



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Community Preservation Committee

Mark Krackiewicz, Chair
Jon Bockian, Vice Chair
Bob DiRico
Dennis J. Duff
Allen Gallagher
Abigail Hammett
Jamie O'Connell
Elodia Thomas
Matthew Walter

Minutes of CPC Public Hearing and Meeting Thursday, July 18, 2024, at 7:00PM held in the City Council Chamber with remote access via Zoom.

Committee Members Present: Mark Krackiewicz, Chair; Jon Bockian, Vice Chair; Bob DiRico; Dennis J. Duff; Allen Gallagher; Abigail Hammett; Jamie O'Connell; Elodia Thomas; and Matt Walter.

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Tom Elmore, Elmore Design Collaborative; Vincent Piccirilli, City Council; Michael Lara, Watertown Housing Authority; Mel Miller, Preservation of Affordable Housing; Linda Scott; Joyce Kelly; Joan Gumbleton; Margie Wayne; Jackie Sullivan; Jacky van Leeuwen; Liz Ketchum; and Josh Rosmarin.

1. Open Public Hearing

Mark Krackiewicz opened the public hearing and introduced the community preservation committee.

2. Hearing Presentation

A. Draft FY2024 Annual CPA Report

Mark referenced the draft annual CPA report which is attached to these minutes.

B. FY2024 Annual Public Hearing Presentation

In his presentation, Mark outlined the contents of the annual report—listing the CPA projects completed and approved to date. He also reported on CPA revenue generated 2018 through 2024 and the amount in the specific category and undesignated reserves. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

C. Commander's Mansion Cultural Landscape Report Update

Tom Elmore described the highlights of his research on the Commander's Mansion. As part of his presentation, Tom displayed historical maps and photos of the Commander's Mansion. He detailed the existing conditions and the opportunities to restore the landscape by clearing overgrown shrubs around the mansion and clearing views along the path on the North Beacon side of the property.

He also made recommendations about:

- Removing a newly introduced shed and stored materials from the landscape;
- Restoring historic walkways and bluestone edging;
- Retaining the arbors as currently configured;
- Introducing signage that Talcott Avenue is not a through street;
- Not reintroducing the formal rose garden due to the anticipated maintenance requirements;
- Improving the relationship between roads and paths connected to the site to signal entry to a significant space; and
- Not restoring the iron fence along North Beacon due to cost, vulnerability to road salt corrosion, and threat of damage by motor vehicles.

Tom answered questions about the views on North Beacon. He recommended first removing dead trees and then invasive species with a mind toward the view of the mansion from the road. Tom responded to questions about a plant list. He said more research was needed to find the historic plant list and the plant list and design would be part of the next phase. Committee members questioned whether broader climate resiliency would be addressed as well as connectivity to the surrounding complex and park would be part of the Cultural Landscape Report. He said the plantings were not part of the scope and the report would address connecting the landscape to the broader Arsenal complex. Tom also emphasized historic plantings should not be selected without ensuring their hardiness in the face of climate change. He clarified his recommendation about removing the damaged sections of fence and not planting shrubs for security or as a boundary to the property. Tom also mentioned that goats could clear poison ivy initially, though it would need to be maintained, and that the gatehouse should not be moved, rather a replica could possibly be installed at the entrance. Next steps would be obtaining assessment of the building exterior, developing priorities with the Department of Community Development and Planning. Tom noted hazards such as electrical boxes with numerous extension cords on the grounds, exposed tent stakes, and drainage issues should be addressed immediately.

3. Public Comment

Joan Gumbleton asked about an irrigation system on the Commander's Mansion site. Bob DiRico answered there was irrigation on the lawn and some of the plantings. There were no other comments from the public.

4. Close Public Hearing

The chair closed the public hearing at 8:11.

5. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order with a roll call.

6. Acceptance of CPC Minutes

A. 2024-5-16-Draft-CPC-Minutes

Motion: Allen Gallagher moved to accept the 5/16/24 CPC minutes as amended. Elodia Thomas seconded the motion.

Vote: Matt Walter, Abigail Hammett, Elodia Thomas, Jon Bockian, Mark Krackiewicz,

and Bob DiRico voted in favor. Dennis J. Duff and Jamie O'Connell voted present.

B. 2024-6-18-Draft-CPC-AHT-Minutes

Motion: Jon Bockian moved to accept the 6/18/24 CPC/AHT minutes as amended, and Allen seconded the motion.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Dennis J. Duff, Jon Bockian, Bob DiRico, Jamie O'Connell, Matt Walter, and Allen Gallagher voted in favor. Mark Krackiewicz and Abigail Hammett voted present.

7. Committee Discussion

A. Housing Consultant Contract

As part of the discussion, committee members asked for clarification about the contract configuration regarding hourly rate and a not to exceed figure as opposed to flat rates for each task. Next steps are obtaining clarification about configuration of the billing rate. The proposed scope of work is attached to these minutes.

B. Election of Committee Chairs

In the discussion, Elodia asked that the election be done in person with every committee member in the room. She had concerns and read a statement, which is attached to these minutes.

Committee members agreed not to defer vote and recommended concerns be sent to Mark and put on the agenda of a future meeting.

Motion: Matt nominated Mark as Chair and Jamie seconded the motion.

In discussion, Dennis J. Duff asked about Mark's vision moving forward and Bob DiRico agreed the issues Elodia raised in her statement should be put on a future agenda.

Vote: Allen Gallagher, Abigail Hammett, Jon Bockian, Mark Krackiewicz and Jamie O'Connell voted in favor. Elodia Thomas and Dennis J. Duff voted against the motion.

Motion: Mark Krackiewicz nominated Jon Bockian as vice chair and Matt Walter seconded the motion. Jamie O'Connell moved to elect Jon Bockian as vice chair and Mark Krackiewicz seconded the motion.

Vote: Allen Gallagher, Abigail Hammett, Matt Walter, Jon Bockian, Bob DiRico, Mark Krackiewicz, and Jamie O'Connell voted in favor. Elodia Thomas and Dennis J. Duff voted against the motion.

C. Housing Authority/Preservation of Affordable Housing Off-Cycle Application

Mark explained that the Watertown Housing Authority and Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) would be submitting a Project Eligibility form and wanted to submit a CPA Funding application some time in September as an off-cycle application. A memo from POAH is attached to these minutes.

In the discussion, committee members asked about funding application timelines, financing success, local preference, acquisition of property, and feedback given in previous meetings. Mel Miller from POAH said the design would reflect community feedback. She added phasing of the project and acquisition of property was being

evaluated. Mel assured the committee that all the items, such as a detailed design, phasing and construction costs would be addressed in their application.

Committee members also raised concerns about an unfair advantage for an early application, status of waiving permit fees, and inquired as to when funds would be drawn. Mel said POAH would prefer to draw down funds early for predevelopment. Michael Lara responded there was a need to show a local commitment to be placed in a higher priority tier and prepare the strongest application for state.

On the issue of an affordable housing deed restriction in perpetuity, committee members asked for Lanae to seek guidance from Stuart Saginor and a legal opinion.

D. In-Person/Hybrid or Remote Meetings

Dennis checked with the Manager's office and found the Lower Hearing Room is available on the 2nd Wednesday and Thursday of the month.

Matt was not in favor of changing to in-person/hybrid meetings. Elodia stated it was better meeting in person. Abigail preferred in-person meetings and Jamie wanted the opportunity to participate remotely.

Lanae pointed out the two dates proposed conflicted with other board and commission meetings of statutory members. Dennis would check for the availability of other dates.

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to hold in-person/hybrid meetings in the near future. Bob DiRico seconded the motion.

Vote: Jamie O'Connell, Mark Krackiewicz, Dennis J. Duff, Bob DiRico, Abigail Hammett, Allen Gallagher, and Elodia Thomas voted in favor. Jon Bockian and Matt Walter voted against the motion.

8. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis Duff moved to adjourn, and Allen Gallagher seconded the motion.

Vote: Bob DiRico, Mark Krackiewicz, Abigail Hammett, Jon Bockian, Elodia Thomas, Allen Gallagher, Dennis J. Duff, Jamie O'Connell, and Matt Walter voted in favor.

Adjournment: 9:30 PM

Attachments:

1. [Draft FY2024 Annual CPA Report](#)
2. [FY2024 Annual Public Hearing Presentation](#)
3. [Housing Consultant Contract Scope of Work 7-5-24](#)
4. [Memo from Preservation of Affordable Housing](#)
5. [Statement of Concerns Regarding Election of Chairpersons](#)