

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)**

MINUTES

Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Remote virtual meeting by ZOOM.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Fred Clark, Bill Cooke, Joe Method, Krystyna Kurzyca, Garfield Reed

MEMBERS Not PRESENT: Ananda Timpane.

OTHERS PRESENT: Eileen Mooney.

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:31 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 called for approval of meeting minutes of January 16 and February 20 as circulated.

Mr. Cooke made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kurzyca, to approve both sets of minutes as circulated. By roll-call the motion was approved by a vote of 4-1 with one abstention.

Mr. Clark reported that the Planning Board has approved the Special Permit for the North Plain Road subdivision project with several conditions including planting native trees & shrubs, orienting the houses for good solar exposures, increasing the width and planting of the vegetated buffer around the edges of the project, and fine tuning the slope of the roadway to drain toward planned storm drains. The project engineers are finishing up the construction plans and bid documents.

Mr. Clark recently attended a Mass Housing Partnership listening session.

Mr. Cooke's vision for a Cottage House development project seems to have attracted some interest, though many details are still in the early stages of definition. The next step will be to flesh out a preliminary project budget.

Mr. Reed reported that the Joint Selectboard & Planning Board Housing subcommittee has assembled an impressive list of ideas and opportunities that need to be explored. He agreed to share a summary list of these with the AHTF Board at a future meeting.

Mr. Clark advised that Ms. Timpane was preparing a financial report summarizing the Board's project and program history since its inception. The objective is to illustrate the varied uses and constructive impacts of affordable housing funding to date.

Mr. Cooke acknowledged that the ADU pilot project is nearing its roll-out. The web site page has just been posted; print advertising graphics have been readied for publication; the initial

March 19, 2024

Page 2

budget for the project has been established and approved by the Board, and Town Council will soon be giving project plans and paperwork a careful final review.

Mr. Method introduced the subject of possible re-examination of zoning considerations for mobile homes in the search for affordable housing solutions. He read a draft letter suggesting that the Planning Board might look into the rationale for limitations on the use of “Mobile Homes” in light of the increasing popularity of “Tiny Homes”. Mr. Method made a motion, seconded by Mr. Reed, to send such a letter. Mr. Clark was less enthusiastic about directing the Planning Board to look into the subject. Mr. Clark recognized Ms. Mooney, who asked whether it might be possible to get a clear idea of the difference between an ADU (that might arrive on wheels) and a Mobile Home? Mr. Method re-made his motion, seconded by Mr. Cooke, to send the letter to the Planning Board. By roll-call vote the motion was approved 4 to 1 with Mr. Clark voting against.

Mr. Clark introduced the subject of finding alternate sources of funding, considering the lack of support presently at the CPC. He reported that a letter of interest has been submitted seeking a state grant. Governor Healy is advocating for funding for affordable housing and has included it in the current Housing Bill. However, funding for affordable housing will require a Bond issue to support such a program, and the legislature is struggling with the idea.

The Town has looked at various alternative sources locally, such as the new Air B & B fees.

Mr. Clark acknowledged the CPC wants a better idea of what has been accomplished with CPA money. He reported that Ms. Timpane has requested administrative funding to hire a writer to provide a professional and more pointed presentation of the financial report she is working on to show where AHTF has committed CPA money and what the results have been. **Mr. Clark made a motion**, seconded by Ms. Kurzyca, to commit up to \$500 from AHTF administration funds for a consultant to assist in drafting an historic narrative of the work of the Affordable Housing Trust from its start to the present day. By roll-call vote, the motion was approved by 4 to 1 with Mr. Method voting against.

Mr. Clark noted that, an informal Vacant House Survey indicates that there are 3 or 4 abandoned/vacant houses in Town. He suggested that the idea is to work with the Town Building Inspector, Health Department and others to identify and work with owners or other interested parties to deal with all the issues such houses present, to address what violations there may be, to get the properties onto the market if necessary or repaired with the goal of creating renewed market value and reliable tax revenue in years to come. He wants the Board to think about ways to have a positive effect on the market without having to rely so heavily on large up-front investment. He believes that education might be a good part of the solution.

March 19, 2024

Page 3

TRUSTEE SPEAK:

Ms. Kurzyca opined that fund raising, similar to the annual events that local non-profits organize with celebrity performers, etc. might be a way for people of good will and financial resources to contribute and be happy making a difference.

Mr. Clark reported that Construct was reported to have raised \$100K with their “Warm Up The Winter” event at the Barn in South Egremont. He also felt that there may be fund raising opportunities in the world of Social Justice Investment Funds.

CITIZEN SPEAK: none

MEDIA SPEAK: none

NEXT MEETING: Mr. Clark announced that the next meeting would be on April 16, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT: Hearing no objection, **Mr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 7:47 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Shepley Evans
Admin. Support