

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

**Thursday, July 21, 2022, 6:30 PM
Remote virtual meeting by ZOOM.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Fred Clark (Chairman), Bill Cooke, John Katz, Ananda Timpane and Garfield Reed.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Krysia Kurzyca.

OTHERS PRESENT: Shep Evans, Eileen Mooney, Amy Turnbull, Kevin Polk, Joseph Method, Jane Ralph and Ed Abrahams

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM and read the Governor Baker's Orders of March 12, 2020 and February 12, 2022. He then introduced Amy Turnbull of the American Tiny House Association who, with Kevin Polk, is working on a proposal to do a demonstration project in Great Barrington.

Ms. Turnbull noted that the opportunity to craft an ordinance with regards to the establishment of movable Tiny Houses had not yet been taken up. They are hoping to develop a source of funding for one already identified "host" property owner and "guest" Tiny House occupant to develop a "pad" for a Tiny House and an adjacent "pedestal" to provide utility "hook-ups". They are looking to present the specifics of their proposal shortly.

Ms. Timpane inquired what the initial "ask" from the Affordable Housing Trust might be.

Ms. Turnbull replied that a community wide survey to establish the availability of host property owners and occupants might run in the range of \$50,000 while the initial cost to get one unit started might be \$12,000.

Mr. Polk replied that, based on their experience in California, the project really needs \$50,000 up front.

Mr. Cook cautioned that the Trust cannot fund projects or initiatives where the recipient of the Funding earns over 100% of the Annual Median Income (AMI).

Mr. Clark noted that the Trust needs to figure out how to maintain affordability, and he requested more information in depth.

Ms. Timpane wanted to see more details.

Mr. Reed asked where the land would come from.

Ms. Turnbull responded that the land would come from existing property owners who wanted to provide space for a Tiny House in their back yard.

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Mr. Clark opined that the Trust needs to understand the best way to implement the concept.

Mr. Polk recited an example from Santa Rosa, California.

Mr. Clark thanked Ms. Turnbull and Mr. Polk and indicated that the Trustees look forward to receiving more information.

He then introduced Jane Ralph, the Executive Director of Construct, the Trust's partner in its Rental Assistance program, who joined the meeting to discuss the beginning of a proposal to employ the Windflower Inn property on Egremont Road for employee housing.

Ms. Ralph reported that the Town had been awarded \$660,000 in Federal ARPA money to assist with recovery from the economic impact of the Covid19 pandemic. The Town has offered to provide funds to cover the down payment for Construct's purchase of the Windflower Inn on Egremont Road across from the former Egremont Golf Course. The main building could provide 14 occupancy ready rooms with private baths and two other residences on the property could house several more residents and/or one family house and a space for training/educational programs. Occupants could rent the residential spaces for rates that are affordable on local service industry wages.

Mr. Reed asked what would happen if an employed tenant got fired? Can this housing project be established without employers being part of the ownership of the project?

Ms. Ralph replied that Construct was looking into ideas like that.

Ms. Timpane said that she wanted more specifics. At the present time she only has a copy of Mr. Clark's letter of interest. *Mr. Clark forwarded the Windflower Inn proposal.*

Ms. Ralph said that Construct's hands were presently quite full figuring out the ownership, financing and ongoing supervision of such an operation. She expressed an interest in providing the Trust with a model of how the workforce housing project might operate and encouraging the AHTF to act as a compliance authority for the project.

Mr. Clark inquired about support from the business community?

Ms. Ralph replied that Construct was in conversation with larger scale business community members. She acknowledged that smaller employers are less able to take on such complex responsibilities.

Mr. Clark acknowledged that Construct has experience with mixed housing projects and operations.

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Ms. Ralph Suggested that the Trust could be a monitor of how rentals are going, keeping track of occupancy levels, tenant/landlord issues that arise and operating policies and procedures that evolve going forward. She acknowledged that there was extra space at the Windflower, like a full-sized commercial kitchen that could be used to educate food service employees. Her view was that Construct would serve as the over-all property manager.

Mr. Katz asked how many more people Construct would need to run the project?

Ms. Ralph agreed that Construct would need some more team members, and added that other properties are coming on the market all the time.

Ms. Timpane noted that the Trust and Construct have shared objectives of projects proposed to the CDC and the CPA, and she asked whether Ms. Ralph thought the two organizations should collaborate?

Ms. Ralph replied yes, absolutely!

Mr. Clark echoed that: “we should”.

Mr. Katz asked how much capital Construct needs?

Ms. Ralph responded that Construct’s goal is to raise \$400,000 before closing on the Windflower property.

Ms. Timpane volunteered to work with others to max out an application for funding.

Mr. Clark thanked Ms. Ralph saying how very much the Board appreciates Construct and her excellent leadership.

Mr. Clark reviewed a few AHTF business matters: He understood that Ms. Kurzyca could not attend today’s meeting. Mr. Slonaker has expressed appreciation for the opportunity to join the Board but chose not to be reappointed to another term. Mr. Method has expressed a desire to make more of a difference in the availability of affordable housing. Mr. Clark Proposed that the Trust recommend to the Selectboard that Mr. Method be appointed to the vacant seat.

Mr. Clark noted that the Minutes of the May and June 2022 had been circulated to the members and he called for a motion to approve them. Mr. Katz moved, and Mr. Cooke seconded the motion, to approve the May and June minutes as circulated. The minutes were unanimously approved by roll-call vote.

Mr. Clark reported that the first community meeting for the North Plain Road project will be held on August 11, 2022 at 6:30 PM.

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Ms. Timpane asked whether there was any opportunity to widen the audience for that Community meeting.

Mr. Clark suggested that the Board encourage Habitat for Humanity to open up a wider community meeting in the Fall. He suggested that the synergy of Habitat's involvement in both 40 Grove Street and North Plain Road could facilitate a widening of community awareness, and participation.

Mr. Clark remembered that at the last couple of meetings, members expressed an interest in going off and bringing back to the Board some new ideas.

Ms. Timpane acknowledged her interest in working with Mr. Cooke to create a program to subsidize homeowners that want to put an ADU in their back yard.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Cooke and Ms. Timpane to look into whether the Trust might be able to marry the Tiny House Association's effort with their ADU effort.

Mr. Cooke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Katz, that Mr. Clark draft a letter asking the Selectboard to allocate anticipated short-term-rental room tax revenue to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Clark moved on to the subject of the next meeting, and he announced that it will be on the third Tuesday, August 16th, 2022 at 6:30 PM on ZOOM.

Adjournment: Hearing no objection, **Mr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Shepley Evans
Administrative Support