well with a new full bathroom being created on the first floor. Habitat is putting a big effort into developing a big summer volunteer schedule.

Mr. Clark urged the group to move on to updates for the Rental Assistance and Down Payment Assistance programs. He acknowledged that Construct administers the Rental Assistance program and that they have other sources of funding beyond what the Affordable Housing Trust has been able to provide. The Trust's Down Payment Assistance program has been loosened up and provides up to \$25,000 at 0% interest. In the current generally high-priced market, however, if you can afford to buy a house, in all likelihood you are too rich to qualify for what the Trust has to offer.

Mr. Clark summed up the Trust's current situation saying that the Board has requested, and the CPC has approved the Trust's application for \$200,000 for whatever program(s) the Board chooses to undertake in the coming year. The Board will wait for the vote of Town Meeting before making any firm decisions. At the present, Mr. Clark's spread sheet that summarizes the AHTF sources and uses of

funding since its inception indicates that there is \$38,000 available and unencumbered for current projects and programs.

Mr. Clark stated that, going forward, the Trust needs to find a couple of new programs or ideas to make a difference in our community. He imagined that some property owners might sell if they knew that the property could and would be kept permanently affordable. However, to do these kind of deals, the trust needs to find alternative sources of funding beyond the cpc. The question of the possibility of accessing ARPA money was raised.

Mr. Clark challenged all the Board to come up with something that will make a real difference in this community.

Mr. Cooke acknowledged that he has become aware of some local employers who are talking about buying houses for their employees. He asked whether, in this market, developers or investors would want to participate.

Mr. Clark did not feel developers or investors would want to get involved in producing or financing such housing.

Mr. Cooke concluded that, in the current situation, the Trust is totally dependent upon the CPC for funds to buy property.

There then ensued a wide ranging free-style discussion about the current housing climate and the difficulty in finding affordable housing anywhere in Great Barrington. Eventually....

Mr. Clark raised the question of establishing a fixed day and time each month for the Board to meet. Having wrestled with this question and after gathering input from the board, he had come to the conclusion that there were a very few realistic options. These were:

Either the 2nd or 4th Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM
Or the 2nd or 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM

Mr. Clark announced that the next meeting would be devoted to working on a Business Plan.

There being no Trustee, Citizen or member of the Press seeking to speak, and hearing no objection, Mr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shepley Evans
Admin. Support