

Town of Great Barrington
Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Minutes of December 1, 2020 special meeting

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.

Chair Blauvelt called the roll. All members were present: Thomas Blauvelt, Leigh Davis, Martha Fick, Jeremy Higa, Don Howe, Jim Mercer, Patricia Sharpe, Karen W. Smith, and Kate Van Olst.

Also present: Christopher Rembold

Minutes:

November 17, 2020 meeting. Blauvelt moved to approve; Higa seconded. Roll call vote: Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-aye, Van Olst-aye, and Blauvelt-aye. Davis abstained. Passed 8-0-1.

Smith asked about the budget. Rembold said it is not yet possible to project fy22 revenues, but his current thinking is that there should be enough to cover all the applications we have received.

Higa asked the committee to consider banking some of the next fiscal year funds in case an emergency need arises between now and next year. Higa moved to bank \$200,000 of the fy22 revenue. There was no second.

Review FY22 Step 2 Applications in the Housing category:

Construct, for rental assistance and microloan program

Davis recused herself.

Construct's Director Jane Ralph answered questions. She said the requested CPA funds would all be used for direct rental assistance or to the microloan program, not for administration. She said the funds are all for within the town of Great Barrington. For microloans, she said those that from previous loans that are not yet paid are on payment plans and she is confident that repayment will ultimately be 100%.

Review FY22 Step 2 Applications in the Historic category:

Ramsdell Library archeological study

Rembold confirmed this is eligible under the Historic category.

Smith said this work needs in order for any future accessibility improvements to be completed.

Sharpe asked how we know this is a reasonable price. Kathy Plungis from the Board of Trustees said the firm has experience in this line of work.

Higa this seems immediate need as without it other phases cannot go ahead.

First Congregational Church restoration of masonry at the Manse

Sharpe recused herself.

Barbara Syer pointed out how important the church is to the community. She said we help many community nonprofits. The parking lot is used too. In fact recently the parking lot hosted the covid-19 testing bus. She said the building is the entrance to the entrance to downtown, a historic landmark on the north end, along with the Catholic Church, Library, and Post Office.

Fick agreed. She thinks the manse is an important historic structure, but she said the cost seems very high.

Ray Murray said this is the first of two phases. This covers the west façade and the north façade. Michael Bandierz said we have estimated the second phase would be around \$356,000, and that is less than the total phase 1 budget. Both include a 15% contingency. He said they believe the costs are estimated well and by a very experienced firm.

Smith asked about the revenue stream from the 271 Main St property next door to the church. Murray said it's about 50,000 per year. Smith said they could generate a bigger loan rather than rely on CPA as much for this budget. Murray said Smith is right in theory but we rely on the revenue stream from the 271 Main building for maintenance. He said mortgaging more based on that revenue stream would mean we have less available money for maintenance of the historic properties.

Davis said she would like to see what you could raise in a capital campaign first. Murray said we have committed to raise 100,000 for each of two phases for a total of 200,000, and we have already begun that, and we have commitments for 50% of the first 100,000.

Rembold said that the Committee has the information they need. He referred them again to read both the Step 1 and Step 2 submittals.

Blauvelt said he is still struggling with the 3-part test. Rembold said Town Counsel will answer that question for you.

Town Historical Commission, inventory of landscape and open space items

Van Olst asked why this was eliminated last year. Rembold said the project was favored, but it was just a matter of trying to save money.

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center emergency doors

Blauvelt and Davis recused themselves.

Janis Martinson said we will replace the site doors and do some resurfacing to eliminate water that is coming in under the doors. This resurfacing would allow a smooth pedestrian access to those doors. She said we did investigate whether it would be possible to put awnings in. But in order to have a drivable alley way the awnings would be so high above the doors that they would be ineffective.

Tristan Wilson said the resurfacing will fix the ponding which is where water sits and is seeping in under the leaky doors.

Higa asked about winter maintenance. Martinson said we have an arrangement with the abutter. Higa asked if snow gets pushed against the building. Wilson said the snow plow crews go back with the shovels to clear snow completely around these doors. He said we raising the sills an inch or so and raise the asphalt slightly.

Howe noted the HDC has begun to review this work, as well as work next door at the old fire station. He said he still had questions about design which he will ask at the HDC.

Clinton Church Restoration second phase

Van Olst said she heard there over 100,000 national historic sites and less than 2% are African American heritage sites, and that speaks to the importance of this project. Davis agreed.

Review FY22 Step 2 Applications in the Open Space and Recreation category:

Town Conservation Commission, McAllister Wildlife Refuge

Howe said this project has accomplished so much. The proposal is visible, it involves other sources of funding, and he can't support it enough. Smith agreed; the bang for the buck has been very good.

Town for Housatonic Rail Trail improvements

Howe asked what kind of material will be used. Rembold said it will be crushed packed stone. Van Olst asked if there will be a crosswalk across Main Street. Rembold said yes, as part of the \$220,000 Complete Street grant sidewalk to be built this spring.

Town for Lake Mansfield water quality studies

Sharpe recused herself as she works for Simon's Rock. Rembold provided another summary including the parks usage report highlighting how important the lake is as a recreational resource.

Citizen's Speak: None

Next Meetings: January 19, 2021

Davis moved to adjourn. Without objection Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:25 PM.

Minutes prepared by Christopher Rembold



