



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, May 21, 2026, at 7 PM held in hybrid format in the Lower Hearing Room of City Hall, 149 Main Street.

Committee Members Present: Bob DiRico, Chair; Dennis J. Duff; Allison Eck; Allen Gallagher; Abigail Hammett; Marissa Mayo; Amy Plovnick; Marilyn Salvas; and Matt Walter.

Others Joining: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Michelle Moon, Department of Community Development and Planning; Libby Shaw, Trees for Watertown; and Michele Waldman, Trees for Watertown.

1. Call to Order

Bob DiRico called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM and noted it was being held in a hybrid format per the Governor's order suspending certain provisions of Open Meeting Law.

2. Committee Discussion

A. CPA Application - Walker Pond Phase II

Michelle Moon presented an overview of the Walker Pond Phase II request for CPA funds acknowledging the estimated construction costs were high at \$8-10 million. She detailed what this phase of the project would entail, including:

- Design Development
- Environmental Services (Licensed Site Professional for contamination on site) Conservation Commission and Wetland Permitting
- Engineering Services
- Construction Drawings
- Cost Estimates

The request was determined based on 10% of the construction costs with a 10% contingency with the hope it will be less depending on engineering/environmental unknowns.

CPC Questions

Question	Answer
Allison Eck \$9 million was used to estimate the request; could it be \$10 million?	Michelle Moon There are a few optional items in the construction estimate like flush toilets and a custom-built shelter that are not likely to be part of the final design, among other items.
Dennis Duff Is the construction estimate reasonable?	Yes, based on a project of this size and the boardwalk is a significant item. (25% of the budget)
Amy Plovnick Are there other sources of funds you will be seeking? Would you apply for those grants after final design?	Yes, there's a state park grant that is available. There may be other funds related to flooding, climate change and ecological restoration. And at Saltonstall there was an earmark. It depends on the requirement of the grant and the project timeline for completion of design.
Abigail Hammett Does the \$990,000 cover construction administration or is it through construction documents? How do you structure contracts, are they lump sum? Does the amount include structural engineering? Do you have a list of Landscape Architects to which you plan to send the RFQ? Would like to see the city look wider and get something spectacular for \$1 million. What would additional ecological study entail?	Construction administration would be part of the third phase. The RFQ could be structured so that piece is broken out as an add-on service. The team discussed putting a lower number in the RFQ and asking for the proposal to include add-on services. That would include everything related to construction and there are a lot of technical experts on the list. There is a list and over the last 18 months the list has grown and can continue to grow. And the RFQ will be posted on the state site. For example, the tree warden has asked for an assessment of quality of the trees. Another wetland delineation, consideration of flooding through partnership with the Charles River Watershed Association and water quality.

Dennis Duff Is the city expecting CPA funds to cover the entire budget? Even if trees are not good quality as long as they won't fall over and injure someone, they become nesting places for bats and birds.	Michelle The city is looking at other sources because it is such a big number.
Bob DiRico Can you envision phasing the construction?	It has been talked about. It makes sense to do the boardwalk portion first. The downside is it will take longer and cost more to phase the project. It may also depend on funding.
Michele Waldman Will there be redundancy in the ecological study in the second phase with what was done in the first phase. For the money being spent would like to see an improvement in water quality.	The one redundancy is the second wetland delineation, which will be done because there was so much difference compared to the one performed in 2012.

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to recommend \$990,000 to the Walker Pond project to be drawn from the open space and undesignated reserves. Marissa Mayo seconded the motion.

Discussion: Abigail Hammett had a concern about the next phase if the CPA investment is another \$1 million and no other sources are identified for construction. The CPC would be in a position where they are required to recommend \$10 million to the project. She wondered about the level of documentation required to apply for grants. Michele explained it depended on the grant, but a clear plan and budget would be needed. Amy Plovnick asked how competitive those grants would be. Dennis asked if Michelle knew what a realistic maximum would be for those grants. Michelle responded that she would look into it to answer those questions.

Bob DiRico said the project may have to be phased. Michelle added that things may have to be cut back or out. Libby Shaw said if all that was built was a beautiful path around the pond that would be fine. Michele Waldman asked how the city handle the water quality issue with Waltham. Michelle Moon said that was under the Department of Public Work's purview

With respect to concerns about other funding sources and design quality, Lanae noted the CPC could add any conditions to its recommendation.

Dennis amended his motion to include the following conditions: update the CPC on design progress and update the CPC on potential funding sources by December 31, 2026.

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

B. 2027 CPA Budget Approval

Motion: Matt moved to approve the following FY 2027 Budget allocation:

The Community Preservation Committee requests the City Council appropriate and transfer FY 2027 CPA funds which total **\$3,944,015** to the following: 5% totaling **\$197,200** for the administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee; 10% to the community housing reserve totaling **\$394,402**; 10% to the historical preservation reserve totaling, **\$394,402**; 10% to the open space/recreation reserve totaling, **\$394,402**; and 65% to the undesignated reserve totaling, **\$2,563,609**.

Allison Eck 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.

C. CPA Annual Public Hearing

Lanae explained there was a scheduling conflict and a space availability issue on the advertised dates. Therefore the date and possibly the location of the public hearing would have to change. CPC members thought it was important to have the event in the library so they agreed to change the date to July 23rd.

Committee members asked about overlap between community feedback and chats and including all CPA projects rather than simply completed projects in Tyler's engagement plan. CPC members also discussed ways to reach people not normally reached in outreach efforts inclusion such as including schools and banks in outreach efforts. As for reaching a wider audience, Lanae pointed out she had a list of contacts for inclusionary zoning apartment buildings though the contacts changed often. She had also tried to get information publicized by Wayside in the past without success. Allison said she had contacts there.

Allison and Dennis volunteered to work on engagement plan implementation with Lanae and Tyler

3. Acceptance of Minutes

A. 2026-4-16 Draft CPC Minutes

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to accept the 2026-4-16 CPC minutes as written and Matt Walter seconded the motion.

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

4. Chair Update

Bob informed the CPC that he went to the Council with the recommendation for \$100,000 for the cemeteries project and the Council approved the request. There were some questions that Lanae answered by email and one that Michelle answered that night. He also announced there were candidates for chair and vice chair, Marissa Mayo and Allison Eck. The CPC did not discuss further because it was not on the agenda.

5. Member Updates

Matt reported that there was a hope that the Historical Society of Watertown would apply again for a climate control system for the Fowle House. There was also a feeling that something should be done with the North Branch Library. Lastly, the Commission would like to see historic city documents preserved. He personally felt that once all the municipal projects were completed that the CPC should be open to preserving more non-profit owned properties.

Marissa announced that Historic New England would be holding an open house on June 6th, making all of its properties open to the public for free, including free tours. She would pick up flyers advertising the public hearing and get them to the Browne House.

Lanae followed up on Matt's comments, noting the North Branch Public Library was on the capital improvement plan. She also mentioned the Affordable Housing Trust voted to apply for CPA funds to place in a reserve for optioning properties or gaining site control.

6. Adjourn

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to adjourn, and Marissa Mayo seconded the motion.

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

Adjournment: 8:27 PM