

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

**Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 6:30 PM  
Remote virtual meeting by ZOOM.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fred Clark (Chmn.), Bill Cooke, Joseph Method and Ananda Timpane

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Garfield Reed

**OTHERS:** Amy Turnbull of the American Tiny House Association and Deborah Herman, a local resident.

**Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM** and read Governor Baker's and Governor Healy's Orders regarding public access to public meetings. He announced that Mr. Reed was on vacation and that there was one other vacancy on the Board, notice of which will be included in the Town Manager's upcoming list of open positions.

**Mr. Clark then noted** that he had circulated draft minutes for the March 12<sup>th</sup> and June 20<sup>th</sup> meetings and called for any comments, corrections or motions to accept.

**Mr. Cooke made a motion**, which was seconded by Mr. Method, to accept the March 12<sup>th</sup> minutes as circulated, and the motion was unanimously **approved by roll-call vote**.

Following a clarification that, in the June 20<sup>th</sup> draft minutes, the North Plain Road project was wrongly referred to as "Windrush", **Mr Cooke made a motion**, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve the minutes of June 20<sup>th</sup> as circulated and corrected, and the motion was approved by a roll-call vote of three in favor with one abstention.

**Mr. Clark** reported on the Habitat for Humanity projects saying that he hoped to have more current information on the Grove Street house for the August meeting. He reported that the infrastructure design work for the North Plain Road project has essentially been completed, and upon completion of a few legal details, it is hoped that the project can be put out for bids in August.

**Mr. Clark** noted that, while the ADU Incentive Program may not be ready for a final vote of the Board at this meeting, the Subcommittee has made significant progress on their proposal, and he turned the meeting over to Ms. Timpane and the ADU Subcommittee.

**Ms. Timpane** prepared to share her screen and explained that she would put up the slides of the Subcommittee's presentation and would explain the Proposal as she talked through the slides.

**.(NOTE: See copies of the Power Point presentation slides attached to these minutes below.)**

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**Mr. Clark** suggested that the chair would take comments on the proposal first from the Board and then open the floor to attendees one-at-a-time for +/- 5 minutes.

**Mr. Cooke** opined that he liked the proposal and the presentation. **Mr. Method** agreed.

**Mr. Clark** had a concern about the next-to-last text on Slide #7 dealing with sale of the subject property. He felt that it might not be practical or reasonable to expect a new owner to maintain the lien for 10 or 20 years.

**Ms. Timpane** suggested that this might be a situation that can be best negotiated in the course of making the sale agreement on a case by case basis.

**Mr. Clark** also cautioned that over time, rental units will accumulate wear and tear, and a new owner will feel the need to upgrade or repair the depreciated premises. He also questioned whether there should be some limit on the size of the loan to the original buyer.

**Ms. Timpane** suggested that it may be important to retain some flexibility, and that one could let the question of the size of the loan be decided through the buyer selection process.

**Mr. Clark** noted that the term “ADU” covers a wide range of dwelling types, sites and buildings.

**Ms. Timpane** reminded that an important objective is to help support individuals who have difficulty affording to live in Great Barrington.

**Mr. Clark** added that the Trust’s objective is to leverage limited available money, and he called for others attending the meeting to come forward with any comments or questions.

**Ms. Turnbull** introduced herself as a representative of the American Tiny House Association and expressed her desire to make it clear that “Tiny Houses” are ADUs and she advocated consideration of making small \$20 - \$25,000 grants to produce Tiny Houses in order to increase the number of such ADUs in Great Barrington. She opined that if several Tiny ADUs were stimulated, other financial sources might want to chip in. In her view, the impact of five or more movable tiny ADUs vs. one more expensive unit could be seen as a greater community benefit.

**Mr. Clark** asked whether Ms. Turnbull thought +/- \$20 to \$25,000 grants would be a stimulus?

**Ms. Turnbull** responded that the right number might be +/- \$30,000 and that in-town existing houses may be the best candidates for ADU-on-wheels sites.

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**Mr. Method** opined that, when setting up this pilot project, it would be good to get cost reductions from other sources such as Town permitting costs and hook-up fees.

**Mr. Cooke** suggested that if it was not necessary to pay such heavy taxes on ADUs the lower tax rate could also be an important incentive.

**Mr. Clark** noted that more clarity is needed regarding the affordable rent, which is generally limited to 30% of the qualified income.

**Ms. Timpane** reminded that qualification is calculated at the time of signing the initial lease but not recalculated each subsequent year. After the initial qualification the only check-up is to confirm annually that the tenant is the same person who signed the lease.

**Ms. Turnbull** volunteered that HUD publishes standardized Fair Market Rents annually.

**Ms. Herman** introduced herself as a local resident who had been interested in the Tiny House concept. She had expected ADUs to be just more affordable units. For her, she said the cost to create an ADU is probably “off-putting”, and a commitment for 10-20 years is “scary”

**Mr. Clark** questioned whether the Board wanted to continue the discussion in August or put it off until later in the fall. He noted the “CPA Season” is coming on soon and the Board needs to start thinking about budgeting. He reported that the CDC wants to meet with the Board and there is talk of the possibility of developing four income restricted units on Mahaiwe Street.

**Ms. Timpane** expressed her interest in continuing the discussion of the ADU Pilot Project into August. She intends to add additional sources of information and various links to the ADU Proposal, and she believes that the Sub-committee will be ready to hand off their proposal to the full Board for a vote. She suggested a next meeting on Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 via Zoom.

**Looking ahead, under new business, Mr. Clark** wishes to discuss dollars to be committed in support of the ADU Proposal. He also wants to update and give a push to the Down-Payment Assistance program, and he wants to illustrate the viability of an ADU Pilot either with a well-reasoned feasibility document or via a case history.

**Trustee Speak:** None

**Public Speak:** None

**Adjournment:** Hearing no objection, Mr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shepley Evans, Admin. Support