

Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Minutes of August 23, 2022

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

Call to Order 5:30 PM by Assistant Town Manager Christopher Rembold.

Present: Tom Blauvelt (Housing Authority), Leigh Davis (Selectboard), Martha Fick (Citizen rep), Jeremy Higa (Planning Board), Jim Mercer (Historical Comm), Karen W. Smith (Parks Comm). Also, Anne O'Dwyer was present to represent the Finance Committee.

Not present: Patricia Sharpe (Citizen rep) and Kate Van Olst (Conservation).

Reorganize: Rembold asked for nominations for chairperson. Blauvelt nominated Smith and Mercer seconded it. There were no other nominations. Smith accepted the nomination. On a roll call vote, all were in favor (7-0).

Smith then presided over the meeting. She asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Higa nominated Blauvelt and Davis seconded it. There were no other nominations. Blauvelt accepted the nomination. On a roll call vote, all were in favor (7-0).

Minutes: Discussion of the minutes from the July 21 meeting were tabled to the next meeting.

CPA Plan: Mr. Rembold summarized each section of the existing CPA Plan and the Committee the needs and priorities for the coming year.

In the Housing section, Rembold noted that some of the statistics will be updated, but overall the urgent need for affordable housing is still present. Blauvelt asked that the section note the progress we have made and whether the Town has met its 10% subsidized housing goals. Rembold said that is a good metric and he will update the production numbers.

Fick asked that the plan note how much other money the CPA funds have leveraged. She said it must be many millions of dollars.

Higa suggested that the committee strongly encourage that housing created with CPA includes agricultural use also. Rembold said that type of goal would respond to what the town has heard through the recent Growing Better Great Barrington planning process last spring. Smith thought the Committee should look more favorably on that type of housing project.

Davis said there may be developers that apply for CPA funds to make a few units affordable in an otherwise market-rate development financed with private capital, as opposed a project that is totally affordable housing that uses public funds. She asked if the committee should consider these two types differently. Mercer said we should encourage long term affordability. Rembold said this Committee does have a goal of producing affordable units throughout town rather than concentrated in one place.

Discussion turned to the Historic Preservation section. Fick asked Rembold if there are Town needs in this regard. Rembold that Town owned projects might include the Housatonic School, masonry at Town Hall, the front entrance of the Mason Library.

Mercer said there is need to inventory the historic documents and artifacts that the town and commission own. Rembold said there may be documents and historic archives that need preservation.

Regarding the Open Space and Recreation section, Smith said the Parks Commission has issued a survey to gather people's interests and needs. That will wrap up in September and will help guide the Commission's work, investing in more than just playgrounds.

Higa suggested including a statement about the need to create agricultural land, not just conserve it.

Public Hearing:

The Committee set the public hearing date for September 15 at 5:30.
Applications will be due October 28 (Step 1) and December 2 (step 2).

Citizen's Speak: None

Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 PM.

Minutes prepared by:

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

Christopher Rembold