

**GREAT BARRINGTON
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MINUTES
Wednesday, August 19, 2020, 6:30 PM via ZOOM video conference**

MEMBERS: Chmn. Bill Cooke, Fred Clark, John Katz, Larissa Yaple, Garfield Reed

OTHERS: Michelle Loubert, Eileen Mooney, Laura Dupont, Michelle Nourse,
(Shepley Evans, Admin. Support)

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Cooke called the meeting together at 6:32 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Continued, as Ms. Yaple & Mr. Reed had not received draft minutes.

Mr. Cooke introduced a draft Request for Proposals (RFP).

Mr. Clark requested that the group have an opportunity to talk about the RFP and just how complete a proposal had to be.

Mr. Cooke reminded that in order to get a Mass Works Grant, a project proposal must be “shovel ready” with the development planning and engineering all done.

Mr. Clark asked whether there was a deadline.

Mr. Cooke replied sometime in August +/-, noting that one may not be able to get into the grant process this year (2020).

Mr. Clark asked whether one could be 70 – 75% ready.

Mr. Cooke replied that, according to Town Planner, Chris Rembold, one must be “all ready to go”.

Mr. Clark acknowledged that he did not understand the sequence of events in the process.

Mr. Cooke replied that a developer must have everything ready to go before applying for Mass Works. He indicated that the purpose of an RFP is simply to find a developer. Even so, he felt that the timing may be too tight to get into this year’s grant round.

Ms. Yaple commented that she was happy with the first two pages of Mr. Cooke’s draft RFP. She asked whether the trust or its developer would still have access to Housatonic Water if the Town purchased the company.

Mr. Cooke said he saw no reason why not.

Mr. Katz sought confirmation that the project was for home ownership of all units.

Mr. Cooke replied in the affirmative noting that a home ownership focus sets the project apart from all of the home rental-based projects.

Ms. Yaple questioned whether there was a max number of units.

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Mr. Cooke replied that the Board had agreed not to have a cap, but to fit in with the neighborhood, in other words, not to be dense.

Mr. Clark noted that the Board should have a scoring system to evaluate proposals, and that the Board could rate proposals according to the degree to which they meet the guidelines and spirit of the RFP.

Mr. Reed noted the language saying “at least 14 units” and asked whether this implied more.

Mr. Cooke acknowledged that the board could cap the project at 20 units.

Mr. Reed questioned whether the Board could refuse proposals if they want to build more than 20.

Ms. Yapple asked for confirmation that the Board would reject proposals that specified 50 or 60 units.

All agreed that any such proposal would be rejected.

Mr. Clark noted that the Board had gotten input from the community and from developers and that the Board is “right in the sweet spot of 14 to 20” affordable units for all. He opined further that it should be a requirement that the units be affordable in perpetuity.

Mr. Cooke recommended that the language “must be affordable in perpetuity” be edited to read “shall be affordable”. All agreed.

Mr. Katz suggested that units should be “affordable up to a maximum of 100% of area median income”.

Mr. Clark agreed.

Ms. Mooney asked, if she moved in, and her income subsequently rose, would she be obligated to sell the house?

Mr. Cooke replied that she would not be obligated to sell, but that the contract should say that she can only sell at the affordable price level (100% of AMI).

Mr. Clark questioned whether the Board should limit the number of minimum bedrooms.

Mr. Cooke suggested maybe 2 or 3. Mr. Clark agreed.

Mr. Clark suggested that, with regard to “Site Plans” the Board adopt language in the RFP that “proposals need to be sensitive”, or “should be sensitive” to the neighborhood.

Mr. Cooke proposed even stronger language that proposals “must be sensitive”. Mr. Clark, Mr. Reed and Ms. Yapple all agreed.

Mr. Cooke assured the Board that the Trust’s attorney will review all submission requirements.

Ms. Yapple asked whether any visitors had thoughts for the Board.

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Ms. Mooney asked if she might have a copy of the RFP.

Ms. Loubert asked for a copy as well. She cautioned that the neighborhood had been anxious and that the issue of a cap on the number of units could overtake and turn into opposition.

Mr. Reed commented that the Board has always held to the idea of 14 to 20 units. He could not imagine the Board going beyond that limit and confirmed that there has never been serious consideration of doing so.

Ms. Yaple said she was more comfortable with a cap on units that could be accepted.

Mr. Cooke asked the Board whether there was a consensus for a 20-unit cap.

Mr. Clark opined that it was impractical to build-out large numbers of units. Nevertheless, he was wary of limiting with a cap, and proposed a limit of 24.

Mr. Reed wanted to stay with 20 units.

Ms. Yaple made a motion, seconded by Mr. Reed, to cap the RFP at 20 units.

Mr. Katz said that 20 units is what the Board had told the neighbors. **Roll call vote:** Ms. Yaple, aye; Mr. Clark, nay; Mr. Reed, aye; Mr. Cooke, aye; Mr. Katz, aye. **Approved 4 to 1.**

Mr. Clark said that the RFP needs to make clear that the developer should manage the infrastructure.

Mr. Cooke said that he would consult with Chris Rembold about the RFP, and the Board will next meet in September.

Mr. Clark said that one needs to figure out how the Town could accept the road and the infrastructure, and that it should be up to the developer to seek Town approval. He posed a question whether there should be a Town meeting on the subject.

Mr. Cook remarked that the neighborhood meeting subject is already in the RFP at #8 of evaluation criteria..

CITIZEN SPEAK / BOARD SPEAK

Ms. Loubert asked the status of the Rose Court Condo? Mr. Cooke replied that the seller has a buyer. She asked whether the Board was thinking about any special consideration for Veterans as a means of gaining support from the neighborhood.

Mr. Clark noted that the Board needs more members Mr. Cooke said he would ask around.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objections, Mr. Cooke adjourned the meeting at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Shepley Evans
(Admin. Support)