

Town of Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Minutes of May 24, 2016

Great Barrington Town Hall, 2nd Floor Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chair Karen W. Smith

Members present: Ed Abrahams, Thomas Blauvelt, Jessica Dezieck, Martha Fick, Kathleen Jackson, Bill Nappo Deborah Salem. Also present: Town Planner/CPA Administrator Chris Rembold

Members absent: Suzanne Fowle was not present since she did not seek reelection to the Planning Board

Minutes of March 22, 2016: Dezieck moved to approve, Abrahams seconded. All were in favor.

Committee Membership / Expiring Terms:

Smith thanked Suzie Fowle, who represented the Planning Board until not seeking reelection to the Planning Board earlier this month, for her efforts and expertise appreciated.

Smith reminded members that all terms are expiring at the end of June except Abrahams who has one more year. Smith asked Rembold to consider how Committee member terms could be staggered so they don't all expire at once.

Salem said the Housing Authority has appointed Nan Wile to replace her as the HA representative.

Town Meeting Follow Up:

Salem said there was a misunderstanding of how people apply for CPA funds. She said applications come through the CPC but are not generated by the CPC. She said there was a comment that the CPC should do something about the Housatonic School, but making applications is not up to this group. She asked that next year we clarify the process.

Planning Ahead; Applications for the Coming Year:

Smith asked if there anything about the application process or procedures we should change.

Abrahams suggested we think about overall priorities before we accept applications, and whether we should save money for future projects. Jackson agreed that was a good idea. She said if we say we are prioritizing open space, for example, then we would not be showing some bias during the application review. Smith said what if nobody applied for that type of project. Jackson said the vision should be larger than that, and CPA should benefit future generations not just the next year or few years.

Nappo said we should prioritize public projects over private projects. Town projects should be a priority.

Dezieck was not sure about picking one thing to focus on. Fick agreed there should be a balance, but agrees with the Town as a priority.

Blauvelt said he would not want to discourage applications by saying we are focusing on one area.

Abrahams asked if the next meeting can be for this discussion—to think about priorities and our plan. Smith said that is a good idea.

Rembold said future years' funding would likely range between 400K to 500K.

Rembold said the Committee needs to review the existing CPA Plan. Every year, by law, the Committee must study the community's needs. Rembold asked every member to discuss with their committees what

the CPA priorities should be. He said the Committee should then consider revisions to the Plan, and then schedule a public hearing.

Fire District Step 1 Application:

Blauvelt asked if customers of the Fire/Water District should recuse themselves for possible conflict of interest. Rembold said he thought that since thousands of other people are also customers of the District, Committee members would not have unique interest in this. He will inquire into this issue.

Bob Avery, Fire District Prudential Committee vice Chair said the District is applying for CPA funds to pay for the cost of land for a secondary drinking water source. The State DEP would like us to find another source. He said the District drilled a ten years ago at Taft Farms and found water but could not use it. He said that cost \$500,000. Then they drilled on Stockbridge Road where they went almost 1,000 feet deep and could not find water. That cost \$750,000.

He said now the District is looking at drilling on land off North Plain Road owned by Bally Gill. The District is leasing the land at \$4,000 per month. There are no test wells yet but they expect them to be go only about 200 feet deep. They are still in the permitting phase. The drilling and testing of the water will cost about \$150,000.

He said if water is found they will purchase the property for \$1.3 million. It totals 82 acres. He said they are hopeful because their engineer gave them favorable sites to explore and that is why they are leasing the site until they find water. He said the District did not ask predevelopment costs from CPA because of timing and they had that money in the budget.

He said using CPA funds for this new water source is a wise use. Taxpayers give the CPA money, and then CPA can award it to the District so those same taxpayers don't have to pay as much for water. He said there are 1,600 customers (services) in the District.

Walter Atwood, Chair of the Prudential Committee, said that DEP restricts access right near wellheads, and so about 22 to 26 acres would be totally restricted. He said the rest of the land could be available for public use. He said eventually the 212 acres of District land at East Mountain could be public too.

Smith said it clearly qualifies for CPA in the open space category, probably as acquisition or creation.

Fick asked if there any problem from the pollution of the Housatonic river. Atwood said the well likely would not be very deep and so would be above the river strata. If was below the river strata then DEP will want to see what sort of geology is there and determine if there is any threat.

Smith said your application says that would need these funds in November 2016, but we won't be ready yet. And, CPA won't have that much money. Atwood said whatever the District borrows would be 20-40 years and at a low rate. They would be able to borrow less or pay down some of it. But they won't know the terms of the borrowing until the fall, most likely.

There was some discussion about public access to the land. Abrahams said it doesn't matter about the water area but it does for the rest of the property. They are not asking us to pay for water per se. They are asking for funds in the open space category.

Jackson said we will want to see the appraisal. Rembold said we do an appraisal and use CPA funds.

Smith said this qualifies for CPA and there are many facets to this project. She said the Step 2 application will be complex; we will want detailed information.

Blauvelt moved to approve the Step 1 application as CPA eligible and invite a Step 2 application. Jackson seconded. All were in favor.

Planning For Coming Year

Rembold reminded everyone to check in with their Committees and to review the CPA plan.

There was general consensus that the Step 1 and Step 2 deadlines of September 1 and October 1, respectively, were good. However the time to make a decision was too short and we should be able to take more time.

There was consensus that the Committee would begin accepting Step 1 applications July 1 with a deadline of September 1.

Reports from Committee Members

Nappo said the Massachusetts Historical Commission granted \$15,000 to the Town's Historical Commission. This matches the CPA grant.

There was some discussion about a need for trails in downtown and at the River. Rembold reminded everybody that the Master Plan and the Open Space & Recreation Plans are part of the CPA Plan. These documents include detailed maps and check lists of open space and recreation needs including trails. He asked Committee members to review these documents while thinking about the CPA Plan. He will send relevant sections to the Committee in time for the next meeting.

Nappo said the Newsboy restoration is 95% complete.

Smith said the Parks Commission is still looking for a place to locate public bathrooms.

Citizens Speak

A member of the public complimented the Committee on its hard work.

Michelle Loubert asked if a project can reapply in future years if not approved by Town Meeting. Rembold said yes.

Set Next Meeting Date

Tuesday, June 14 at 6:30 PM at the Fire Station (note different start time).

Adjourn 6:50 PM

Materials presented or distributed for this meeting:

- Draft minutes of March
- Step 1 application from GB Fire District

Respectfully submitted:



