

Town of Great Barrington
Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Minutes of August 3, 2021

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

Call to Order 5:00 PM by Chair Blauvelt.

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

Also present: Christopher Rembold

Elect Chair and Vice Chair:

Rembold called for nominations for Chair. Higa nominated Blauvelt, and Smith seconded. On a roll call vote all were in favor.

Blauvelt called for nominations for Vice Chair. Fick nominated Smith, and Higa seconded. On a roll call vote all were in favor.

Minutes: Smith moved to approve the April 6, 2021 minutes as written; Fick seconded. Roll call vote: Blauvelt-aye; Davis-abstain; Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye; Smith-aye; Van Olst-aye. Passed 8-0-1.

Project Status Review: Rembold provided a spreadsheet on all previously funded projects, the amount spent per category, and the status of each project.

Coalition Dues: Smith moved to pay the dues of \$2,875, Higa seconded. On a roll call vote all were in favor.

CPA Plan: Discussion began with comments about the housing section. Fick thought our priority should be projects that deliver homes for more than one family. She said we need 261 more affordable homes based on the Housing Needs Study. Smith agreed; she said housing is critical for our town, for employees. She said there are no apartments to rent between here and Connecticut, let alone affordable ones. We have plenty of open space and now we should do more housing. Higa discussed the difference between the Habitat site and the Housing Trust's down payment program – the former is income restricted forever. Higa said that is good but does not build equity like the down payment program.

There was a brief discussion of short term rentals, and that people are buying homes just to rent them on air bnb. Rembold said a way to deal with that is to have the Housing Trust be funded to act in this market place. Fick said the problem is that it would take so much money to buy a house that is on the market.

Higa suggested the Committee set aside funds for housing this year. Blauvelt said we will see what applications come in. We have not been reluctant to fund projects, just prudent. Fick said we need projects to come to us, and then we can fund them.

Higa moved to set aside 75% of the next year's funds for housing projects. Davis seconded.

Blauvelt asked if that was permission. Rembold said yes. Rembold reminded the committee to consider all the needs, in all the CPA categories.

Howe reminded that some projects can be bonded, paying small amounts over time rather than spending a large sum at once.

Davis left to attend the Selectboard meeting.

Van Olst suggested the set aside 30% instead of 75%; Higa seconded. Roll call vote: Smith-no; Howe-no, Higa-yes, Van Olst-aye; Sharpe-no; Fick-no, Mercer-no, Blauvelt-no.
Failed 2-6.

On the original motion for the 75% set aside: Roll call vote: Smith-no; Howe-no, Higa-yes, Van Olst-aye; Sharpe-no; Fick-no, Mercer-no, Blauvelt-no.
Failed 2-6.

Discussion turned to the open space section. Sharpe suggested the top priority should be for projects that address the impacts of climate change. All agreed. Rembold will add that to the draft.

Public Hearing: Members decided the CPA Plan public hearing will be September 8 at 5. Rembold will send the updated draft and publish the advertisement of the hearing.

Citizen's Speak: None

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 8 at 5:00.

Hearing no further business Blauvelt adjourned the meeting at 6:15 PM.

Minutes prepared by Christopher Rembold

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Rembold", written in a cursive style.