

Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Minutes of November 12, 2019

Great Barrington Fire Station, 37 State Road

Members present: Thomas Blauvelt, Lisa Bozzuto, Leigh Davis, Martha Fick, Jeremy Higa, Don Howe, Patricia Sharpe, and Karen W. Smith

Absent: Jim Mercer,

Also present: Chris Rembold

Call to Order 5:30 PM by Chair Blauvelt

Administrative Items Smith moved to approve the minutes of October 9. Davis seconded. All in favor with Fick abstaining.

Review of Step 2 Applications

Chair Blauvelt said tonight will be an overview and no votes will be taken. We have \$1.56 million in requests and between \$800,000 and \$900,000 available. He said tonight is focused on Historic requests. Open space and Housing requests will be discussed at upcoming meetings.

GB Historical Society:

Executive Director Bob Krol reviewed his application. He said the Town and private individuals trust and rely on the Society to store their memories and share them with people. He said the Society's goals including keeping them safe and creating a resource center at the Wheeler Farmstead so the artifacts are more accessible for display purposes and for research. He said artifacts are no good if they are not accessible. Currently a lot of material is not conveniently stored on site and not readily accessible. He said having it on site, even on second floor so the Director can get it for handicapped persons, is the goal.

Smith asked about other funding. Krol said they are working on the Preservation Massachusetts grant and the Fitzpatrick Foundation grant. He said CPA not the only source but it is key to applying for other grants.

Smith and others wanted to know more about the viability of the Society and its preservation priorities. Krol said he could provide that information. He said we spend a lot on upkeep as well. We just painted the house for \$14,200.

Fick asked if the large project could be phased and what the priorities are. Krol said the first phase is to finish the main floor including the summer kitchen, the interior of the wagon house, and the privy.

Davis asked for information regarding memberships, a strategic plan and mission statement. Krol said he would get that for the Committee, but generally our goals are to protect and preserve artifacts and to share those with and educate the community. He said we also exist to preserve this historic property and a historic, National Register-listed property that was damaged by the tornado. He said they wish to save the barn and silo because those can contribute to the mission. For example, larger artifacts like a horse drawn buggy can't fit in the house.

Davis asked if they had designs for the areas they are preserving. Krol said we have the kitchen designs and a plan that is also functional for our activities. Sharpe asked what old records they are using on which to base their work. Krol said we have some old photos of the summer kitchen but nothing from 1771 of course, so we have to pick an era and try to be faithful to that.

Paul Ivory said a historic structure report exists documenting the history of the house. Howe asked about sprinklers and alarms. Krol said the house is fully alarmed for heat and burglars, but there are no sprinklers.

Ramsdell Library windows

Blauvelt and Bozutto recused themselves. Smith chaired.

Patrick Hollenbeck said the proposal is to restore the windows. He handed out photos of their current conditions. He said the windows can be saved. They are all wood and can be repaired. We are restoring the existing windows not replacing. And we will replace the glass if we can afford it. None of the old wavy glass is left.

Fick and Howe asked whether the Trustees knew if replacement was ok to meet historic standards.

Smith asked if the DPW Superintendent Van Deusen in charge of town buildings has signed off. Hollenbeck said he has not spoken to Van Deusen but the Library Director has.

Davis suggested this seemed premature and a survey might be needed to get a defined sense of the scope of the work. She said what if \$130,000 is not close enough. Hollenbeck said it might not be but we need to get started before they deteriorate further.

Smith asked if the building study was done, and if not, why fix windows if you don't know the end product needed? She asked if the \$375,000 previously given to the building has been allocated. She added that the Master Plan states that Ramsdell deserves a serious debate and it should have happened in 2014. She said her feeling is we have not, as a town, gotten a sense if we are ready to do this work.

Rembold asked what the plan was the FY20 CPA grant. Hollenbeck said we are still trying to hire a consultant for the building program study. He added that he believes the previous large appropriation is for accessibility improvements. He said there is a committee now to hire an architect to make the building accessible.

Howe asked if plans for additions and improvements would impact these windows. Hollenbeck said he has excluded some of the windows as shown in the application.

Howe asked why they could not put storm windows on in the meantime until the full building is done. Davis suggested two steps: first, stop deterioration of windows and air leaks, and two, when you know the building program you can preserve/restore the windows.

Smith said she thinks there are not a solid plan and there are loose ends and questions. She was concerned the DPW has not been consulted as to the priorities for the building

Howe asked if there a study being done by a historic architect. Hollenbeck said no. He said the building program study is different than an architectural study.

Historical Commission – Scattered sites

Paul Ivory, Historical Commission Chair, stated they seek \$6,000 to document various historical sites scattered around the town landscape. He said the study will result in an inventory form which is the foundational item documenting history, key features and what deserves protection. He said items include

towers related to the old streetcar line. He said the methodology is the same for what they did in the previous work, published this year. He said they would hire an expert to guide the work and select final sites and do the work. He said the final deliverable of surveys and maps are then available in hard copy and electronically.

Historical Commission – Housatonic Village study

Howe said the commission has research for the mills and other parts of town, but not for the village. He said this would focus on the downtown of Housatonic houses and buildings. He said there are more sites than above and they cost more. He said the deliverables are the same as above.

Historical Commission – Trolley Shelter

Ivory said this structure at the intersection of Stockbridge and State Road is one of the few remaining tangible connections to the trolley system that was here in the early 20th century. It was a waiting shelter for people catching the trolley. He said the Commission paid for a historical conditions assessment last year. It was done by Berkshire Design, and we have that documentation. We will use that for specs and will do an RFP to restore the structure. It's distinctive and lends to town character. We want to put an interpretive panel to describe what it was.

Howe said the deterioration is significant. It's falling down.

Smith asked them to research other funding sources that could be available.

Adjourned at 6:30 PM

Minutes prepared by Christopher Rembold



