

Town of Great Barrington, Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Minutes of March 19, 2015
Great Barrington Fire Station

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Vice-Chair Jessica Dezieck.

Members present: Ed Abrahams, Thomas Blauvelt, Jessica Dezieck, Martha Fick, Suzanne Fowle.

Members absent: Kathleen Jackson, William Nappo, Deborah Salem, and Karen W. Smith

Also present: Town Planner Chris Rembold and Town Manager Jennifer Tabakin

Administrative Business

Dezieck asked the Town Manager to present her ideas about the CPA Administrator position. Tabakin said she had developed a position description based on models from other CPA communities. The person would do the necessary administrative work, manage the projects and contracts, help the CPC do its planning, and assist applicants as well. She would create the position and it would begin in the next fiscal year. The person would report to her but be required to work closely with the CPC. She believes it will average five hours per week and the pay rate would be equal to about \$20 per hour. At around \$5,000 per year, this would be able to be covered under the CPC administrative account budget, leaving enough administrative funds for other items.

Dezieck asked for a formal vote. Fowle moved to ask the Town Manager to create the CPA Administrator position to perform administrative and planning functions for and provide staff support to the CPC. Blauvelt seconded. All were in favor.

Tabakin said she would try to incorporate CPC comments into the position description. She will send the description prior to the next CPC meeting.

Abrahams moved to approve the Minutes of January 3, 2015, as amended. Fowle seconded. All were in favor.

Fowle moved to approve the Minutes of February 5, 2015. Abrahams seconded. All in favor with Blauvelt abstaining.

Town Meeting Preparation

Rembold presented the draft CPC report to Town Meeting. He reviewed the budget as presented on page 2 and discussed the conservatively estimated budget versus the expected actual total revenue. He also reviewed the proposed warrant articles and a spreadsheet that shows the warrant articles (both administrative and project related) versus the CPA budget. The first article will be the administrative article. A second article may be needed in order to top off the 2015 reserves. It may not be needed; this needs to be checked with the Town Accountant.

The last article will be for the project allocations. The CPC report includes a summary of each project, as well as a map locating each project. Voters could vote for the entire amount or for the projects individually.

There were some typos in the report and suggestions on the warrant article. Rembold will finalize these. The report will be included in the Town Meeting warrant so voters can refer to the project details.

Blauvelt made a motion to ask the Selectboard to include the CPC Report in the Town Meeting warrant. Fick seconded. All were in favor.

Blauvelt made a motion to approve the draft warrant articles. Fick seconded. All were in favor.

Project Funding Conditions

The Committee received a letter from the CDC of South Berkshire related to when they receive the funding for the Open Space project. The letter requests that some of the \$300,000 be released up front if the project receives Town Meeting approval. Dezieck asked Tim Geller of the CDC to review the request. Geller said the request is to have \$40,000 be released immediately after the grant is signed so they can engage the wetlands scientist and landscape architects and begin the design. He said they want to break ground on new buildings in the fall. Their goal is that once the Co-Op market is built, the open space will also be ready at the same time.

Fowle asked whether the request was for the funds to be released right after town meeting. Rembold said no and the conditions of funding for this project still apply. A grant agreement must be signed first. Then the design money could be released. The rest of the money would be subject to the other conditions.

Dezieck said the grant agreement also sets the schedule for the distribution of funds. We can write the agreement to allow for the release of the design funds. Fowle said it is good of the CDC to be upfront and ask for the money, but it might be overkill since the grant agreement will have the disbursement details. Fowle said she did not think the intention is for the money to be released only in one lump sum. Rembold said it would be best if the Committee could vote so its intentions are clear.

Abrahams moved that the first \$40,000 be released after the grant agreement is signed. Blauvelt seconded. All were in favor.

Rembold discussed other project conditions. He said he discussed the proposed conditions with Stuart at the Coalition and with Town Counsel and the conditions are appropriate. He said it is not clear what level of funding for historic preservation should require a permanent historic preservation restriction. He said Counsel suggested there are other ways to address the anti-aid amendment such as public access agreements or recapture of funds. Fowle wanted to clarify whether requiring restrictions was allowed. Rembold said it is allowed, but not necessarily required unless the Town owns the land.

Draft Grant Agreement

Dezieck asked whether the CPA Administrator would be the project liaison. Rembold said that would make sense.

With regards to records and reporting requirements Fick suggested a checklist would be helpful to both the CPC and the project. So the agreement or an Exhibit would include a check list (e.g. has the architect certified the Secretary's historic standards have been met, etc.).

Abrahams said the draft looks ok to him, but he is assuming this draft has everything it needs. Rembold said it has the basic form and content of other agreements the Town uses. And he used other CPA communities' agreements as a starting point. It does not have to be finalized until after Town Meeting.

Communications and Outreach

Rembold said St. James Place had an idea for a public event. Alexandra Lincoln of St. James Place said the idea is to invite all project sponsors to come and discuss the projects with the press and members of the public. The idea would be to have an informal setting and to build some awareness and support. She said they are looking to do this in the afternoon of Saturday, April 25.

The Committee thought this was a good idea and asked Rembold to help coordinate it.

Rembold said he will be on the radio on April 30 in the morning. Blauvelt said he might be able to help.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 14 at 5:30 PM.

Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Dezieck adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Materials presented or distributed for this meeting:

- Draft Minutes of January 3 meeting as amended on February 5
- Draft Minutes of February 5 meeting
- Draft CPA Grant Agreement
- Draft CPC Report to Town Meeting
- Draft CPA warrant articles for Town Meeting
- Letter dated March 19, 2015 from the CDCSB requesting a portion of the open space grant be released for open space design activities

Respectfully submitted: _____

