TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Community Preservation Committee

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, December 16, 2021, held remotely via Zoom at 7PM.

Committee Members Present: Mark Kraczkiewicz, Chair; Jason Cohen, Vice Chair; Jon Bockian, Bob DiRico, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, Jamie O'Connell, Elodia Thomas, and Matthew Walter.

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Michael Lara, Executive Director-Watertown Housing Authority; and Kristi Monti

1. Call to Order

Mark Kraczkiewicz called the meeting to order at 7:01PM. He announced the meeting was being held remotely as allowed by the Act extending the Governor's Emergency Order and waiving certain provisions of Open Meeting Law. Mark then requested a roll call.

2. Acceptance of 2021-11-18-Draft-CPC Minutes

Mark asked if there were suggested changes to the minutes. There were none.

Motion: Jon Bockian moved to accept the minutes and Allen Gallagher seconded.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Matthew Walter, Dennis J. Duff, Bob DiRico, Jon Bockian, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Jason Cohen, Jamie O'Connell, and Allen Gallagher voted in favor.

3. Committee Discussion:

A. Evaluation Structure – CPA Applications

Mark opened the discussion on application evaluation with his opinion that each CPC member should offer their viewpoint about the pros and cons of each project. He spoke about the Planning Board model where staff makes recommendations to the board, however, Mark preferred that committee members take the lead and express their thoughts about each project. Jason wanted to keep the current discussion focused on how to evaluate applications and establish a framework or guidelines for discussion rather than on specific projects. Jamie thought it would be more fruitful to evaluate each project first on its own merit and then rank where the application fell within the pool of applications. Jon said that wasn't necessary in this round because the total amount of CPA funds exceeds the amount requested but we could rank anyway to set a precedent. Elodia noted there may be applications where more information would be needed before the committee came to a decision. Because CPA funds are taxpayer dollars, she emphasized the committee must vet the applications well and the January meeting should not be an opportunity for applicants to market their project. Dennis would like to know if an applicant is being evasive or withholding information.

Jon asked about the housing applications. Lanae said she would distribute the MHP feedback to the full committee.

Audience Participation
Committee members agreed the committee must review applications before entertaining questions and comments from the public. Jason stated questions and clarifications from applicants would be fine, but the meeting should not be an opportunity to promote their projects. Elodia warned the public should not be speaking if they are not informed. She asked whether applications would be posted on the website. Jon asked when applications would be posted. Lanae said applications would be available online next week. Dennis was concerned that one group may monopolize the questioning and proposed limiting the public to one question unless time allows for more.

Coordinator Role
The committee would not ask for a recommendation like the Planning Department staff provides. Lanae's role would be to report if applicants did not supply requested information note deficiencies that remain. She would summarize this in a quick introduction prior to CPC discussing each application.

Committee members will submit questions and comments to Lanae, and she will compile them for review of the applications in January and send questions to applicants. Jason suggested using a standard information request form and entering answers into a Google spreadsheet.

B. Eligible Project Deferrals

Mark reminded committee members the Parks Department submitted four Project Eligibility Forms. Three were deemed eligible and one was withdrawn. He proposed not accepting CPA Funding Applications for these projects until the next cycle as outlined in the Application Manual and that Project Eligibility Forms be updated. Jon suggested the applicants could use the same Project Eligibility Form and be required to put in writing that nothing had changed. Jamie and Elodia agreed that it would be simple for applicants to resubmit their form. Lanae also agreed that with an online and automated submission date, it would be cleaner to submit new Project Eligibility Forms. Mark stated the consensus was DPW would submit new Project Eligibility Forms. Dennis asked about the application deadlines dates. Mark and Allen proposed moving the Project Eligibility Form due date to September. Lanae said she would distribute a calendar of 2022 meeting dates and proposed dates for the FY 2023 application process. The Project Eligibility Form deadline proposed would be an earlier date by a month or so as suggested.

Mark reported he would be sending out thoughts and guidance about what committee members can and cannot say at public meetings hosted by CPA project applicants. He warned individual committee members should not get ahead of the full committee.

Committee members should send application comments and questions to Lanae by January 7th.

4. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to adjourn, and Matthew Walter seconded.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Matthew Walter, Dennis J. Duff, Bob DiRico, Jon Bockian, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Jason Cohen, Jamie O'Connell, and Allen Gallagher voted in favor.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:03PM