

**GREAT BARRINGTON  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Tuesday, March 23, 2021, 6:30 PM via ZOOM video conference**

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

**OTHERS:** June Wolfe and Jane Ralph of Construct, Carolyn Valli of Habitat for Humanity, Eileen Mooney, Beth Carlson, Chris Rembold the Assistant Town Manager / Director of Planning (Shepley Evans, Admin. Support)

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Cooke called the meeting together at 6:34 PM, read the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order and announced that all recorded Zoom meetings were available on CTSB.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Reed made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to accept the minutes of February 9, 2021 as circulated. **Unanimous approval** by roll-call vote.

**Mr. Cooke introduced Jane Ralph of Construct** for an update on the Rental Assist Program.

Mr. Clark noted that the need for rental assistance is a continuing issue.

Ms. Ralph reported that the Rental Assist Program has been a "Roller Coaster", working through the accumulating arears.

Ms. Wolfe reported that everyone involved, including all sources of funding, is working toward keeping folks housed. All have pledged to be unified in this effort.

Mr. Clark confirmed that the Board members are tremendously grateful for this unified effort to keep people in housing and to support landlords as well.

**Mr. Cooke introduced the next item:** The Board's acceptance of the transfer from the Town of the 40 Grove Street property.

**Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Reed, to accept the deed to 40 Grove Street. Unanimous approval** by roll-call vote.

**Mr. Clark asked Mr. Rembold to summarize** the proposed RFP for the Grove Street property.

**Mr. Rembold** indicated that, assuming a site visit by applicants on April 21<sup>st</sup>, the deadline for responses to the RFP would be May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The RFP says that the Trust can do with the property whatever zoning allows i.e.- single family or two family. Responders are encouraged to describe their approach. Any subsequent sale must be affordable and this restriction must be permanent for folks earning up to 100% of the area median income.

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**Mr. Clark** enquired whether, if the property were to be renovated as a 2-family, must both units be affordable in perpetuity?

**Mr. Rembold** replied that, yes, both units would be so restricted.

**Mr. Clark** asked who can respond to the RFP?

**Mr. Rembold's** answer was "anyone".

**Mr. Clark** inquired whether there were criteria for the Trustees to apply when evaluating proposals?

**Mr. Rembold** answered in the affirmative, saying that there was a section spelling out "affordability"; a section covering the applicant's experience producing housing; a section on the applicant's financial ability; and a presentation of purchase price and terms.

**Mr. Clark** inquired whether it was necessary for the Trustees to present a rationale for their choice among proposals.

**Mr. Rembold** replied that, if there were two or more respondents, a rationale would be Ok.

**Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Reed, to approve the RFP as proposed. Unanimous approval** by roll-call vote.

**Mr. Cooke** indicated his pleasure with the result saying that the RFP was "All set".

**Mr. Cooke** asked Mr. Clark to present the status of the North Plain Road project.

**Mr. Clark** began with a presentation of timing issues. He acknowledged that the Trust needs to submit an application for a MassWorks Grant. The Mass Works Grant deadline is in June. There is not enough time to be ready by June 2021. To meet the June 2022 deadline, the Trust will need full engineering documents within the coming 12 months. The Town will submit a letter of interest for a design grant.

**Mr. Clark** acknowledged that the Trust or its representative(s) need to engage with the North Plain Road neighborhood. The engineers will want to get busy in the late Summer/Fall of 2021. Therefore, the Trust needs to start engaging the neighborhood this coming Summer. One would like the town to file the letter of interest and to submit the Mass Works Grant application in June of 2022. Bottom line, it will take 2 years to get to "infrastructure ready to build" in 2022. The Town must be the applicant and be the implementer of the infrastructure contract. The Trust wants Habitat for Humanity to deal with the neighbors on their preferences for neighborhood lay-out.

**Mr. Clark** asked when the Trust might start seeing applications for houses?

**Ms. Valli** replied that applications could be out by the end of the month.

**Mr. Clark** said that one would like to take residual CPA\$ to pay the engineer to establish the preliminary location of the infrastructure. This will help Ms. Valli to be more informed in her dealings with neighbors.

**Ms. Wolfe** acknowledged that the town may want to seek design money for infrastructure.

**Mr. Rembold** agreed that there will be lots of moving pieces. The Town can give Habitat room to go ahead with their work with the neighbors, and will need to be careful to meet expectations.

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**Mr. Clark** said that what the Trust wants to do it cannot do by right.

**Mr. Rembold** said that the Trust will probably pursue a “friendly 40B” approach at the ZBA.

**Mr. Clark** inquired whether that meant that one would need engineering to be 80% done before going to the ZBA?

**Mr. Rembold** replied “Yes”.

**Mr. Clark** volunteered to take on the role of attending meetings and work sessions and reporting back to the Board of Trustees.

**Mr. Cooke** reported that the Trust has +/- \$6,250 unrestricted funding available for engineering.

**Mr. Clark** reminded that there is +/- \$14,000 funds left over from acquisition for engineering starting in August.

**Mr. Cooke** suggested and **Mr. Clark** to **made a motion, seconded by Mr. Reed, to hold on to the \$6,250 and go after the \$14,850 to be released for preliminary engineering for the North Plain Road site. Unanimous approval** by roll-call vote.

**Mr. Cooke introduced Beth Carlson** who had some thoughts about social media presence as part of the marketing mix for the Trust. **Mr. Clark** was interested in getting moderate social media presence. **Ms. Carlson** suggested Instagram & Facebook every other week. Plus a brief film on the Trust’s work. She offered to show a sample 1 minute film of “faces” pitching Construct.

**Mr. Clark** said the Trust wants clients rather than donors right now, and he asked who generates the content?

**Ms. Carlson** said that she could gather the words and generate drafts, then the Trust could refine and she would distribute.

**Mr. Clark** asked whether there would be enough material to maintain freshness.

**Ms. Carlson** replied that people see some of this material only off and on – not every day – and that it is easy not to be boring.

**Carolyn Valli** said Beth crafts what we need. Habitat just tells her what’s happening. She creates it.

**Mr. Reed** asked where these messages would get sent to. He wanted to message people who are found at places like the laundromat.

**Ms. Carlson** said that the South County Instagram community was very active.

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**Mr. Cooke** noted that the Trust has a down-payment assistance fund and can use those monies to promote the Trust's program(s).

**Ms. Carlson** said that the Shopper's Guide is best for classified ads, not for display advertising. It is inexpensive and has many local classified ad readers.

**Mr. Clark** recommended that the Trust do this.

**Mr. Reed** expressed his concerns saying he needed more information so he could know what people will see.

**Mr. Clark** replied "Instagram and Facebook".

**Mr. Reed** wants to see what the people will actually see.

**Mr. Cooke** summarized that the Board would discuss among themselves and get back at the next meeting.

**Ms. Carlson** left for another engagement.

**Mr. Clark** wanted to get input from Larissa Yapple. He agreed that the Trust does need social media presence, and that the Board will try to get information for Mr. Reed. **He made a motion, seconded by Mr. Reed, that Mr. Cooke place promotional material in the Shopper's Guide on the Down-Payment Assistance program. Unanimous approval by roll-call vote.**

**Mr. Cooke** made a suggestion that Mr. Clark be a co-signer for the Trust.

**Motion by Mr. Reed, seconded by Mr. Katz, that Mr. Clark be a signer for the Trust. Unanimous approval by roll-call vote.**

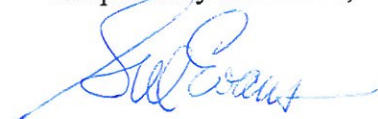
**Trustee speak** – none.

**Citizen speak** – none.

**Media speak** – none.

**Hearing no objections, Mr. Cooke adjourned the Meeting at 8:04 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,



Shepley Evans  
Administrative Support