

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

**Tuesday, August 16, 2022, 6:30 PM
Remote virtual meeting by ZOOM.**

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Rembold, Shep Evans, Eileen Mooney, Amy Turnbull & Kevin Polk of the American Tiny House Association, Joseph Method, Carolyn Valli of Habitat for Humanity, and Aileen Mooney.

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM and Mr. Rembold read Governor Baker's Orders of March 12, 2020 and February 12, 2022.

Mr. Clark introduced Amy Turnbull of the American Tiny House Association (ATHA) who, with Kevin Polk, is working on a proposal to do a Tiny House demonstration project in Great Barrington and has assisted the Town in establishing zoning to accommodate Tiny Houses.

Ms. Turnbull expressed an interest in qualifying the ATHA project to be a recipient of ARPA money.

Ms. Timpane & Mr. Clark responded that AHTF has no ARPA money to provide.

Ms. Turnbull reminded that the ATHA proposal only wants to facilitate or create sites to be occupied by existing tiny houses.

Mr. Clark expressed an interest in finding a way to meet the rules for the use of ARPA money.

Ms. Timpane suggested that the money might go to the property owner to establish the "hook-up" site.

Mr. Clark wanted to see if there could be a way for the ARPA money could go to the Tiny House owner as a grant.

Mr. Polk added that it is the experience of the ATHA in California that there are various costs of implementation that may not be immediately apparent. For example, Tiny Houses often need certification of their compliance with various codes. Also, creating hook-ups can be a messy business requiring excavation, and often there are landscaping expenses.

Ms. Kurzyca asked why the tiny house owner must have the house before the hook-up site is created?

MINUTES of 8-16-2022

Page 2

Ms. Turnbull responded that it may only be necessary for the prospective Tiny House owner to demonstrate the ability to buy or build it.

Ms. Timpane summarized that this pilot project accommodates Tiny House owners looking for a site to install their small home.

Mr. Clark felt that the AHTF Board needs to show people the pathway.

Ms. Turnbull explained that the ATHA will be doing survey work in the community to identify candidates with no more than median income. For a demonstration project, she wanted the first site to be easy – almost “ready to go”. Thereafter, sites and candidates can be engaged on a “first come, first served” basis. She stressed that one must be careful to avoid nepotism in candidate and site selection, and clearly demonstrate a policy of equitable access to opportunities and funding.

Mr. Clark acknowledged that the Board needs to set policy guidelines.

Ms. Timpane expressed a need to think through the proposed project and develop answers to anticipated questions.

Mr. Clark summarized that the Board needs to sit with Ms. Turnbull and Mr. Polk and thrash out details, issues, what can and can’t be done. He opined that the ATHA proposal is an exciting idea and that the Board needs to work out what it can do. For example, he noted that the Board could issue a letter recommending that the Town consider applying ARPA funding to such a project. He thanked Ms. Turnbull and Mr. Polk and noted that Mr. Rembold would meet with Ms. Turnbull on the following day.

Mr. Clark opened consideration of the **Minutes of the July 21st meeting**. He requested the following changes: Page 1: strike Robert Slonaker; Page 2: add “Mr. Clark forwarded Windflower information.”

Mr. Katz moved to approve the minutes as corrected; **second by Mr. Cooke**.
By roll-call vote, **unanimous approval**.

Ms. Valli reported on an informational meeting by Habitat on the North Plain Road project. Both the Town and the neighbors were well represented. Concerns and/or questions related to the number of houses to be built, the buffer area around the outside of the residential sites, and the traffic impacts of the project. She thinks the next meeting should have more potential buyers and should be held in a larger venue.

Mr. Clark, moving on, said that he will produce a letter seeking short term rental surcharge dollars from the Town and he will be looking into other sources of revenue.

MINUTES of 8-16-2022

Page 3

Mr. Clark opened a discussion of the Fall 2022 CPC grant proposal, reviewing that, last year, the Trust sought and was awarded \$200,000. To date, none of these funds have been spent. He noted that \$200,000 doesn't go very far for housing. He noted that a couple of CPC members prefer "shovel ready projects", but that AHTF is supporting "programs".

Mr. Cooke suggested that maybe AHTF should add a program to support a property owner to build an ADU.

Mr. Rembold reminded that the Habitat project off North Plain Road may produce several or many folks who need support.

Ms. Timpane noted that in the current fast paced real estate market, the down payment assistance program needs to work fast in order to match the pace purchase offers and negotiations.

Mr. Clark reminded that the Trust has established \$200,000 as a threshold annual ask.

Ms. Timpane opined that AHTF needs a draft proposal to discuss in September.

Mr. Clark acknowledged that AHTF has an affordable housing assist mandate, but that the hot real estate market is running away from the concern for affordable housing.

Ms. Timpane suggested that the AHTF include support for new ADUs and/or Tiny Houses.

Ms. Mooney asked what is the difference between Co-Housing and Condominium living.

Mr. Clark replied that in co-housing everyone owns everything, i.e. – pooled resources held in common.

Ms. Timpane & Mr. Cooke expressed their desire to work on ADUs so that the AHTF can be a vehicle to motivate property owners to develop their own ADUs. The concept would be similar to a down payment where the home owner seeks a grant or loan to build an ADU. The AHTF can maybe provide the incentive for an owner to put an affordable apartment over a garage. They suggested that AHTF might seek deferment of tax increases as a way to motivate affordable ADUs.

Mr. Rembold responded that tax deferral may require legislation, and the AHTF should do the homework on the idea.

Mr. Reed suggested that a survey could be done to determine what sort of incentive(s) would motivate property owners to create ADUs.

MINUTES of 8-16-2022

Page 4

Mr. Clark summarized several assignments for the Board: Mr. Cooke & Ms. Timpane to work on an ADU proposal; Mr. Clark to write a letter advocating for short term rental surcharge money to come to the AHTF; Mr. Method to choose where he would like to help out and work with Mr. Cooke on the AHTF Web Site; Mr. Katz to seek sources of funding and talk with the Town Assessor about available tax related incentives.

Mr. Clark announced that the **next AHTF Board meeting** would be on September 20, 2022 at 6:30 PM. He is considering setting a regular monthly meeting to be on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM, and he hopes to get this set monthly meeting put onto the Town Calendar.

Citizen Speak, Board Speak, and Media Speak Time: None.

Mr. Clark, hearing no objection, adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shepley Evans
Administrative Support