



TOWN OF WATERTOWN

Community Preservation Committee

Mark Krackiewicz, Chair
Jason Cohen, Vice Chair
Jonathan Bockian
Bob DiRico
Dennis J. Duff
Allen Gallagher
Jamie O'Connell
Elodia Thomas

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, October 21, 2021, held remotely via Zoom at 7PM.

Bockian, Bob DiRico, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, Jamie O'Connell, and Elodia Thomas.

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Matthew Walter, Historical Commission; Larry Field, Planning and Community Development; Leo Martin, Chair of Conservation Commission; David Koven, Belmont-Watertown United Methodist Church; and Stephen Steadman, Church of the Good Shepherd.

1. Call to Order

Mark Krackiewicz called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. He announced the meeting was being held remotely as allowed by the Acts of 2021 and asked for a roll call. Mark informed the Committee Susan Steele had resigned effective 10/12/21 and thanked Susan for her contributions to the Community Preservation Plan and Committee deliberations. He introduced Matt Walter, as the new Historical Commission designee on the CPC and asked for CPC members to introduce themselves to Matt.

2. Acceptance of 2021-10-7-CPC Minutes

Mark noted suggested revisions to the minutes. He proposed shortening Jason's requested addition to read, "Jason declared our purpose was not to debate merits of projects, rather determine project eligibility."

Motion: Jon moved to accept the minutes with the requested changes and Jason seconded.

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

3. Committee Discussion - Project Eligibility Continued

The Committee discussed the *Filippello 2021* project and deemed the project eligible. There were concerns that the project activities must be limited to capital improvements. Further, Committee members wanted more details in the CPA Funding Application about public participation in the design process.

After receiving a legal analysis from the Town attorney regarding applications from religious institutions, the CPC was able to discuss the following historic preservation projects.

Rand House Window Replacement - Church of the Good Shepherd

According to Mark's reading of the legal opinion, the project was ineligible. Dennis, Allen, Jamie, and Elodia agreed. Jon agreed and saw the public benefit of the project as secondary to the religious function. The project was deemed ineligible by the CPC.

Historic Bell Tower Rehabilitation - Belmont-Watertown United Methodist Church
Mark summarized the opinion of the Town attorney and stated the Committee would need to determine whether the tower's historic significance outweighed the risk of religious entanglement on the part of the Town.

Jon did not think the tower necessarily had religious symbolism. He wanted more information about the tower's historical significance and recommended the Watertown Historical Commission (WHC) weigh in. Allen, Jamie, and Jason agreed that more information was needed to determine eligibility. Elodia and Dennis agreed with Mark's interpretation of the legal analysis, concluding the tower had religious symbolism, and the project would primarily benefit the religious institution. Jason reminded the Committee that Elise recommended all historic preservation projects go before the WHC whether the property was on the State Register of Historic Places or in the Historic District or not. Lanae asked what further information was needed to determine the eligibility of the bell tower project. In answer to Lanae's question, Jon and Jamie requested information about context—what's so historically significant about the property and how significant is it in relation to other historic properties?

Jason pointed out that even if the WHC found the property historically significant, the committee may still find the entanglement issue outweighs the property's historical significance. Lanae asked Matthew Walter if placing a historic resource in context was something the WHC typically did. He stated it was not and that the WHC would simply determine a resource was historically significant and wouldn't rank or determine the level of historic significance.

Jon proposed the applicant make its best case before the WHC. The applicant would be responsible for performing the necessary research about the historic resource. The applicant, David Koven, noted about 100 churches received the CPA funds. He asked what the Committee was looking for related to historic significance. It was not clear what specifically the Committee was looking for, rather certain members wanted the applicant to demonstrate the historic significance of the project outweighed the religious entanglement issue. Mark proposed holding the project in abeyance until the WHC had an opportunity to review the project.

Elodia reminded the CPC that Larry Field and Leo Martin withdrew their projects. Jamie wanted to ensure Leo knew whether his project could be considered off-cycle before he withdrew it. Jon said there was a question as to whether the project met the criterion for an off-cycle application.

After the eligibility discussion, Mark declared 8 projects had moved forward to the CPA Funding Application stage. Lanae would post the chart displaying the eligible projects on the CPC webpage.

4. Committee Discussion - Historic Preservation Continued

Mark called attention to the Historical Commission's withdrawal of their application. He asked if the Committee wanted to discuss acting on the historic inventory using administrative funds. Mark recommended the CPC focus on funding capital improvement projects at this time. Elodia felt strongly that the Town should provide the local matching funds for a grant from the Mass Historical Commission.

Near the conclusion of the meeting, Allen suggested the CPC write a letter thanking Susan for her service on the Committee. Also, Matt mentioned he would notify the WHC about the Bell Tower project.

5. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis moved to adjourn, and Jon seconded.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM

Attachments:

[2021-10-7-Draft-CPC-Minutes](#)

[Town Attorney Legal Analysis](#)