

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 6:30 PM
Remote virtual meeting by ZOOM.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Fred Clark (Chair), John Katz, Joseph Method, Bill Cooke, and Garfield Reed

OTHERS PRESENT: Carol Bosco Bauman of the CDC

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM, read Governor Baker's and Governor Healy's Orders regarding public access to public meetings and recited the roll of members present.

Mr. Clark previewed several items on the Agenda to cover: the North Plain Rd. project which is in the special permit process; mention of the AHTF in the Town manager's Budget; a CDC request/proposal to be presented by Ms. Bauman; and an ADU workshop sub-committee report.

Mr. Clark reported that after meeting with the Planning Board and securing their endorsement, the Trust's affiliate in this project, Habitat for Humanity, submitted the North Plain Rd. project to the Selectboard as a 30-unit housing development, which was not received favorably. The Select Board recommended that the project be resubmitted as a 20-residence development. Mr. Method read into the record a letter to the Berkshire Edge expressing an opinion about the conflict between market needs for more affordable higher density housing and existing resident's preferences for less density.

Mr. Clark called for a motion to endorse the revised plan showing 20 houses in the development. Mr. Cooke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Reed, to endorse the revised plan showing 20 houses.

Mr. Clark asked if there were any members of the public who wished to comment on the motion? He recognized Mr. James Bailey who urged the Board to try not to accommodate one group of residents at the expense of others.

Mr. Clark asked for a roll-call vote on Mr. Cooke's motion: Cooke-yes; Katz-yes; Reed-yes; Method-no Clark-yes; The motion carried 4 to 1.

Mr Clark introduced Carol Bosco Bauman, Executive Director of the CDCSB. AHTF had previously granted CDC a \$100,000 grant toward their affordable residence development of the Marble Block in return for affordable housing unit on the upper floors accompanied by affordability deed restrictions. Ms. Bauman reported that the Marble Block purchase did not go through, and that CDC is looking at another downtown building which might replace their

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affordability and, with funding from other sources, several other units would be offered at 65% of AMI.

Mr. Cooke asked whether the deed restrictions were to be permanent?

Ms. Bauman responded that if CDC were to sell the building, they would expect to return the grant money to AHTF. There are six residential units in the building and three would be established as affordable work-force housing.

Mr. Clark called for one vote to rescind the prior grant for the Marble Block and one for a grant for the new proposal.

Mr. Cook moved, and Mr. Katz seconded to rescind the \$100,000 grant for the Marble Block. Roll-call vote: Cooke-yes; Katz-yes; Reed-yes; Method-yes; Clark-yes; Unanimous.

Motion by Mr. Cook, seconded by Mr. Clark, to award a grant of \$100,000 to the CDCSB to be used to purchase a building and develop an affordable residential project on Main Street in Great Barrington. Roll-call vote: Cooke-yes; Katz-yes; Reed-yes; Method-no; Clark-yes; Approved by 4 to 1.

Mr. Clark reported that it has been determined that any time more than one member was working as a sub-group of the Board, the meeting must be posted. A group working on an ADU pilot program proposal was posted for the week of March 13, 2023. Attendees were Ananda Timpane, Joe Method, Bill Cooke, Jeremy Higa, and Amy Turnbull. The group is working on new ideas and clarifying methods and procedures to facilitate the development of ADUs. The next meeting will be coordinated around Chris Rembold's schedule.

Mr. Clark reported that he met with representatives of other towns' affordable housing representatives from Lenox, Stockbridge, Pittsfield, and Williamstown. Stockbridge has considerable interest as their housing stock is 63% second homes.

Trustee Speak Time: Mr. Method expressed an interest in "crowd funding" the purchase of abandoned buildings.

Citizen Speak Time: None

Media Speak Time: None

Next meeting will be April

Adjournment: Without objection Mr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 7:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Shepley Evans, Admin. Support



Project/ Grant Request

This form is to be used to request funds from the Great Barrington Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Name/ Organization: Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire
Address: 40 Railroad St, Suite 8, Great Barrington, MA 01230
Contact Person: Carol Bosco Baumann
Email: carol@cdcsb.org
Phone: 413.528.7788

Title of request: Sumner Block acquisition
Address of Project: 306-310 Main St, Great Barrington, MA 01230
Dollar amount requested: \$100,000
When are the funds needed: April 7, 2023 (closing date is 4/14/23)

Describe briefly the request:

The historic Sumner Block, 308 (aka 306-310) Main Street in Great Barrington, houses six rental units and one commercial unit that was once two spaces (and could easily be converted back into two spaces). The acquisition of this mixed-use development is CDCSB's latest effort to directly mitigate impacts of the prolonged economic fallout of the pandemic and luxury rental development on the local real estate market, including a spike in home prices, frequent bidding wars and all-cash purchases, and impossibly high rent burdens for many community households.

The CDCSB's goal is to maintain affordability and prevent displacement for the residential tenants. Preserving aging housing stock and keeping storefronts with character and personality on our Main Street is important. By keeping downtown rentals economically diverse, we can slow the socioeconomic homogenization of the neighborhood. We are requesting financial support from the Trust to help fund the downpayment, therefore acquisition of the property. Lower debt payments will help with cash flow and support any immediate and future renovation needs.

Affordable housing units, if applicable:

The Trust's fund will help acquire a property that provides homes for local workers and community members—ten people—and ensures that it will do so for years to come. Some of the current residential tenants pay rents that are comparable to amounts charged at our affordable housing apartment complexes. The six residential units are considered to be Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) and/or workforce housing. NOAH is the term for existing multifamily rental properties that are affordable without public subsidy. Nationwide, NOAH constitutes the largest supply of affordable units, and it's also the most at-risk form of housing we have as more and more of our residents are becoming rent-burdened. Workforce housing typically houses folks who earn 60-120% of AMI, while affordable housing houses community members who earn less than 60% of AMI, and more typically around 30% of AMI. Availability of in-town workforce housing has rapidly shrunk to almost zero units as of this writing, and each unit we can save helps keep local workers in town.

Number and type of deed restricted units:

If the GBAFT is able to invest \$100,000 into this property, one one-bedroom unit will be restricted to 100% AMI in accordance with CPA restrictions and in alignment with "workforce housing" limits. Two one-bedroom units will be restricted to 65% of AMI in accordance with ARPA rules.

Income Qualification % of AMI:

If the GBAFT is able to invest \$100,000 into this property, one unit will be restricted to 100% AMI in accordance with CPA restrictions and in alignment with "workforce housing" limits. Two units will be restricted to 65% of AMI in accordance with ARPA rules.

How will this request promote affordable housing?

This is the CDCSB's first acquisition of an existing building; up until now we've built new affordable housing developments. In fact, the CDCSB, with co-developer Way Finders, is in the process of leasing up 49 clean, safe, new townhouse-style affordable housing units in Great Barrington to tenants in the next few months—these units are affordable housing, with income requirements typically around 30% of AMI.

While the CDCSB will continue to build larger affordable housing developments, more than 60% of the housing stock in western Massachusetts was built before the 1970s - so this project is about preserving existing housing stock at rates that are affordable. The request will help retain homes for those who earn too much to qualify for our typical affordable housing units, but not enough to pay market rates—the "missing middle" of our workforce.

Furthermore, it is a challenge to find large swaths of land in proximity to existing neighborhoods that can be developed for affordable housing. We also want to preserve open space and practice Smart Growth principles, which concentrate development in existing neighborhoods where there is public transportation, retail and services. It takes a lot of time and money to build new affordable housing; we must fight to preserve what's left.

Thank you for your time and consideration!