

Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Minutes of January 6, 2020

Great Barrington Fire Station, 37 State Road

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

Absent: Patricia Sharpe

Also present: Chris Rembold

Call to Order 5:30 PM by Chair Blauvelt

Administrative Items

Smith moved to approve the minutes from the meetings of November 12 and December 4, and December 5, 2019; Bozzuto seconded. All were in favor.

Recommendations for Town Meeting

Blauvelt noted that the Ramsdell Library application and the Old Route 7 Greenway applications have been withdrawn. He said the Committee has already voted to recommending full funding of \$250,000 for 910 Main Street housing, and that the housing needs study is withdrawn here because it was funded from the CPA administrative budget.

Great Barrington Historical Society, Wheeler Farmstead: Bob Krol had sent the committee more information about the Society, its financial situation, and how it would prioritize the CPA funding if received. He also requested a lesser amount than originally. He said he thinks he can leverage this CPA with some level of matching grants, if the CPA is awarded.

Smith moved to recommend full funding for the revised request at \$173,650. Fick seconded.

In discussion Davis asked about funding just phase 1 of the priority items. Krol said that is possible and he would not be able to work on the barn. Fick asked what the 173,650 would fund. Krol said it would do the first floor of the house and the barn and silo roofs, preventing further decay of those structures.

Vote: Blauvelt, Fick, Howe, and Smith in favor (4)
Bozzuto, Davis, Higa opposed (3)
Mercer abstained (on the Society board)

Historical Commission for scattered sites:

Bozzuto asked about non-CPA matching funds. Paul Ivory said there are none specifically but last year the Commission did fund the structural study of the trolley shelter. Howe added that there typically is no funding in the state programs for scattered sites like for buildings or districts.

Smith moved to recommend full funding at \$6,000. Fick seconded. All were in favor.

Historical Commission for Housatonic Village research

Smith moved to recommend full funding at \$21,400; Davis seconded. All were in favor.

Historical Commission for the Trolley Shelter preservation

Ivory confirmed the Commission did vote that it is historically significant to the town.

Smith moved to recommend full funding at \$60,000; Mercer seconded. All were in favor.

Housing Trust Fund land acquisition

Blauvelt and Rembold addressed the room, explaining that the Committee's role as a recommending funding to Town Meeting voters and that the Committee is not the permitting board.

Smith moved to recommend full funding of \$200,000. Higa seconded.

There were questions about infrastructure to serve future homes. The property is served by Housatonic Water Works, but not by sewer. Trustee Jonathan Hankin said if the acquisition is successful, they will work with developers and try to get grants to fund a sewer extension.

After many other questions, comments, and allegations by members of the public in attendance, the Committee deliberated.

All were in favor, with one abstention (Mercer, as he is President of Housatonic Water).

BNRC for the Barbieri trailhead

Narain Schroeder said BNRC will construct a parking lot and make trailhead improvements for public access. He said the trail would be for nonmotorized vehicles. He said typically BNRC land allows passive recreation which includes hunting. Smith asked if the CPA funding should come with a condition that it is not disbursed unless BNRC actually closes on its land purchase. Schroeder said they would not go through with the project if they did not do so.

Higa moved to recommend full funding at 30,000. Smith seconded.

All were in favor, with one abstention (Mercer, as he owns abutting land).

Lake Mansfield Road

After some discussion at possibly funding at the full \$165,000, Smith moved to recommend funding at \$120,000 only. Bozutto seconded. All were in favor.

Conservation Commission for McAllister Wildlife Refuge

Both Smith and Fick commended the Commission for excellent work at the site over the past few years. Smith moved to recommend full funding at \$33,500. Higa seconded. All were in favor except Davis who recused herself because she works for the Commission Chairperson.

Conservation Commission land acquisition fund

Davis asked Conservation Commissioner Bill Boyer how this fund would differ from other conservation nonprofits in the town. Boyer said there are a number of organizations with this focus on conserving land. He said for the Town, it's the Commission that has the authority to determine what is worth conserving and has the authority to do purchase it. Boyer said this request would help establish the fund.

Bozutto said it is important to establish a fund. Blauvelt agreed but did not think it should be at this dollar level. Mercer felt it was premature to fund it from CPA. Higa thought otherwise, that CPA was the right place to start, not the town budget.

After some discussion Bozutto moved to recommend funding at \$10,000; Higa seconded.

Vote: Bozutto, Fick, Higa in favor (3)
Blauvelt, Davis, Howe, Smith opposed (4).
Motion failed.

Higa moved to fund it at \$4,400, the apparent balance of the CPA budget; Smith seconded for discussion.
 Vote: Bozutto, Fick, Higa in favor (3)
 Blauvelt, Davis, Howe, Smith opposed (4).
 Motion failed.

The final recommendations for Town Meeting are in the chart below.

		CPC VOTE 1/6/2020
Org.	Project	
CDC of South Berkshire	910 Main Street creation of new affordable housing	\$250,000
Town of GB	Affordable housing needs study	<i>withdrawn</i>
Town of GB - Affordable Housing Trust Fund	Acquisition of Alden property for housing and OS	\$200,000
Town of GB	Lake Mansfield Road final design	\$120,000
Berkshire Natural Resource Council	Public access to Barbieri forest	\$30,000
Town of GB	Old Route 7 Greenway Phase 2	<i>withdrawn</i>
Town of GB - Conservation Commission	McAllister Wildlife Preserve	\$33,500
Town of GB - Conservation Commission	Land Conservation Fund	\$0
Town of GB - Library Trustees	Ramsdell Library windows and trim	<i>withdrawn</i>
Town of GB - Historical Commission	Landcape/open space historic items	\$6,000
Town of GB - Historical Commission	Housatonic Village historic resource forms	\$21,400
Town of GB - Historical Commission	Preservation of historic trolley shelter	\$60,000
Great Barrington Historical Society	Restoration and Preservation of Museum Spaces, Artifacts	\$173,650
		\$894,550

CITIZENS SPEAK

A number of people spoke about the Housing Trust proposed purchase of land:

Bob Gray asked about ethical considerations of the Housing Trust purchase.

Debra Herman asked what CPA criteria are used in decision making.

Dan Bailly urged the Committee to consider costs to the Town and people and about wider impacts.

Ana James was concerned about visibility, privacy, traffic, and sidewalks, and if the committee has considered these items.

Barbara Bailly spoke about the integrity of the neighborhood.

Al from Linda Lane commented on possible previous sales of the land and that there are traffic concerns.

Sara James commented on parcel boundaries and asked about the development process and notifications.

Tina Sweet asked if the purchase was completed yet.

Joe Aberdale asked who the applicant for CPA funds was and who would own the land.

Dave Smith was concerned about area property values.

Jamie Schumacher commented that the neighborhood should have been consulted first before entering into a purchase and sale agreement.

Laura Dupont asked about next steps. It was confirmed that the May Town Meeting is the voters next decision point.

James Bailly had various comments and also questions about how much money has been spent for a deposit on the land.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be January 21, 2020.

With no further business Blauvelt adjourned the meeting at 7:44 PM.

Minutes prepared by Christopher Rembold

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Rembold", written over the printed name.