

**Town of Lenox
Community Preservation Committee
6 Walker Street Lenox MA
Meeting Minutes
January 18th 2024
6:00 p.m.
Town Hall/Land Use**

Documents Available: 1/18/24 agenda, 11/6/23 meeting minutes

Members Present: Tom Delasco- chair, Shannon O'Brien, Kim Graham, Frederick Keator, Neal Maxymillian, Mark Smith

Members absent without notification: Chuck Koscher

Members Virtual: Olga Weiss

Others Present: Tracy Johnson, Chris Johnson, Diana French, Kevin O'Conner, Catherine Hibbard, Betsy Dovydenas, Jonas Dovydenas, Kate McNulty-Vaughan, Lori Pestana, Dan Bross, Rebecca Schofield (Zoom) Lucy Kennedy (Zoom) Clarence Fanto (Zoom)

Staff: Neena Martino

TD called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

1. Approval of Minutes- November 6th 2023

Motion to approve minutes made by FK, seconded by NM. Chuck Kosher was not in attendance at the meeting and needs to be removed from the members present section. As amended, all were in favor.

2. Review, Discussion and Approval Decisions of FY25 Applications

- **Pennrose**—Brushwood Project, \$500,000

NM questioned Rebecca Schofield on their amended application, which included connectivity to the town land and its trails adjacent to the project. She said their architect is working on the final sign package, which will include signs for trailheads and trail markers, and she will share that info with the town once it is complete.

Motion made by FK to approve \$500,00 to Pennrose for the Brushwood Project, seconded by NM. All were in favor.

- **Pennrose**—238 Pittsfield Road, \$500,000

TD asked if this request is similar to the one made for Brushwood, in that this would be the first \$500,000 of an overall \$1,000,000 ask for the project; RS confirmed that it would be. She explained that in order for them to apply for state financing, they need a local commitment. They are currently preparing an application for funding to submit in February and the state is comfortable with an approval of some funding here as that commitment, even though it won't be officially approved until town

meeting. TD explained that the board previously discussed the possibility of holding out on the request at the moment for two reasons- A. limited CPC funds and B. a desire to see how it all works out with the Brushwood project first. MS spoke of his concerns regarding the access to and from the site as it still seems to be pretty problematic and there haven't been any solid answers on how they plan to handle it. RS explained they are at the point where the traffic solution is still in the works, but they have hired a traffic consultant who will be putting together feasible proposals that will work for the site. KG also spoke of her concerns for the project, including the fact that there has already been \$1,000,000 commitment to Pennrose for a project that they haven't even seen any progress on yet, and that it makes more sense to take a wait and see approach on 238 while the relationship is being established. RS said they would be willing to reduce their request in order to receive some level of funds right now, as they won't be able to submit their application to the state without the town's support.

Motion made by FK to table the 238 Pittsfield Road application, seconded by MS.

KMV then told the board that the Affordable Housing Trust has already voted to commit \$100,000 to this project. All voted in favor to table the request.

- **HomeFarm at Undermountain, \$189,750**

Motion made by FK to approve \$100,000 for HomeFarm at Undermountain, seconded by MS.

The board went on to discuss the project. NM asked for clarification on funds in hand versus pledges and commitments. Lori Pestana explained that since October 1st, they have raised \$185,880 from 57 unique donors and have \$81,500 in the bank towards this project, with a firm commitment of another \$100,000. NM recalled that the board had asked HomeFarm to show a little more initiative on their own in terms of raising money and if they were able to demonstrate that, they would consider approving their entire ask. TD clarified it would be essentially a 50/50 match at this point. KG noted that she was inclined to agree with NM.

NM amended the motion to support the entire request of \$189,750, seconded by KG. FK encouraged HomeFarm to try to find other funding sources in the future and not have the town carry such weight, as it allows them to support many more groups over time. The board voted in favor of the amendment.

- **Lenox Affordable Housing Trust, \$37,000**

Motion made by FK to table the application, seconded by NM for the sake of discussion. FK explained the reason he wants to table it is because he feels they are merely asking for the allocation that gets segregated in the budget line when they get state funding, which basically just moves money outside town meeting to the housing trust to distribute at their will and not the will of the town. He also stated that the Housing Trust clearly has funds, as they were able to give \$100,000 to the Pennrose project at 238 Pittsfield Road. OW countered that the Housing Trust has this money earmarked for the first-time home buyers program and argued that it should be supported. KG clarified that the \$37,000 would be committed to the first-time home buyers program as well as the CDBG rehab program, which are both high priorities in town currently, and agreed that they should be in support of it. NM questioned where the money from the CDBG would actually go if it was awarded; KMV explained that it would not actually go into the Trust and pointed out that they never actually referenced the CDBG grant in their CPC application. NM voiced his support for housing that is affordable in Lenox, and is in favor of any way

they can spend dollars to help people that don't necessarily fall under the moniker of "affordable housing", which the first-time home buyer program does.

NM made an amendment to approve the request \$37,000, seconded by KG. All were in favor, except FK.

KG suggested that OW communicate the board's frustration over the lack of communication back to the Housing Trust; she agreed to do that.

3. Schedule subsequent meeting

The board agreed to meet again on Thursday February 22nd at 6pm to vote on the applications of Ventfort Hall, the Mount and the Church on the Hill.

Motion made to adjourn by FK, seconded by NM. All were in favor. Adjourned at 7:05pm