

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

MINUTES

Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Remote virtual meeting by ZOOM.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Fred Clark, Bill Cooke, Ananda Timpane, Joe Method, Krystyna Kurzyca.

MEMBERS Not PRESENT: Garfield Reed.

OTHERS PRESENT: Philip Orenstein representing the CDCSB and Chris Rembold.

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:32 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 as circulated.

Motion by Ms. Timpane, seconded by Mr. Cooke, to approve with corrections of minor typographic errors, the minutes of meetings on 3/21; 4/18; 9/26/ 10/5; 10/17; 10/17; 10/24; 11/21 and 12/6/2023. Roll call vote: 4 in favor and 1 abstention, to approve all.

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Ms. Timpane, to approve minutes of a working sub-committee of the Board on 5/10 and 9/12/2023. Roll-call vote: 4 in favor and 1 abstention, to approve both.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Cooke, to accept (rather than approve) the minutes of joint meetings of the Selectboard and Planning Board on 10/24 and 12/6/2023 that were attended by members of the AHTF Board. Roll-call vote: 4 in favor and 1 abstention, to accept both.

Mr. Clark gave a summary of news items since the last meeting of the Board:

The Grove Street rehabilitation project managed by Habitat for Humanity has been completed, and the new owners have moved in. **The North Plain Road subdivision** project is expected to break ground in the coming Spring of 2024. **The Community Preservation Committee** did not vote to recommend funding all applications for FY 2025. CPC will recommend to Town Meeting a FY2025 grant for \$23,000. **Mr. Cooke and Ms. Timpane made an impressive appearance** on Bill Shein's "Berkshire Argus" program discussing affordable housing matters.

Mr. Clark listed "Old Business" that he wished the Board to consider: **He requested a vote and made a motion, seconded by Mr. Method**, to approve a funding contribution of \$175K toward of CDC's purchase of the Thornwood Inn to create workforce housing, subject to at least two units being restricted as affordable. It was noted that the CPA had proposed an award of \$250K toward the project, and the proposed \$175K contribution would bring support of CDC up to \$450K. He noted that it was never expected that CDC would secure grant funding for the full cost of their project, and he call for comments on the matter.

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Ms. Timpane expressed her wish that it be made clear to all parties that the money was to come from two different sources.

Mr. Method expressed his feeling that the total cost of the project should not be judged in the absolute, but better in terms of how much it cost for each unit.

Mr. Clark recognized Mr. Orenstein, representing the Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire (CDCSB), who said that the project would produce 10 affordable units that would be deed restricted as affordable.

Mr. Clark amended his motion and Mr. Method agreed to increase the number of affordable units from two to ten units deed restricted.

Mr. Orenstein said that the deed restriction as to affordability would be for the term of the mortgage to be placed on the property.

Mr. Clark noted that the affordability restriction had not been agreed to be term limited, and he called for a vote on his motion, asking for any public comments prior to any vote. There were none.

Mr. Method moved to amend the motion seconded by Mr. Cooke to 15 years rather than for an unspecified term of a mortgage.

Mr. Clark called for a roll-call vote on the motion to amend, and on votes of Mr. Cooke and Mr. Method voted YES and Ms. Timpane, Ms. Kurzyca, Mr. Clark voted NO. The motion failed.

Mr. Clark then called for a vote on the original motion, as amended, of “a contribution of \$175,000 for 10 units deed restricted at 100% AMI in perpetuity.” The roll-call vote was Mr. Cooke YES, Ms. Timpane, Ms. Kurzyca, Mr. Clark NO, Mr. Method Abstain. The motion failed.

Mr. Clark thanked the members of the CDCSB for working to create affordable and workforce housing. He voiced his desire that the business community might do more to support the purchase.

Mr. Clark called for any “New Business” and noted that there was a legal document to be approved and signed ASAP that Town Counsel had prepared concerning restrictions in the covenant(s) relating to property on Front Street in Housatonic. Ms. Timpane made a motion,

seconded by Mr. Cooke, to approve the language in the document, and by roll-call vote the motion was approved unanimously.

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Mr. Clark noted that the Trust had received a Down Payment Assistance Application for purchase of a property at 232 Grove Street in Housatonic. The sale price was to be \$245,000 and the down payment for which assistance was being requested was \$24,500. **Ms. Timpane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cooke** to approve the application, and by roll call vote the motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Clark called on Ms. Timpane who wished to comment on recent criticisms by members of the Community Preservation Committee during discussion of the Trust's recent application for FY2025 CPA funding. Ms. Timpane reported that some CPC members were concerned about how funds previously allocated have been used. She felt that the Trust's record-keeping needs to be improved and that the Board needs to communicate more clearly about how it is using funds that have been awarded. She recommended a joint meeting with the CPC to begin to talk about gaining access to and managing all affordable housing related funding. Ms. Timpane also felt that the board should be issuing both financial and textual reports on its activities, perhaps updating the Trust's web site quarterly to show more currently what the trust has done.

Mr. Clark suggested that the annual report from the Trust should come at the beginning of the fiscal year.

A general free-style discussion followed concerning reporting to and from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Ms. Timpane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cooke to adopt a practice of issuing a periodic report in each meeting packet showing budgeting and periodic reporting out to the Community Preservation Committee. The motion carried unanimously. This report will in part be based on the monthly work sheet prepared by Mr. Rembold.

Mr. Clark asked if it was time for the ADU Pilot project to be rolled out?. **Ms. Timpane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, that she would prepare** the project implementation. A roll call vote gave unanimous approval. Ms. Timpane confirmed that she would connect with Mr. Rembold and with Construct for their respective inputs. **Ms. Timpane also made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kurzyca and approved unanimously by roll-call vote** that Mr. Cooke and Mr. Method would form a working subcommittee of two to create the necessary marketing program and materials for the ADU Pilot Project.

Mr. Clark noted that the agenda included a discussion of public participation in the meetings of the Affordable Housing Trust Board and he recognized Mr. Method.

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Mr. Method apologized for appearing irritated during the last board meeting. He opined that Board members should be able to have a prior vote whether to allow non-board members in attendance to participate in a discussion of issues among board members.

Mr. Clark opined that residents should be able to speak before any vote. Out-of-towners can address the Trust at the discretion of the Chair which will not be unduly withheld.

Ms. Timpane opined that, if someone is to be invited to contribute to a meeting or discussion, the Board should have its own prior discussion and vote or agree formally to invite or not to invite the non-board person and the objective sought through such person's participation.

Mr. Method recommended that a "high bar" be set for any participation by a non-resident.

CITIZEN SPEAK: none

MEDIA SPEAK: Question: Ms. Mooney: Is there a finished copy of the ADU proposal?

Answer: Mr. Clark: Yes, it will be posted.

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cooke to close the regular meeting, and go into executive session, not to return, pursuant to MGL Ch. 30A sec 21(a) for the following purpose: (6) to discuss strategy with respect to a possible of real estate acquisition because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the negotiation of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Mr. Clark will take minutes. **Approved unanimously by roll-call vote.**

ADJOURNMENT: Hearing no objection, Mr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shepley Evans
Admin. Support

