

## **Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)**

Minutes of December 12, 2022

This meeting was held in-person and via Zoom as noted on the meeting agenda.

**Call to Order:** Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

All were present: Tom Blauvelt (Housing Authority), Leigh Davis (Selectboard), Martha Fick (Citizen rep), Richard Geiler (Finance Committee), Jeremy Higa (Planning Board), Jim Mercer (Historical Comm), Patricia Sharpe (Citizen rep.), Karen W. Smith (Parks Comm), Kate Van Olst (Conservation).

Also present: CPA Administrator / Assistant Town Manager Christopher Rembold.

**Minutes:** Smith asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 1, 2022 meeting. Sharpe said the minutes should state she was recused from the Congregational Church vote. Blauvelt moved as amended. Sharpe seconded. On a roll call vote, all were in favor (9-0).

### **Review of Step 2 Applications**

1. Town of GB, Conservation Comm., for the McAllister Wildlife Refuge. Jess Toro from Native Habitat Restoration, who has been the Commission's contractor for the project over the years, gave a summary of the goals for the next year, including invasive plant control and the planting of new trees. Blauvelt asked how much of the overall restoration is completed. She said the work has focused on specific areas of the property over the years and so far about 50% of the restoration work is done. Davis said people think there is clearcutting, so some more education might be useful next year.

2. Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC), for Three Mile Hill Trail improvements. Deanna Smith from BNRC discussed the application which includes rebuilding old trail bridges. She said they are seeking CPA funds and have BNRC funds committed also. Smith asked if there were other projects to do. Smith said this is it for the Three Mile Hill trail improvements. Davis asked if they could move forward with less funding. Smith said they would just have to prioritize which areas to fix first and do what they can.

3. Town of GB, Dept. of Public Works, preservation of the Brown mausoleum. DPW Superintendent Joe Aberdale was present to speak about the project. Sharpe asked if the Town could apply for Mass. Historic funds. Rembold said the structure is not listed on the State Register so it is not eligible for that; however, the Historical Commission voted that it is significant to the Town so it is eligible for CPA funds. Blauvelt said he thinks the town should ask Town Meeting to use some funds from lot sales for this project. Smith asked why not take it down. Aberdale said there are burials in there. Mercer asked if the structure is actually a town asset. Aberdale said yes; there are no heirs. Higa wondered if the town should get a legal opinion about its ownership. Geiler suggested the town think outside the box and generate funds by using the structure for other burials. He said the cost to dismantle it might be more than to fix it. Sharpe said it is an important and impressive structure. It is not a good idea to take it down.

4. First Congregational Church, Manse Restoration, Phase 2. Charles Hamilton and Ray Murray presented this project on behalf of the church. Hamilton said Phase 1 is complete, thanks in part to the CPA and Mass. Historic Commission funds. He said this second phase is for the south and east facades of the Manse. Smith said this project has been a great model of historic preservation. Mercer said the Historic Commission supports this project. Murray said Phase 1 was more expensive than they thought. There were few change orders but it was pricey. He said for this phase the church is paying 64% and we are asking the CPA for

36%. Higa asked if people can see the facades that will be worked on. Murray said yes, you can see both. The south façade frames part of the courtyard that opens to Main Street,

5. BAB Capital 77 LLC, for preservation of The Cove - Ph 1. Craig Barnum of BAB was present. Fick asked him what he would do if doesn't get these funds or only some of these funds. Barnum indicated there is a lot of work to do and he would look to raise other funding. Davis asked if it would stay as an entertainment complex. Barnum said he hopes to continue running it as is but the capital costs are high. He said he does not intend to change the use if he can get the capital. Sharpe said maybe this is an Open Space or Recreation project for CPA, not a Historic Preservation project. Barnum said it is unorthodox but it is historic. Mercer said the Historical Commission supports it. Mercer asked about the leases for the tenants. Barnum said they are not long term currently because he needs to figure out the funding. He can't lock in rent until he knows those costs that have to be covered. Blauvelt said insulation is more about maintenance, not a CPA cost. Barnum said there weren't those types of building codes back then, but now he has to do it. Smith asked how this is historic; is it just about the sign? Barnum said it is more than just the sign out front. The building shape and silhouette is unique and recognizable. The barrel roof is part of the historic building.

At the end of the meeting Sharpe suggested the Committee consider the following language to clarify the Committee' position when funded projects have a change:

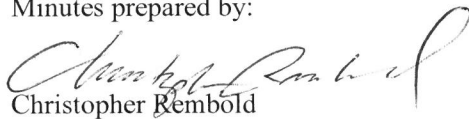
"All awards from the CPC are made with the expectation that projects approved for funding will be carried out for the stated purpose and as described in the application. Any significant changes to the project purpose or plan should be reported to the CPC promptly, and progress on the project using expenditure of CPC funds should be halted for sufficient time to enable the CPC to determine whether the change will necessitate a revision of the award, revocation of the award, or a revote on it at Town Meeting."

**Citizens' Speak:** None

**Next Meeting:** December 13.

**Adjourn:** Blauvelt moved to adjourn, Davis seconded. On a roll call vote, all were in favor (9-0). The meeting ended at 7:00 PM.

Minutes prepared by:

  
Christopher Rembold