



Town of Watertown Community Preservation Committee

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472
Tel. (617) 972-6417
Fax (617) 972-6595

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Elodia Thomas, Chair
Jonathan Bockian
Jason Cohen
Bob DiRico
Dennis J. Duff
Mark Krackiewicz
Allen Gallagher
Maria Rose
Susan Steele

Minutes: Thursday, September 19, 2019, Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, 4:00 PM

Committee Members Present: Elodia Thomas, Chair, Jonathan Bockian, Jason Cohen, Bob DiRico, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, Mark Krackiewicz, Maria Rose, and Susan Steele.

Others Present: Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner, DCD&P, Vinnie Piccirilli, Lisa Feltner, District B Town Councilor, and Leo Martin, Chair of the Con Com.

1. Call to order

Elodia Thomas, Committee Chair, called the meeting of the Community Preservation Committee to order at 4:01 p.m.

2. Consultant interview with JM Goldson LLC, Community Preservation & Planning

Jennifer Goldson, Founder & Managing Director
Anna Callahan, Project Manager Community Planner

Jennifer Goldson gave a brief introduction as to why she does what she does and why she loves what she does. She expressed her love for community preservation + planning and described her company, which she started in 2006, and its work with community visioning, community preservation programs, affordable housing, master plans and development feasibility. She started her career in historic preservation and believes that special places in a community enhance quality of life and the CPA gives a community money to spend on things it normally can't afford. "This RFQ was perfect for us. We are thrilled to be here."

Anna Callahan introduced herself by saying that she has been working with Jennifer Goldson for about a year-and-a-half, right after receiving her Master's degree in Planning from Cornell. She added that she has experience working with planning, preservation, and economic development. She also mentioned that she interned with Preserve Rhode Island and is interested in the intersection of preservation, economic development, quality of place and community character. She also has experience in external affairs, grant writing and event planning.

Jennifer Goldson and Anna Callahan focused their presentation on the following five points as to why their approach could work for Watertown:

1. Robust engagement,
2. Highly collaborative - internally and externally,
3. Systems-oriented approach,
4. Value making work products attractive and easy-to-read,
5. Experience with providing technical assistance.

They also discussed/showed examples of visual materials: meeting agenda, data fact sheets, pamphlets, and community engagement exercises.

Q&A

Susan Steele asked about community outreach and how to engage the community in CPA, and how they have dealt with that in past projects. Jennifer Goldson responded that the more you can get out into the community, the better. She asked that the committee be a big part of engagement - in cafes, at events, farmers market, back-to-school nights. She claimed that not one thing, but lots of different things are needed to get word out, and the project should be viewed as a campaign. She also suggested an on-line survey to reach others.

Mark Krackiewicz asked what role should the plan play in weighing and ranking applications? Jennifer Goldson answered that the plan should emphasize priorities, signaling to potential applicants your priorities as heard from the community.

Dennis Duff posed the question, what was your most challenging and difficult project, and why? Jennifer Goldson replied that the most difficult projects are those where the community client isn't committed to the process and the result. They don't care about the work product and process. Instead, they just want it done and finished so that they can say that they did it. She added that her company does its best to persuade people that the work/plan does matter, that listening to the community matters, and that owning the plan as a community is important.

Allen Gallagher inquired about specific experience of the team, with regard to affordable housing issues. Jennifer stated that in the past 5 years she has done over 50 housing plans, looking at zonings and feasibility of town owned sites for housing. She has been training her staff to understand the unique housing regulations in Massachusetts.

Jon Bockian asked about brand identity as part of community process and requested examples of creative and best practices for creating brand identity, as well as other communication tools, and how they interact. Anna Callahan provided an example (Winchester) of working with local artists/students to develop logo or brand, from a grassroots level. She added best practices, sticking with one or two colors and keeping everything consistent. Jennifer Goldson offered the idea of working with the Mosesian Center for the Arts to engage that sector of the community in process right away.

Jason Cohen wanted to know about Bang the Table; how they would describe it, and how it works. Anna Callahan explained that Bang the Table allows participation in on-line

exercises and recommends it because it allows you to create your own URL or house a URL on the town website. She stressed the importance of establishing a clear way of people getting information. It's an on-line tool with an interactive component. Bang the Table is easy to customize and flexible for content e.g. questions, surveys, interactive maps, and applications.

Maria Rose asked, what is the single most important thing for a first time CPC to get right? Jennifer Goldson suggested the pilot program idea could really help a first timer. She added that the pilot allows you to start small and test out how everything's working. Anna Callahan added that the pilot can help with nuances of CPA. Jennifer Goldson said the pilot is also an opportunity to help train the person in the coordinator position. And small pilot projects with funding caps generate grassroots involvement and build capacity to apply for CPA funds.

Bob DiRico asked, what is your favorite project and why? Anna Callahan responded that Chelsea was her favorite project because she loved the eagerness of the group. Jennifer Goldson expressed pride in the Chelsea work product, and said it was one of her favorite projects, as well. She added that she was also thrilled about the Town of Winchester master plan, which is integrating sustainability. She loves plans where they can be creative.

Elodia Thomas asked, what are the best ways to involve community leaders? Jennifer Goldson suggested focus groups, relatively early in process, involving stakeholders, being strategic with stakeholders, and establishing a stakeholder list for outreach. Anna Callahan suggested getting them to think about CPA as an option for their project, hearing about various community priorities, and teaching them what is eligible for funding.

Jon Bockian asked if it is an issue/concern about giving people language to talk about priorities, and, if so, what can be done about it? Jennifer Goldson responded that she does think it's an issue. She tries to encourage the community to think through what they mean when they use the phrase "community character". She suggested using project ideas to translate/capture into a goal, looking for themes to word goals, and working backwards. Ideas might include a pocket park, community garden, a playground to walk to which need to be translated to a goal and steps to get there.

Mark Krackiewicz asked what factors should be looked at in applications, in terms of implementation? Jennifer Goldson said the big problem in communities is giving money and then the project doesn't move forward. Part of the solution is to make sure the person implementing the project is really on board and has capacity for follow-through. She added that some communities provide add-in funds to help the projects follow-through. She suggested having applicants demonstrate ability and capacity for follow-through during application process by detailing staffing, time, maintenance of investment. Some committees add-in oversight funding.

Dennis Duff followed up on the previous question, wondering who would do the follow-up? Jennifer Goldson recommended implementing a system for follow-up, whatever that may be; specify expectations in award letters and grant agreements, have some committee members act as liaisons or appoint a committee member to be a coordinator. Dennis Duff

asked how that would be enforced? Jennifer Goldson recommended adding term length for money, so that when money is about to expire, you can make sure there is a check-in, set up a quarterly reporting process, and keep the accountability date the same for all projects e.g. December 31st.

Elodia Thomas asked what is meant by public vs. private? Jennifer Goldson explained that CPA funds are not restricted to just government projects, but when you use public funds for private property, you have to show that the money used for a public purpose/benefit. Preservation restrictions are also involved with private properties.

Jon Bockian asked, if JM Goldson LLC is hired, who will the committee be dealing with? Jennifer Goldson answered that she would be at all public meetings and key policy/plan pivot meetings. Anna Callahan would be in charge of day-to-day communication and coordination, as well as a lot of the research and organizing.

Mark Krackiewicz inquired about their role in website and social media. Jennifer Goldson responded that the committee would decide where you want to put your priorities and what you want to fund. Bang the Table has a subscription cost, but she could provide blurbs/materials/information for social media.

Elodia Thomas asked Jennifer Goldson and Anna Callahan whether they had any questions for the committee. Jennifer Goldson asked what the committee believes will be their greatest challenge? Jason Cohen answered that ranking collective priorities, building consensus, and moving forward will be their greatest challenge. Elodia Thomas added that transparency and fairness are important. Maria Rose said making sure the committee is servicing the entire community will be another challenge.

3. Consultant interview with Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Roberta Cameron, Project Manager

Roberta Cameron gave an overview of Community Opportunities Group, Inc. (COG), noting that the company has been in business for 40 years and is comprised of its principal and founder, Peter Sandborn, and 15 staff members. Roberta Cameron noted that she has 20 years' experience and extensive CPA experience. She is Chair of the Medford CPC, helped with implementation and of the drafted ordinance, was the principal writer of the CPA plan, helped to hire their staff person, and communicates with staff and applicants. COG's philosophy is that transparency, clarity to community and public officials, and well-managed funds and resources are critical to success in launching of a CPA. They consider stakeholder outreach to be the most important part of a CPA because stakeholders are community partners and potential applicants. She concluded by saying that COG has a deep knowledge of CPA, and a hands-on experience, and a passion for pragmatic problem solving and helping communities to meet their goals. They are a strong team, have worked together for years, and are knowledgeable, dedicated, and fun to work with. Cortney Starling, a planner with 10+ years of experience would be working with Roberta.

Q&A

Susan Steele asked what COG will do to facilitate the priority of community engagement? Roberta Cameron offered community events - social, civic, shopping, farmers market - are all opportunities for community engagement, as well as working through existing networks. Online and paper surveys, forums, and workshops could be part of the mix as well as interfaith groups, schools, the 2020 census takers.

Mark Krackiewicz asked for an explanation of what part should priorities in the plan play in vetting applications. Roberta Cameron answered that it played a concrete part in the Medford CPA. Example - improving city assets received a higher priority than private assets. She suggested it could also play a concrete role in Watertown, but there could also be room for flexibility.

Dennis Duff asked about her most challenging and difficult project. Roberta Cameron responded that every project is challenging for different reasons, and that the barrier to implementation is often not the lack of strategies, but something outside of the strategies. Community capacity, staff, political will, and economics come into play.

Allen Gallagher wanted to know the single most important thing for a first time CPC to focus on and get right? Robert Cameron responded that communication is the single most important thing.

Jason Cohen asked if a test-run is part of COG's tool kit. Roberta Cameron that could be part of the application process. In Medford, they tested different timelines for applications.

Maria Rose asked what key skills and task assistance do the most successful CPC's bring to the consulting process? Roberta Cameron answered, participation. She added that the more COG hears from you, the more we can do for you, and the more confidence it will give us. We like to involve you in implementation, so that you will take ownership. Being an engaged partner is the best skill.

Jon Bockian asked if COG has any other CPA or housing experience? Historic Preservation or Open Space/Recreation experience? Roberta Cameron listed Holyoke and Hanson, as well as some towns that they helped, but did not develop a plan, like open space in Groton (volunteers care for 100 miles of trails) and a master plan in Ayer.

Bob DiRico asked about her favorite project. Roberta Cameron answered that Holyoke was one of her favorites because she loves underdog communities i.e. those with great bones and dedicated people.

Mark Krackiewicz asked what critical factors in applicants should the CPC look for? Roberta Cameron replied the ability to prepare a detailed application is an indication of readiness, and a staff person to work with funded projects, monitor, and ensure completion.

Jason Cohen asked what means should be at our disposal, in case a project can't reach the finish line? Roberta Cameron said that is something that can be spelled out in grant

agreement, on a case-by-case basis. Housing may have a long timeline before funding is spent, so put in benchmarks. An open space/rec project, you would expect that to be carried out more immediately. If a project hasn't been started after a year, then you reserve right to revoke project/funding.

Elodia Thomas asked if she had any suggestions regarding Watertown and its complexities? Roberta Cameron responded that the first step is to identify a list of potential projects and start talking about them. Use public engagement to talk about and generate ideas. A priority could be projects that have a visually strong impact, i.e., Chevalier Theater in Medford and Condon Shell on DCR-owned property; something centrally located in the community, that people see it every day.

Jon Bockian inquired whether state CPA language would be a problem, in terms of priorities? Roberta Cameron answered that many communities have not risen to Watertown's level of effort - hiring a consultant to develop a good plan and many communities are not engaging a public process around a community preservation plan.

Dennis Duff asked about the timeline from when the CPC was voted in Medford until when the first project appeared? Roberta Cameron said the Medford CPC was enacted in November 2015, 18 months before the committee was appointed. The CPC developed plan in May 2017, launched the application process in November 2017, and funded its first project in December of 2017, or two years.

Elodia Thomas asked Roberta Cameron to describe COG's experience with branding. Roberta Cameron responded that the Medford CPA logo being used was developed by COG and that many communities are adopting similar images. A volunteer developed their website. Signage is important for CPA projects.

Maria Rose asked about COG's capacity, in terms of developing Watertown's plan, and who would be working on it. Roberta Cameron answered that COG has the capacity and that she and Courtney Starling would be working most directly with Watertown's CPC.

Elodia Thomas asked Roberta Cameron if she had any questions for the CPC. Roberta Cameron wanted to know what kind of public engagement had been undertaken prior to this point. Elodia Thomas explained that the CPC has been very low-key because they want to get it right and establish a solid foundation. The CPC has met regularly, has posted info on the town website, but the meetings are not well-attended by the public. With a consultant in place, they will launch a strong outreach effort and a transparent process. Roberta Cameron asked if there were specific concerns about particular neighborhoods? Elodia Thomas answered that because of the 35 languages spoken in Watertown, it presents a particular challenge. Maria Rose added that there are a lot of renters and young, busy families. Jon Bockian acknowledged that many residents are just too busy to participate in all the town meetings. Roberta Cameron agreed that it would take some creativity to reach renters and apartment complexes.

Roberta Cameron asked the CPC if they anticipated any particular problems? Maria Rose answered, we don't know what we don't know. Jason Cohen expressed concern about

being careful about funding allocation, so as to not potentially exacerbate an imbalance that has occurred in the recent past.

4. Discussion and Vote

The committee members discussed the two presentations and gave their opinions. Jon Bockian stated that both candidates were well-prepared, strong candidates. Maria Rose echoed Jon's sentiments, adding that she wasn't impressed with COG, but was very impressed with Roberta Cameron. Elodia Thomas expressed her concern that Peter Sandborn, the principal for COG, was supposed to present, but decided to send only Roberta Cameron writing "If you need me, I am available" and that it left a bad taste in her mouth. Also, there were mistakes in the proposal.

Bob DiRico liked how Jennifer Goldson and Anna Callahan played off each other, their teamwork, and visuals. In addition, he liked both of their answers regarding branding. Jason Cohen like that Jennifer Goldson and Anna Callahan brought examples of branding, which demonstrated their understanding of its importance. He also made the point that he felt that the COG proposal was lacking, although he felt that Roberta Cameron's responses offset that. Maria Rose commented that Roberta Cameron nailed her answers, but that she loved Goldson's visuals and energy. Furthermore, she loved the fact that they had hired/trained a coordinator and that they have a lot of community engagement experience. Susan Steele stated that Jennifer Goldson and Anna Callahan's experience would be valuable and that she was enormously impressed with how thorough their proposal was "They'll be able to see around corners". She was not impressed with the COG proposal; thought it was superficial and lacking in thought and preparation. Mark Krackiewicz added that COG did not match up well with the RFQ and that it did not address issues of website, toolkit, branding, and focus groups. He felt that Jennifer Goldson spoke from a much deeper CPA experience and provided fuller answers to the questions about vetting proposals and capacity to implement. He did note that COG made an interesting point about using projects that have a strong, visible community impact.

Dennis Duff agreed with almost everything that has been said and noted that they were fortunate to have two good, qualified groups. He added that he was very impressed with Jennifer Goldson and her historic preservation background (Newport), and, overall, believed Goldson to be superior. Jon Bockian felt that Goldson group gave a much stronger proposal and he was impressed with their range of experience. He also liked their answer about the capability of applicants' ability to perform, and he appreciated that they brought the visuals in to demonstrate their understanding of the importance of visuals and their ability to deliver them. He acknowledged that Roberta Cameron did a great job, but that her firm's experience seemed to be lacking re: CPA and the answers were not as strong.

Allen Gallagher stated that he liked the Goldson group and their visuals; they gave a great presentation. He likes the pilot program and the mock application process. Elodia Thomas liked that Jen Goldson immediately picked up the scope of the committee's effort; something that COG did not address. She felt that Jen Goldson got it as reflected in her introductory letter to the scope of work, was into Watertown, and what the committee is trying to do. Mark Krackiewicz stated that COG did themselves a disservice by not bringing along the second planner to the interview. Jason Cohen said he deliberately asked Roberta

Cameron about a pilot plan, because he thought it was a great idea, but he felt her answer was vague. Maria Rose commented that she considered Jennifer Goldson and Anna Callahan's presentation to be a "homerun", and that Roberta Cameron had a wealth of experience that did not get conveyed but there are mistakes in the proposal, dates, typos, attention to detail. The capacity to take us on is unknown to me.

Dennis Duff made a motion to hire JM Goldson, LLC. Maria Rose seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, all in favor.

The committee then discussed next steps in getting a draft budget proposal from JM Golson for a negotiated scope of work - the core proposal, potential add-ons, deliverables, and the potential for additional TBD funding. The turnaround to receive the cost proposal plan should come in within a week. This price plan proposal will be forwarded to all committee members for feedback re: questions/concerns. The committee will then need to hold another special meeting to discuss expenditures, make a decision, and vote on a contract cost. The contract is negotiated through the town.

5. Adjournment

Dennis made a motion to adjourn. Jason Cohen seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Attachment: RFQ Consultant Questions - Final

Minutes transcriber by Anne Korte



Questions for Watertown Community Preservation Plan RFQ Respondents

Questions for Both Respondents:

1. What specific measures will you take to establish a robust outreach framework to draw out the ideas and priorities of Watertown's diverse cultural, socio-economic, and ethnic community, particularly members who do not usually attend community meetings - be they homeowners, renters, WPS students, community businesses, newcomers, or long-time residents?
2. In your view what part should priorities cited in community preservation plans play in reviewing and ranking applications for community preservation funds?
3. What was your most challenging and difficult project? Why?
4. When should key community leaders, town boards, officials be brought into the process?
5. What key skills and task assistance do the most successful CPCs bring to the consulting process to ensure a successful collaboration?
6. What's the single most important thing for a first-time CPC to focus on and get right?
7. What critical factors should Watertown weigh in determining whether an applicant for community preservation funding is capable to implement (as opposed to eligible to propose) a project?
8. In what detail do you expect to be involved in developing and putting into place Watertown's CPC website?
9. What has been your favorite project and why?
10. Who will we be working with and how much time will they devote to our project?
11. What haven't we asked you that we should have?
12. Do you have anything you want to ask us?

Questions for JM Goldson:

1. Please describe how "Bang the Table" and "coUrbanize" work and their utility in surfacing community priorities.
2. What are the creative and best practices for developing a CPC branding identity and ongoing communication tools/presence?

3. What specific background and experience do each of the team members have with regard to affordable housing issues?
4. Please describe the “CPA Tetris” - a consensus-building visual prioritization exercise.

Questions for Community Opportunities Group (COG):

1. In working with a dense, diverse city like Watertown, please provide examples of the kinds of materials that would be provided to CPC members “to extend outreach to other boards and committees, community groups, and community events.” (Work Plan, Task 2).
2. COG seems to focus on municipal planning, operations, housing, and public finance. What specific background and experience do each of the team members with the CPA regarding open space/outdoor recreation planning, and historic preservation with cities like Watertown vs. towns?
3. You do not elaborate on “Next Steps” in Task 6. (a) What would they be?
(b) Is your firm prepared to work with the CPC during the receipt and review of its first round of CPC applicants? If so, what types of assistance could you provide?
4. Please describe a “dot” exercise (Work Plan, Task 4) and its utility in surfacing community priorities?