

Town of Great Barrington
Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Minutes of October 6, 2020

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.

Chair Blauvelt called the roll. All members were present: Thomas Blauvelt, Leigh Davis, Martha Fick, Jeremy Higa, Don Howe, Jim Mercer, Patricia Sharpe, Karen W. Smith, and Kate Van Olst

Also present: Christopher Rembold

Administrative Items:

Smith moved to approve the minutes from September 8, 2020, Higa seconded. On a roll call vote, Blauvelt, Fick, Higa, Howe, Mercer, and Smith voted in favor; Davis, Sharpe and Van Olst abstained. Passed 6-0-3.

Review FY22 Step 1 Applications and Determine CPA Eligibility:

Town - Improvements to the Housatonic rail trail.

Chris Rembold presented this for the Town. He said he checked to wrong box on the Step 1. It should be in the CPA category of Recreation Land / Rehab or Restoration. Smith moved that this is eligible to move ahead to Step 2. Higa seconded. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. 9-0

Town - Lake Mansfield water quality studies.

Smith moved that this is eligible to move ahead to Step 2. Davis seconded. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. 9-0

Town - McAllister wildlife refuge.

Jess Toro represented the Commission and described the plan. Higa asked whether the mowing in Section 0 was maintenance or preservation. Toro said no, we doing invasive species removal there as preservation. Smith moved that this is eligible to move ahead to Step 2. Higa seconded. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. 9-0

Town - Inventory of landscape and open spaces.

Smith moved that this is eligible to move ahead to Step 2. Higa seconded. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. 9-0

Town - Ramsdell Library archeological study.

Blauvelt recused himself, and Smith acted as Chair.

Library Director Amanda DeGiorgis presented the application. Davis and Sharpe has questions. DeGiorgis said this request is for funds to do an archeological study, which is a state requirement needed to move forward before there is any work on the grounds at the library including an access ramp. Rembold confirmed the library is on the State Register. Smith said there has not been a town vote on the library. Higa moved that this is eligible to move ahead to Step 2. Howe seconded. On a roll call vote of the 8 voting members, all voted in favor. 8-0

First Congregational Church of GB - Restoration of stone and masonry walls at the Manse

Rembold confirmed the building is on the State Register. Blauvelt asked if the Manse was the home of the Pastor. Barbara Syer for the Applicant said yes. Fick asked if there are any church activities that take place in the Manse. Syer said yes there are some church activities that do take place in the Manse. Fick said that

becomes a thorny issue and we will have to talk to the Town's lawyer about this. The state courts have issued a three condition test we need to look at in order to fund this. It may make it difficult to fund even though it is an important historic building.

Rembold said these questions do not prevent it from being eligible for a Step 2 application. He felt the applicant could make a more detailed application because rehab of a historic structure is clearly eligible for CPA. He said the application would need to be subject to a detailed scrutiny to ensure public funds do not become entangled with religious uses.

Howe said he thinks church business meetings occur in the Manse. He also said there is a permanent historic preservation restriction held by MHC on this property, in return for funds granted to the church for stonework and roofing. Blauvelt said the SJC ruling put an interesting twist on the state having design control over a church.

Smith asked if the building needs to provide public access. Rembold said no, public access is not required.

Fick moved that this is eligible to move ahead to Step 2. Davis seconded. On a roll call vote, Davis, Fick, Higa, Howe, Mercer, Sharpe and Van Olst voted in favor; Blauvelt voted no; Smith abstained. Passed 7-1-1.

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center - Replace emergency exit doors.

Blauvelt recused himself, and Smith acted as Chair.

Rembold confirmed the structure is on the State Register.

Diane Wortis and Tristan Wilson spoke on behalf of the Mahaiwe. Wortis said they have secured private funds already to match a CPA grant. Wilson explained the proposal.

Davis asked if the doors were historic. Wilson said no they are modern fire proof crash bar exit doors to be replaced in kind.

Smith said she was having some difficulty seeing replacement of doors that are not historic to be eligible.

Fick said it is. She read from the eligibility grid. It fit into the rehab/restoration category to make improvements to comply with codes.

Fick moved that this is eligible to move ahead to Step 2. Higa seconded. On a roll call vote of the 8 voting members, Fick, Higa, Howe, Mercer, Sharpe and Van Olst voted in favor; Smith voted no; Davis abstained. Passed 6-1-1.

Clinton Church Restoration - second phase of restoration work

Rembold confirmed the building is on the State Register.

Director Eugenie Sills explained the project at the former church. There was some discussion about the utility line work. Rembold said that work in the street probably would not be eligible, but work to replace the building-owned utilities could be considered eligible as they are necessary to make the building functional.

Smith moved that this is eligible to move ahead to Step 2. Higa seconded. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. 9-0

Reports from Committee Members:

Blauvelt said Step 2 applications are due November 6.

Higa said there were no housing applications for Step 1. He suggested that the committee consider putting more than 10% into housing reserve in case there is an off-cycle housing application submitted.

Davis said she now works for Construct, and would look into whether this impacts her ability to vote on housing grants.

Howe gave an update on the trolley shelter project.

Rembold said a Historic preservation restriction has been finalized for the Historical Society Wheeler Property, as required by the Committee.

Citizen's Speak: None

Next Meetings: November 10, and November 17

Blauvelt adjourned the meeting at 5:58 PM.

Minutes prepared by Christopher Rembold

