



City of Westfield

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2018 – 6:30 pm, City Council Chambers,
Westfield Municipal Building,
59 Court Street, Westfield, MA

Members attending:
Members absent:

Staff attending:

William Carellas(Alt)
Cheryl Crowe
Kate Deviny(Alt)
Cynthia Gaylord
Daniel Kelly
Joe Muto
Vincent Olinski
William Porter
Thomas Sharp
Michael Tirrell (Alt)

Jay Vinskey
Christine Fedora

APPROVED

Chairman Sharp called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

1. Public Participation & PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING to solicit the needs, possibilities and resources of the City regarding the Community Preservation Act.

Chairman Sharp read the notice into the record for the public informational hearing to solicit the needs, possibilities and resources of the City regarding the Community Preservation Act.

Chairman Sharp asked if there was anyone in the room who had any comments or questions regarding the Commission or how the spending of the CPC funds are spent?

Dan Call- Thanked the Committee for the opportunity to come before them. He felt the process the CPC follows is very friendly and fair, the CPC does a good job in that it asks the right kinds of questions.

Chair Sharp noted the Commission is trying to stay true to its Plan. Vinskey informed the room there is a copy of the Master Plan on the podium if anyone wishes to review it.

Chair Sharp asked if there was further discussion? There being no one else to speak the Chair closed the public hearing and proceeded to the regular agenda.

2. Review and Approval of 1-11-18 Minutes.

Chair Sharp noted the minutes were sent out earlier today and asked the members had an opportunity to review them? He further noted he didn't have a chance to review them.

Member Kelly MOTOINED, seconded by Member Gaylord to approve the minutes of 1-11-18. Approved.

3. Review of Budget/Funds

Vinsky reviewed the budget for the members. The total CPA funds are about \$800,000.00; HOUSING about \$400,000.00 of that. HISTORIC \$50,000.00, OPEN SPACE \$50,000.00; UNDESIGNATED \$300,000.00 Includes state match.

He noted the Committee had already committed to the Rail trail \$250,000.00, which has already been deducted from the budget this fiscal year. They are seeking an additional \$250,000.00 as a precommitment for the rail trail for the next fiscal year. He further noted it's up to the Committee to decide how they want to fund it.

Vinsky indicated the funds could come out of the undesignated for this year or it could come out of the next fiscal year, he further noted the money needs to be available early in Fiscal Year 2019. City Engineer Mark Cresora noted it was his hope to have the Council vote on the application at their first meeting in the new fiscal year that way they wouldn't have to wait until the CPA meet after the new fiscal year.

APPROVED

315,000 in undesignated and 50,000 other categories. Jay explained fiscal year budget about 400,000 and change put into categories, 50,000 in each district and then 315,000 in undesignated, last year started 315,000. Rail trail came out of that leaves 65,000. In that this year.

Chair Sharp inquired how many dollars are we talking about tonight? If said yes to everyone? Jay if include rail trail \$250,000. Stanley park \$85,000. Talking 431,000 for petitions in front of board.

Chair Sharp inquired how the rest of the members felt about funding this year or next year? Members Gaylord and Olinski would like to see the funding from next year.

4. Review of New/Pending Applications

- Stanley Park(historic) – Western Avenue - \$85,000.00

Representatives for the petition of Stanley Park who were in attendance were: Jeff Glaze, Harry Rock, Barbara Brain and Bob McKean.

The applicants gave a brief review of the application. This was for 2 structures; the Grist Mill which was built in the 60's which needs repairs and maintenance work as well as the Meeting House. They have not been open to the public for quite some time.

A brief review of the previous meeting occurred. Stanley Park had concerns regarding the requirements of the Committee to hold restrictions on properties that receive CPA funding when Stanley Park already has an incorporation document which states the park will be in perpetuity.

At the request of Member Porter the Board referred this to the law department. Chair Sharp and Planner Vinskey met with Bob, it was the law department's feeling that it's not necessary for a restriction to be permanent unless the Committee feels it is necessary. Mr. McKean noted \$85,000 would be enough for renovations not enough to rebuild, he further noted if for some reason something were to happen to the buildings they would not be able to guarantee the use of the buildings, he further noted if something were to happen they would return the \$85,000.00.

Chair Sharp asked about a Memorandum of Understanding? Mr. McKean informed him they wanted to make sure of the basic terms prior to working on that.

The Committee reviewed the leverage funding and noted there is a lot of in kind contribution that is being done. Mr. Glaze added the amount they are requesting is a fraction of what is going to be spent, carpentry crews and outside contractors, sending own power tools or equipment, in terms of renovations he didn't have the details. Mr. McKean added the total cost would be around \$169,000 they have received 40% and already plus other donations.

Barbara Brain also noted the park wants it to stay in perpetuity everyone is committed to make sure it stays in the park.

Mr. Glaze inquired if they had asked the City Attorney if they had asked about the payback option? Vinskey, referencing the City Law Dept. memo from January, informed him it was not advisable. Chair Sharp noted the memo states the CPC can make their decision, it doesn't have to be on the state level. Chair Sharp noted it could be a restriction for 30 years versus perpetuity and the memo states that the CPC can make a decision. Vinskey clarified that the use of funds should be for public purpose is up to the committee to determine if protections to that investment are sufficient. Chair Sharp suggested having an agreement to review.

Member Olinski spoke in support, it's a great asset to the city, getting legalease out of the way, and he's anticipating it will move forward. Member Gaylord also spoke in favor, she was comfortable with the 30 year versus perpetuity, and she felt it's worth its value.

Mr. McKean asked if the Board could vote tonight. Chair Sharp was not comfortable voting on something without having it in front of him. Member Gaylord noted she would be willing to have a special meeting, Chair sharp also noted he would be willing to hold a special meeting too. Discussion to be continued then.

- Columbia Greenway (recreation) - \$250,000.00

Chair Sharp inquired if the Committee has already committed \$250,000. You are asking for an additional 250,000? Mark Cressotti – City Engineer - initial request was \$250,000. Mr. Cressotti noted he is asking for a second installment of the \$250,000, still outstanding expenses such as lighting, still working on 3rd stretch. Mr. Cressotti noted he was hoping the Committee vote tonight on and noted the Council will otherwise have to wait until August, which could delay things.

Dan Call -78 Granville Road - Informed the Board this is what they talked about at their last meeting where they mentioned they would be coming back again for a similar request. This \$250,000 would complete the amount for the design work required for the central portion of the greenway. He further noted this funding impacts the construction money from MASS DOT .

The Committee further discussed what budget this money should be coming from. After discussion the Board felt the funding should come from the next year, but contingent on the budget being approved and money being available.

Member Oliniski MOTIONED, Chair Sharp seconded to approve the funding of \$250,000.00 coming out of next year's budget (FY 19), contingent on the CPA budget being approved and the funds being available. All in favor.

- Elks Lodge Building (historic) – 56 Franklin Street - \$96,576.00

Steve Andras - Trustee of the Elks addressed the Board. He's been a member of the Elks for 17 years, they are seeking money to restore the historical part of the building.

He gave a brief history of the roughly 150 year old building. The original owner was Edwin Rutchin of the Vandussen Tobacco Company it was part of the original Whip Building. The lodge took over in 1929, the building sat there for a while, he noted he didn't have much history as far as the building goes.

He explained what they would do with the funding if received. They would like to restore the front and rear columns to make it look like it did 150 years ago. While the architects were looking at the site they found more than they were planning on. He also noted this is a very active club in the city which hosts many events.

He further noted the memberships are on decline just like other memberships. It was also noted that some of the memberships were merged.

Chair Sharp noted if the Committee does provide funding they would have to provide a commitment to keep the way it is he also felt the applicant should receive more than one quote. Mr. Andras informed him he's tried to get another quote but with the work involved it's very difficult to find someone who is qualified to do the work. Member Muto also noted this type of work is governed by the state and it's very difficult to find people to do these types of projects.

The Committee also mentioned they like the projects to have some other type of leverage funding, the Board does not like to fund 100% of a project.

Chair Sharp suggested the Committee table this discussion for tonight and continue to the Board's next meeting which will probably be in a month. Agreed.

The Committee also noted there would need to be a deed restriction put on the building and inquired as to how it works, as the Grand Lodge owns the building.

Member Olinski inquired about the money they have spent so far? The amount they spent so far was approximately \$450,000.00, it was suggested they take that amount and include it in the application to show they have other sources of funding rather than just the amount being requested from the CPC.

- Down Payment Assistance Program (housing)

Vinskey noted the housing funds language program being considered is similar to a Holyoke program, the hope is this will be able to be funded with CPA, which is generally less stringent than the federal funds. The funding will be utilized for a down payment assistance program for low income families to help purchase homes, the amount being requested for 15 buyers at a max of \$5,000 per applicant.

Chair Sharp inquired if this has been researched and if it's legal? Planner Vinskey noted other communities have done this and we have been working with the Law Dept. Member Olinski added the Community Development Department has done similar projects and have experience in moderating it. Member Olinski noted when people own their homes and pay taxes they take pride in their ownership and it builds community. Member Kelly also noted he was comfortable with this type of a program and added if Peter Miller and Jay Vinskey are working on this he would have no problem with such a program.

Member Gaylord inquired as to how it would be administered? Would it be first come first serve basis or lottery? Vinskey noted it's still to be seen, it could depend on the demand noting this is somewhat of a pilot program.

Member Crowe thought it would be helpful if the Commission had an opportunity to review the paperwork. Chair Sharp also was in favor of more time noting there would probably be a special meeting within the next few weeks anyway, and suggested it be tabled for tonight.

Member Gaylord MOTIONED, seconded by Member Olinski to table until the next meeting. It was also noted the Commission would like Peter Miller to attend the meeting. All in Favor.

5. Status of Recommended/Funded Projects

- Old Town Hall (funding request resubmission by new applicant)

Presenting the proposal was Robert McDonald of the Work Opportunity Center. Mr. McDonald gave a brief history of the Work Opportunity Center. It is a day program that offers services to disabled individuals, vocational training. They are expanding their services. They have been working with the First Congregational Church, their original intention was to rent, after researching it was felt it would be more advantageous to enter into a purchase agreement with the church. An agreement for a purchase price to buy the building has been worked out. It is his understanding the Church has a commitment from the CPC for funding for the repointing the outside brick and making the building handicap accessible. He further noted one of the contingencies for them to purchase the building would be to have the money transferred to them. He added department of DDS have given their approval to move but are concerned with the handicapped access.

Mr. McDonald explained they will be using the first floor for the programming, second floor would be for their corporate headquarters. Their intentions are to totally gut the building, the building itself has good bones, the arch way in the inside needs to be renovated, which will be a large expenditure on their part. He further noted they have leveraged funding in the amount of \$17,200.00.

Planner Vinskey noted \$163,000 has already been appropriated, the current application is for \$172,000. He further noted that \$163,000 is already sitting in an account, if approved at 163K, wouldn't require additional appropriation.

Member Olinski felt it might be more advantageous to take it out of the church as it will eliminate any religious hurdle.

Chair Sharp noted he loves the Old Town Hall, nothing will change that the building is important. What complicates the situation is that the applicant is not the owner of the property it would be much easier if he were to come back when he is the owner of the building. Mr. MacDonald added there are other people involved lawyers, bankers who won't let them purchase the building if he doesn't have a commitment for the funding. He further noted the purchase and sale agreement is contingent upon him receiving the funding from the CPC.

Member Gaylord noted the Historical Commission is not backing the church but rather the building itself. The Historical Commission was delighted when they came along and said they would take and restore it further. The restriction that would be placed on the building

is that the façade of the building has to be maintained. The church has been trying to sell this for 3 years.

Rich Gaylord noted the church also wants the transfer to occur.

Mr. McDonald noted they are not asking the Commission to move the money but rather looking for the commission to transfer the grant to Work Opportunity as the same property, the money goes with the property, not the owners.

Member Olinski suggested contingent upon the new owner to supply the paperwork showing they are the new owners and that nothing happens until they buy the building, and the Council approves the transfer. Planner Vinskey noted the Council has already approved the funding and the money has been transferred, a letter notifying the Council will be submitted.

Member Kelly MOTIONED, seconded by Member Olinski to make a commitment to approve the transfer of funds previously approved for the Old Town Hall to Work Opportunity Center, as the new owners of Old Town Hall building and once the transfer is completed. All in Favor. Vinskey noted once the new owner takes over the property the money can be accessed.

Member Gaylord also inquired if they could possibly keep some of the woodwork on the first room on the right? Mr. McDonald indicated he would try.

Planner Vinskey noted he would notify the Council of the desire to transfer the funds.

APPROVED

- West Farms Schoolhouse (funding request resubmission by Historical Commission)

Vinskey stated this is a similar situation. The money has been appropriated. The Historical Commission is now in charge of the property. The funding needs to be re-affirmed to the Historical Commission, as suggested by the Law Dept.

Kathy Deviny - Addressed the Board informing them The Historical Commission Commission now has formal control over the West Farms School house. She noted she is here to ask the Commission to transfer the funds to the Hisotrical Commission so they can move forward with the project. She also noted they have over \$13,000 worth of donations.

Member Olinski noted he was glad this is going to be handled by the Historical Commission,. Member Olinski MOTIONED, seconded by Member Crowe to approve the transfer of funds (\$65,000) to the Historical Commission. Planner Vinskey noted there was \$7405 of surplus funds they might want to include in the motion.

Member Olinski MOTIONED, seconded by Member Crowe to amend the motion to include the repurposing of the \$7405 to also be available for use. All in Favor.

- Hotel Bismark

Joe Shibley, Jeff Penn addressed the Board. He noted the work they have done now triggers ADA compliance so now they are required to install a handicap ramp, he further requested that he be allowed to re-budget the \$250,000. In talking with the owner and the contractor the original estimate was about \$41,000. He believes he will be able to complete in the amount of \$30,000. He would also like to add a ramp as part of the façade part of the plan, eliminate changes to front steps.

Chair Sharp inquired if this would be a change in dollars? He was confident no additional funds would be required, he felt it would be a wash. Member Gaylord MOTIONED, seconded by Member Crowe to remove the work on the steps and replace with a handicapped ramp. All in Favor.

Vinskey informed the Commission the deed restriction language is still being worked on.

- Stowe house - Deed restriction outstanding, still being worked on.
- Athenaeum - Deed restriction outstanding, still being worked on.
- YMCA Mansion - Considering maybe not implementing the restriction and returning money instead

Other Business

Member Gaylord noted Pine Hill Cemetery is still thinking of sending in a request for iron fencing.

Matt Roman - noted he would like to try and get a museum downtown.

Member Crowe MOTIONED, seconded by Member Gaylord to adjourn at 8:32. All in favor.

APPROVED