

Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Minutes of May 12, 2020

This meeting was held via audio/video teleconference as noted on the agenda for this meeting.

Call to Order 5:00 PM by Vice Chair Smith.

Smith called the roll and the following six members were present:

Lisa Bozzuto, Leigh Davis, Martha Fick, Jeremy Higa, Don Howe, and Karen W. Smith.
Also present: Chris Rembold

Absent: Thomas Blauvelt, Jim Mercer, Patricia Sharpe,

Administrative Items: Howe made several corrections to the minutes from April 28, 2020. Bozzuto moved to approve as amended, Davis seconded. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor except Fick who abstained. Passed 5-0-1.

Affordable Housing Trust request to use its FY20 CPA grant, which is restricted to downpayment assistance, for either rental assistance or downpayment assistance. CPC to make recommendation to Town Meeting.

Trust Chairman Bill Cooke spoke on this issue. He said the rental assistance program is already underway using \$35,000 of other Trust CPA funding. Construct is running the program, and they already have the infrastructure to do this program. Construct is reimbursed based on their actual rental assists. They started in April and have already disbursed funds for tenants in need. Cooke said that initial amount of funding won't last through June or into July probably, but this emergency need will last for a while. So we are seeking to get more funds available. This way it can be used for rental assistance if needed, and anything left can be used as originally intended for the downpayment assistance.

Jane Ralph, director of Construct, also spoke about the program. She said the average rental assist is between \$600 and 800. Tenants must pay 35% of their income. She said they work to make sure the tenants are getting whatever assistance they qualify for, and Construct steps in at the end to make up the difference. She said there have already been 40+ applications from Great Barrington residents.

Howe asked if previous downpayment assistance Grantees are being followed up with. Smith suggested the Trust do more marketing for that program.

Davis moved to recommend to Town Meeting that \$100,000 of the previous grant be available for either downpayment or rental assistance. Higa seconded. On a roll call vote, all were in favor. Passed 6-0.

Great Barrington Historical Society request to extend its FY18 CPA grant handicapped accessibility project for one more year.

Howe moved to approve a one year extension to this grant. Davis seconded. On a roll call vote, all were in favor. Motion passed 6-0.

Additional Discussion of FY 21 project amounts or elimination of projects, continued from April 28 meeting.

The Committee discussed the Historical Commission's proposal for Housatonic Village research and the Housing Trusts proposal to purchase the North Plain Road land.

The Committee discussed Town Housing Trust proposal to acquire land for housing, and to possible cut it from \$200,000 to \$185,000 to better reflect the closing costs estimate.

At the last meeting the Committee reduced the Housatonic Village research project from \$21,400 to \$0. Howe moved to recommend reinstate \$15,000 and recommended that amount to the June 2020 town meeting, and that the project focus on the Main Street properties. Higa seconded. On a roll call vote, all were in favor. Motion passed 6-0.

Davis moved to recommend to Town Meeting to fund the Housing Trust land acquisition project at \$185,000. Fick seconded. On a roll call vote, all were in favor. Motion passed 6-0.

Committee Members Reports: None

Citizen's Speak: None

Next Meeting: To be determined

On a motion by Davis, seconded by Howe, Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Minutes prepared by Christopher Rembold

