

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

Thursday, May 7, 2020, 5:00 PM via ZOOM video conference

MEMBERS: Chmn. Bill Cooke, Fred Clark, John Katz, Larissa Yaple, Garfield Reed, and Jonathan Hankin.

OTHERS: June Wolfe and Jane Ralph of Construct, Dan Bailly, Aileen Mooney, Carolyn Valli, Brent White of White Engineering, (Shep Evans, Admin. Support)

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Cooke called the meeting together at 5:07 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Katz made a motion to approve the minutes of 3/05/2020 second by Ms. Yaple. Role call vote: Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Reed, aye; Ms. Yaple, aye; Mr. Katz, aye; Mr. Clark, aye; and Mr. Cooke, aye. Unanimous.

Mr. Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of 4/03/2020 second by Ms. Yaple. Roll call vote: Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Reed, aye; Ms. Yaple, aye; Mr. Katz, aye; Mr. Clark, aye; and Mr. Cooke, aye. Unanimous.

June Wolfe introduced Brent White of White Engineering who presented an engineering evaluation of various aspects of the Alden property.

Ms. Yaple raised a question about why the analysis included consideration of the feasibility of serving area residences near the Alden property with sewer. Mr. Hankin replied that neighbors could connect to sewer if their existing septic systems failed. Brent White explained his experience with such hook-ups, asserting that one can design a neighborhood sewer system for nearby residences to hook-up if needed.

Mr. Clark questioned whether the Town would accept and take over a system that included grinder pumps and dosing tank hook-ups, expressing a preference for doing a turnkey system where the Town would take over the entire system. He also asked how close the entrance would move to the adjacent property line. Brent White indicated that there were more than adequate sight lines at that location. Ms. Wolfe opined that moving the curb cut for the driveway should work well for northerly abutters.

Dan Bailly questioned how properties to the south would be affected by run-off from impervious surfaces and roofs during heavy rain storms. Brent White assured Mr. Bailly that one has the ability to employ "best management practices" and creative designs to mitigate surges in stormwater run-off, such as detention basins or ponds and rain gardens, where the land opens up in the back (to the west). Dan Bailly asked whether one can keep runoff within the Alden property limits, to which Brent White replied that one can capture runoff and provide adequately for infiltration of stormwater. He indicated that the best stormwater management designs deal with the water at the upstream end of the flow and not allow stormwater to accumulate and thereby requiring big stormwater systems at the downstream end of the flow.

Mr. Cooke suggested that the group move on to the important new topic of "Rental Assistance". Brent White thanked the board for the opportunity to present and left the meeting. Mr. Cooke invited Jane Ralph to update the group on Construct's recent "rental assistance" experience.

Jane Ralph reported that Construct was seeing as many as 40—45 applicants each week. Construct can and does refer some to other sources of assistance. In all Construct has had about 100 applicants. She asserted that Construct's opinion is that 90 days of rental assistance programming will not be enough. The unemployment wave will be with us longer than that. Construct has applied for additional funds availability from other sources such as Bank Foundations, and is asking whether they might have access to some of the \$100,000 in funding available to the Trust Fund from the CPC.

Mr. Clark asked what sorts of people are these applicants.

Jane Ralph responded that applicants for the most part have had their income reduced directly because of the COVID emergency. The good news is that some have gotten stimulus checks and/or unemployment compensation. Most of these folks have never had to deal with this sort of problem before Construct is helping many get help from other sources as well.

Mr. Clark asked if Construct was also working with landlords who have seen rent shortfalls.

Jane Ralph replied: Yes, and that June Wolfe reports the effort is taking more time than originally expected. Some clients (tenants and landlords) are really scared about the future. Construct expects \$19 to \$20,000 going out across southern Berkshire in May.

Mr. Katz asked how many landlords Construct is dealing with in this effort.

Jane Ralph's response was that the number is about the same as the number of tenants, and that Construct is looking for solutions that work for everybody.

Mr. Clark summarized, that Construct sounds like they are looking 30 to 60 days ahead, and asked whether the Board should expect Construct will need \$12,000 per month.

Jane Ralph responded that, in total, ideally Construct is looking to arrange support amounting to \$230,000 of which she expects to put out about \$215,000.

Ms. Yapple asked what of this total amount Construct is asking the Trust for

Jane Ralph responded that Construct is coming to the Board in support of MR. Cooke's initiative to seek approval of flexibility at the CPC with the use of the \$100,000 in CPA money. She believes that, in the end, as many as 1/3 of all tenants will need help. She mentioned that Construct had secured two other significant sources of assistance including \$50,000 from a Fitzpatrick family entity.

Mr. Katz made a motion to ask the CPC to remove restrictions on the use of the \$100,000 CPA money. Mr. Hankin seconded the motion and questioned whether the Trust might be able to use the subject \$100,000 for either "Rental Assistance" or "Down Payment Assistance".

Mr. Clark opined that if GB needs either assistance, this money is the best source to meet the need.

Mr. Cooke offered to put a resolution proposed by Mr. Katz on the screen. (4 short paragraphs)

Mr. Clark commented that the definition of affordable housing is being broadened to include rental assistance. (i.e. Helping people not lose their homes.)

Mr. Reed expressed concern that such a change in what the Trust is doing will become an issue at the CPC.

Mr. Clark opined that these are very probably the worst economic times in our lives, and the Trust needs to step up.

Mr. Hankin asked whether Construct had experience with rental assist programs before the present.

Jane Ralph responded that Construct has had a smaller scale assist program up to \$300 limit on and off, but nothing like the present program.

Mr. Clark recommended a change in the second paragraph of the Katz resolution so that the Trust can use CPC funds to provide funding for rental assistance or other programs. (removing the COVID-19 name) (See final language of the revised Katz resolution attached to these Minutes.)

Roll call vote: Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Reed, aye; Ms. Yapple, aye; Mr. Katz, aye; Mr. Clark, aye; and Mr. Cooke, aye. Unanimous.

Mr. Clark asked when the Alden Property feasibility report was expected to be completed and available. June Wolfe responded that she expected to have it sometime in June of this year.

Mr. Clark reminded that, when receiving an e-mail from Mr. Cooke to all Trustees, members should be careful not to "reply all". Just reply directly to Mr. Cooke.

CITIZEN SPEAK TIME:

Dan Bailly asked whether, in the development of the Alden Property, there were expected costs that the Town would be "on the hook" for. Mr. Cooke replied that he could not think of any.

Dan Bailly opined that the Trust ought to have an appraisal done of the Alden property before purchasing it.

NEXT MEETING DATE: To be determined. Mr. Cooke will poll the board to check on the best dates for the most members.

ADJOURNMENT: Hearing no objection Mr. Cooke adjourned the meeting at 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Shepley Evans

Administrative Support

**Attachment to the Minutes of the GB AHTF
Board of Trustees Meeting of May 7, 2020**

**FINAL TEXT OF THE KATZ RESOLUTION
APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS ROLL-CALL VOTE
AT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF MAY 7, 2020**

That the Trust ask the CPC to remove the restriction, limiting the \$100,000 of CPA funds -- provided to the Trust by Town Meeting vote for FY 2020 — to the AHTF's Down Payment Assistance Program.

So that, the Trust can have the option to use said funds for either Down Payment Assistance, or to provide funding for Rental Assistance, such as Construct's Rental Assistance program, or other such need as might arise.

Also, that the Trust ask the CPC to add this request to the CPA Warrant article, for the upcoming (FY 2021) Town Meeting vote.

And, that the Chair of the Trust, and any other members of the Board, designated by the Chair, are hereby authorized to take such steps, including signing any documents, necessary to accomplish the foregoing,