



Bob DiRico, Chair
Dennis J. Duff
Allison Eck
Allen Gallagher
Abigail Hammett
Marissa Mayo
Amy Plovnick
Marilyn Salvas
Matthew Walter

CITY OF WATERTOWN Community Preservation Committee

Minutes of CPC Meeting Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 7 PM held in hybrid format in the Lower Hearing Room of City Hall.

Committee Members Present: Bob DiRico, Chair; Dennis J. Duff; Allen Gallagher; Marissa Mayo; Marilyn Salvas and Matt Walter.

Joining Remotely: Allison Eck, Abigail Hammett, and Amy Plovnick (joined at 7:30).

Others Joining: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Michelle Moon, Department of Community Development and Planning; and Joyce Kelly, Historical Society of Watertown.

Others Joining Remotely: Genie Johnson, Linda Scott, Joan Gumbleton, and Margie Wayne.

1. Call to Order

Bob DiRico called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM and noted it was being held in a hybrid format per the Governor's order suspending certain provisions of Open Meeting Law.

Bob welcomed new CPC member, Marilyn Salvas (Conservation Commission designee).

2. Old Burying Ground and Common Street Cemetery Application Presentation

A. Presentation

Bob introduced Michelle Moon, Open Space Planner from DCDP. Michelle presented the cemeteries application request of \$100,000 for architecture services to produce construction documents for the restoration of the two municipal cemeteries. Michelle noted the historic preservation plan previously funded with CPA was the basis for second phase of the project. She also presented the timeline for additional grant applications as well as the phase II project scope and schedule.

The application and presentation are attached to these minutes.

The CPC questioned Michelle about the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the architectural services and some items in the application.

Matt Walter asked how specialized the landscape architect would need to be and Michelle responded that the RFQ called for experience in historic preservation and restoration.

Marissa Mayo asked about replanting trees and mentioned that trees may be part of the historic landscape.

Lanae answered that the landscape architect who produced the plan did not recommend replanting trees within the cemetery to avoid damage to headstones and digging near graves.

Allison Eck inquired about who comprised the working group of stakeholders. Michelle answered that the working group included Joyce Kelly (Historical Society of Watertown), some Department of Public Works (DPW) staff and other Department of Community Development and Planning (DCDP) staff.

Dennis J. Duff commended Joyce for all her work on this project and other projects for the city. Joyce responded that she was excited to see the project move forward.

Bob asked Michelle to provide an update on Saltonstall while she had the floor.

Michelle expected to have the project completion date in a couple of weeks and the stage rental form to be developed within a month. Bob added that the stage lighting was impressive. He mentioned the grass overwintered well and the construction fencing would be coming down shortly—though for safety the area near the stage would remain cordoned off.

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to expend \$100,000 for the cemeteries project and send the recommendation to the City Council. Matt Walter seconded the motion.

Vote: Marissa Mayo, Abigail Hammett, Allen Gallagher, Marilyn Salvas, Dennis J. Duff, Allison Eck, Matt Walter, Bob DiRico, and Amy Plovnick voted in favor.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

A. 2026-2-19 Draft CPC Minutes

Motion: Matt Walter moved to accept the 2026-2-19 CPC minutes as written and Allen Gallagher seconded the motion.

Vote: Allen Gallagher, Allison Eck, Marissa Mayo, Bob DiRico, Amy Plovnick, Matt Walter, and Dennis J. Duff voted in favor. Abigail Hammett and Marilyn Salvas were not present at that meeting and abstained.

4. Chair Update

Bob reported that the correspondence from the CPC regarding Community Preservation Coordinator supervision was sent to the City Manager and the Council will vote on the administrative code revision.

5. Committee Discussion

A. CPC Chair

Lanae pointed out that Bob's interim tenure was coming to an end and asked the committee what they wanted to do. Dennis asked Bob if he would consider another 3 months. Bob explained he had discussed that with Lanae and he was willing. He said that it would make sense for him to finish out the fiscal year.

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to elect Bob DiRico chair until July 1st and Marissa Mayo seconded the motion.

Vote: Allison Eck, Dennis J. Duff, Matt Walter, Bob DiRico, Allen Gallagher, Marissa Mayo; Abigail Hammett, and Marilyn Salvas voted in favor.

B. CPA 5-year Plan Update

Lanae described that the Plan update outline attached to the agenda was more detailed than the one presented last month. She explained her process included reviewing each section of the plan to determine what needed to be updated or rewritten and which areas such as the application process where policy or language needed to be revisited. Lanae thought the plan needed a new section listing all the project completed with descriptions and images. She asked for input from CPC members.

Lanae added she had met with Tyler Cote (Community Engagement Specialist) about a community engagement plan and had informed Tyler that the CPC was seeking to update the needs, opportunities, and priorities in the 5-year CPA Plan. Tyler said he could provide a menu of options in about 3 weeks or so. He would be willing to come to a CPC meeting to hear more and present what he comes up with. Due to this, the timeline attached will be pushed out a couple of months. Tyler mentioned the possibility of creating some flashvotes in addition to a community survey. He also could do some targeted outreach to stakeholders.

Lanae asked if CPC members had strong opinions about particular sections of the plan or wanted to discuss plan updates at this meeting. If not, they can contribute their changes and ideas to her via email.

Matt Walter suggested thinking about the budget and what is going to be available and looking at what could potentially be committed for phased projects like Walker Pond. He added that now that Commander's Mansion and the cemeteries are in the pipeline, municipal historic assets are taken care of, leaving more to the non-profit sector.

Lanae pointed out there is the possibility of two more municipal projects—the North Branch Library and Clerk's Office historic documents.

Marilyn said she didn't want to see the beautiful building (North Branch Library) not being used. Bob added the building had been assessed and not in such bad shape. Lanae has heard possible ideas for use included an arts/cultural space and new Hatch space.

Marissa asked if a feasibility study for use had been conducted. Lanae responded that there had not been and that was a major issue when a community member had applied for CPA funds to perform an assessment of the building.

Allen had an update on the 103 Nichols Ave. project. He stated Beaverbrook STEP was the only respondent to the Housing Authority bid process. Now everything will move forward through Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC) and construction will likely begin in June. There is no official word on Willow Park, but there are rumors that the state loves that the project is 100% affordable.

Lanae asked if statutory member updates should be a regular agenda item on the CPC agenda to report items from member Boards and Commissions that are relevant to the CPC.

Matt asked what was expected. Lanae asked to hear in advance if there was something more detailed to be put on the agenda from a member. Otherwise, she noted it would be an opportunity for statutory members to report news about potential or current projects from their municipal bodies or pass if they did not. Matt will ask if the Historical Commission has anything to pass along. Dennis requested that the agenda item be changed to member update.

Abigail asked if the committee could discuss some of the items that needed to be updated such as values and priorities. Lanae responded that there was another level to updating and rewriting sections where some items will involve getting community input before they are rewritten. Lanae said Tyler commented that instead of having community members respond to our existing guiding principles and value statement, he would ask questions to better understand community values. Armed with that information we would compare community input with our existing statement to see what is missing or how values have changed.

Lanae proposed that there were some policy issues that may be formalized in the plan and there may be some to leave on a case-by-case basis. For example, for historic projects depending on the amount of CPA funds invested and the type of project where it doesn't involve acquisition and a historic preservation restriction, there may be a need to protect the city's investment. In that case, the CPC may want to insert a claw back provision in the recommendation and grant agreement. The CPC should think about where to make policy issues formal in the plan and where you leave more flexibility. Lanae mentioned this because the Gore Estate is interested in a project installing accessible pathways and some community gardens. It wouldn't be on municipal property and there is no conservation restriction on the property.

Dennis suggested clawing back funds with interest. Lanae wasn't sure if other communities charged interest. Marilyn asked if other communities have claw back policies and would like to see some examples. Amy asked if there were other policies the CPC should be discussing. Lanae said she hadn't gotten through the entire plan or to the application manual yet and was certain others would come up.

6. Adjourn

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

Vote: Amy Plovnick, Allen Gallagher, Marilyn Salvas, Matt Walter, Bob DiRico, Allen Gallagher, Allison Eck, Marissa Mayo, Dennis J. Duff and Abigail Hammett voted in favor.

Adjournment: 7:54 PM

Attachments:

1. [Old Burying Ground and Common Street Cemetery Application](#)
2. [Old Burying Ground and Common Street Cemetery Presentation](#)
3. [CPA 5-year Plan Update - Process Outline](#)