

Town of Great Barrington
Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Minutes of January 25, 2022

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 nine 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

Minutes: Smith moved to approve the minutes of the January 6 and January 11 meetings. Fick seconded. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor.

Revenue: Rembold indicated there should be sufficient funds to approve the applications this year. The funds available include FY23 revenue plus and previous year unspent funds, and in total are estimated at \$1.45 million.

FY23 CPA Applications / Recommendations for Town Meeting

343 Main Street, Alander Group, c/o Ian Rasch:

Blauvelt recused himself from the 343 Main St discussion since he is an owner at Wheeler & Taylor which abuts 343 Main St. Ian Rasch of Alander Group was present.

The Committee again discussed the scope of work with Rasch and the status of the other sources of funds including the bank loan. There was discussion about requiring a deed restriction as a condition of funding. Rasch said he would agree to restriction with a five year term. Rasch said in addition to the historically preserved building and new uses the Town will benefit from the increased tax revenue of a renovated taxable building.

Smith moved to recommend the project to Town Meeting for full funding, subject to a historic restriction. Higa seconded. Roll call vote: Davis-aye, Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-aye, and Van Olst-aye. Passes 8-0.

Town, for Castle Street pedestrian underpass:

Smith moved to recommend the project to Town Meeting for full funding. Davis seconded. Roll call vote: Davis-aye, Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-aye, Van Olst-aye, and Blauvelt-aye. Passes 9-0.

Town, for Lake Mansfield weeds study:

Smith moved to recommend the project to Town Meeting for full funding. Davis seconded. Roll call vote: Davis-aye, Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-aye, Van Olst-aye, and Blauvelt-aye. Passes 9-0.

Town, for McAllister Wildlife Refuge:

Smith moved to recommend the project to Town Meeting for full funding. Davis seconded. Roll call vote: Davis-aye, Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-aye, Van Olst-aye, and Blauvelt-aye. Passes 9-0.

Town, for Memorial Field improvements:

Rembold summarized a proposed change to this CPA request. He said the Town now seeks that the Memorial Field improvements, estimated at \$500,000, be funded 100% from the CPA funds rather than 50% CPA and 50% Town capital funds. He also recommended that this \$500,000 be bonded for, using CPA funds. He said while we have not bonded with CPA yet, it would make sense to do so for a Town-owned project which will benefit future generations.

Rembold said staff received estimates from our financial advisers and provided the debt model estimate to the Committee before this meeting. He said the bond would be a 15 year bond and the model is at a conservatively high rate of 3.25%, for 15 years. With these terms a \$500,000 project would be about \$35,000 per year. He said if recommended by the CPC and if voted by 2/3 vote at Town Meeting, then this annual payment amount would count towards meeting the 10% “spend or reserve” on this CPA category for the life of the bond.

Rembold said this request because there is no real logical reason to split the funding request between two different town sources—CPA and capital—unless of course there was not enough money in one or the other.

Smith moved to recommend the project to Town Meeting for full funding at \$500,000 through a bond as recommended by staff. Davis seconded.

In discussion Higa proposed to amend the motion by reducing the CPA portion to \$250,000 as he felt it would be better to reserve funds in CPA for housing purposes. The motion was not seconded.

Roll call Vote on the main motion: Davis-aye, Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-aye, Van Olst-aye, and Blauvelt-aye. Passes 9-0.

Davis recused herself from all of the following Housing applications.

Town of GB Affordable Housing Trust:

Smith moved to recommend the project to Town Meeting for full funding. Higa seconded. Roll call vote: Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-abstain, Van Olst-aye, and Blauvelt-aye. Passes 7-0-1.

Construct, for Eagle Cliff apartments:

Smith moved to recommend the project to Town Meeting for full funding. Higa seconded. Roll call vote: Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-aye, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-aye, Van Olst-aye, and Blauvelt-aye. Passes 8-0.

CDC, for Berkshire Cottages:

Allison Marchese, Director of the CDC, was present. Committee members asked her about outreach to the community, how much of the site could be built on, and whether any of the berm could be

used for parking. There were questions too about whether more affordable housing should be located in that area since there already are 45 units on the south end of the site.

Marchese said an architect will be hired soon, and the civil and environmental engineers will verify what areas can be built on. She said this phase will include outreach and community discussions.

Smith moved to recommend the project to Town Meeting for full funding. Higa seconded. Roll call vote: Fick-aye, Higa-aye, Howe-abstain, Mercer-aye, Sharpe-aye, Smith-aye, Van Olst-aye, and Blauvelt-aye. Passes 7-0-1.

Reports from Committee Members: None

Citizen's Speak: None

Next Meeting: March, date to be determined

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Minutes prepared by:

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

Christopher Rembold