



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 Meeting Thursday, September 19, 2024, at 7:30PM held remotely via Zoom.

Committee Members Present: Mark Krackiewicz, Chair; Bob DiRico; Dennis J. Duff; Elodia Thomas; and Matt Walter.

Absent: Jon Bockian, Vice Chair; Allen Gallagher; Abigail Hammett; and Jamie O'Connell.

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Ray Dunetz, Ray Dunetz Landscape Architects; Joyce Kelly; Amy Tse; and Amelia Crawford.

1. Call to Order

Mark Krackiewicz called the meeting to order at 7:41 PM and noted it was being held remotely per the Governor's order suspending certain provisions of Open Meeting Laws.

2. Presentation by Ray Dunetz

Ray Dunetz presented the Historic Preservation Plan for the Old Burying Ground and Common Street Cemetery. After his presentation, which is attached to these minutes, Ray addressed comments and answered questions from the CPC.

Mark asked whether the project would have three sets of contractors—one for gravestone restoration, one for masonry, and one for fencing. Ray replied that the project could be bid separately, however, he recommended bidding it as one project. He added that Ivan and Ray Dunetz Landscape Architects could prepare specifications for the bid documents.

Bob DiRico asked if there were general contractors who would take on such a project. Ray said there were general contractors who could be given specifications for protecting headstones and trees. The contractor would be provided with a specifications package that includes a paint system for the fencing. He has done a lot of work with Cassidy Bros. who have a paint system that lasts 60-70 years.

Matt Walter asked if it were worth considering that some of project is maintenance because it would all be funded by CPA if lumped together. Dennis Duff asked if the city was the applicant and who would obtain the bids. Lanae explained that the Historical Society of Watertown was the applicant, and the city was the co-applicant as property owner. Further, she stated, Joyce Kelly was acting as project manager and the city would solicit the bids.

Matt asked if Ray considered creating a path from the north entrance to the Mount Auburn St. entrance. Ray pointed although the cemeteries were open to the public, they were not parks. Also, he said that there could be no digging, and the path would need to be

accessible, which would require regrading and excavation.

Elodia Thomas mentioned she had sent information about matching the fencing being used by the High School. Ray only had information about chain link fencing with black slats. Bob agreed that using the same fencing as the High School would be appropriate for the historic cemetery. Elodia also asked about doing both cemeteries at the same time. Ray responded he commonly worked with bid documents for multiple sites and that would be the least expensive and most efficient way to do the project.

Mark commented that it is current practice for family members to maintain gravestones. He presumed no surviving relatives would be available to maintain the stones to be preserved and that public funds would be used to preserve an important historic resource. Elodia asked if records could be used to track down descendants. Matt found it highly appropriate to use public funds to preserve significant historic resources. Ray emphasized it was a public benefit to preserve the cemetery and headstones as cultural heritage. Mark concluded the philosophy for investing public resources centered on preserving cultural heritage and funeral art.

Joyce asked if there were any laws requiring restorers to contact surviving family members. Ray said he would have to research that, but thought families would be obtaining a benefit from the stone restoration.

Elodia asked if stones must be restored within the cemetery. Ray thought as much of the work as possible would be done on site. Joyce pointed out that putting together stone fragments required a flat surface and clamping stones together while adhesive dried and that would be best done off site.

Lanae inquired whether there was a dividing line between preservation and maintenance. Ray noted that while fence work was specialized, he could see tree removal as maintenance. Ray explained the fencing must be taken off site to straighten pickets and recast missing decorative parts. He noted masons who specialize in historic structures would be needed to restore stone walls. Lanae emphasized turf aeration and fertilization seemed like maintenance. Ray said amending soil and reseeding could be seen as maintenance.

Matt asked whether as much as possible should be done under the umbrella of the project to reduce the burden on the Department of Public Works (DPW). Bob agreed that whatever could be done as part of the project should be done because it was specialized, requiring extra care and smaller equipment. Elodia asked if the DPW could maintain the turf if all the work were included in the scope of the project. Bob said it would give DPW a better chance. Secondly, she asked about using groundcovers resistant to drought and requiring less mowing. Ray said he and Lanae had discussed that, but he didn't have data on ground cover use, hadn't used them, and it was not a prevalent practice. He added that there were drought tolerant turfs that require less mowing. Bob noted trying to introduce new material where there was grass that had been reseeding for hundreds of years would be difficult and the original turf was stronger than any replacement would be. Joyce added the tombs needed to be covered where there was no grass or soil as described in the recommendations.

Mark asked about the Historical Society of Watertown's interest in the project. Joyce said she is very interested in the stones. When Matt asked how much further Joyce was willing to move forward with the project. Joyce replied that she didn't want to exit the project entirely though her plan was to apply for funding to restore the headstones and leave remaining components for others. Bob pointed out there was a new open space planner who would presumably take on this project.

Elodia asked how long it would take to complete the entire project. Ray replied 8-9 months

for both cemeteries minus lead time for fence fabrication.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

Mark called for a motion to accept the 2024-8-15 CPC Minutes with the change he requested.

A. Motion: Elodia Thomas moved to accept the 2024-8-15-CPC minutes and Matt Walter seconded the motion.

Vote: Mark Krackiewicz, Bob DiRico, Elodia Thomas, Matt Walter and Dennis J. Duff voted in favor.

4. Chair Update

Mark reported that Jon Bockian and Allen Gallagher were not present to share their recommendations for the roles and responsibilities of the Chair, Vice Chair and CPC Members.

Elodia brought up the most important issues of reporting and the finances had not been addressed. Mark was waiting for a meeting date with Megan. Lanae said she was working to get that meeting after Megan closed out the previous fiscal year.

5. Coordinator's Update

Lanae reported on the status of CPA projects. A summary of her update is attached to these minutes.

6. Committee Discussion

A. In-person/Hybrid Meeting Update

Mark asked for an update from Dennis. He shared that the City Manager was still working out the details. Lanae asked if that involved changing the Licensing Board meeting location or the CPC meeting day. Dennis reported that it was relocation of the Licensing Board because it has fewer members.

7. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to adjourn, and Elodia Thomas seconded the motion.

Vote: Bob DiRico, Mark Krackiewicz, Matt Walter, Elodia Thomas, and Dennis J. Duff voted in favor.

Adjournment: 9:11 PM

Attachments:

1. [Ray Dunetz Presentation](#)
2. [Coordinator Update](#)