



CITY 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
Matthew Walter

Minutes of CPC Meeting Monday, June 15, 2023, at 7:00 PM, held in-person and remotely via Zoom.

Committee Members Present: Mark Krackiewicz, Chair; Jason Cohen, Vice Chair; Jon Bockian; Dennis J. Duff; Allen Gallagher; Jamie O'Connell; and Elodia Thomas. (Bob DiRico and Matt Walter were absent)

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Liz Helfer; Community Development and Planning; Joyce Kelly, Historical Society of Watertown, Chris Golden, Michael D'Angelo Landscape Architects; Nicole Gardner, District A Councilor; Lisa Feltner, District B Councilor; Vincent Piccirilli, District C Councilor; Anthony Palomba, Councilor-at-Large; Jacky Van Leeuwen; Linda Relson, Watertown Community Gardens; Pam Phillips, Friends of Bees; Larry Field, Department of Community Development and Planning; Liza Ketchum; Elyse Colby; Josh Rosmarin; Katherine Pomplun; Margie Wayne; Patrick Fairbairn; Sam Ghilardi; and Jamie Gordon.

1. Open Public Hearing and Introductions

Mark Krackiewicz opened the public hearing at 7:05pm.

2. CPA Annual Report Summary

Mark introduced the attached presentation, commenting on the projects that were approved for CPA funding by the City Council. He noted two projects would produce plans (Commander's Mansion and Old Burying Ground and Common St. Cemetery) and one was for predevelopment work (103 Nichols Ave Group Home). In addition, two projects were deferred (Fowle House Museum Climate Control and Saltonstall Park Rehabilitation). Mark mentioned CPA projects may come out of the acquisition of Walker Pond. He also pointed out the draft Comprehensive and Open Space Plans mention the CPA as a source of funding. Mark spoke a little about the creation and early operations of the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust.

3. Panel of Awardees

Panel members talked about their experience with the CPC application process and CPA project implementation.

Chris Golden of Michael D'Angelo Landscape Architects (MDLA) compared the two projects—the Irving Park project being implemented and the Saltonstall Park

application. At Irving Park, MDLA started with a blank slate and sought community input, while at Saltonstall Park the architects presented big picture ideas to organize the community's thoughts and input. Chris stated they presented concepts to guide the community process for redesigning such a large space.

Joyce Kelly of Watertown Historical Society spoke about her involvement with two projects, the restoration of the City Hall paintings in its implementation phase and the recently approved Old Burying Ground and Common Street Cemetery Master Plans project. She was engaged in the effort to pass the CPA in Watertown. Joyce described the difficulty in finding conservators for the painting restoration and sought help from the Museum of Fine Arts. For the cemeteries project, she used the Community Preservation Coalition website project database to identify similar projects and as a result reached out to counterparts in Arlington.

On what could be improved in the application process or what could be learned from their experiences, Joyce cited the fillable budget document could be replaced with a simple Excel spreadsheet.

Liz Helfer of Department of Community Development and Planning found the application materials and in-person workshop useful. She suggested a single printable pdf application packet instead of links to single documents. Also, Liz would have found guidance on what to include in the project presentations beneficial. Chris thought it would be helpful to have a checklist of what needed to be done throughout the process and the order for such tasks.

In getting approval for projects involving city property, Joyce declared it was easy to make an appointment with Steve Magoon to present a project and obtain the permission of the city.

Jacky Van Leeuwen asked several questions about the application process because heard the process was very daunting for residents. She also inquired about whether funds in the community housing category accrued and was anxious to see funds spent on housing projects. Jacky recommended a special meeting or group to discuss ways to help use CPA community housing funds.

Mark responded that housing projects are difficult and noted the applicants would likely be implementers, such as the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) or an affordable housing developer. It would be difficult for residents to apply unless they had site control of a property. An affordable housing deed restriction, fair access to the housing through a lottery, and a maintenance plan would all be required.

Elodia Thomas commented that affordable housing development is very complicated, requiring layers of financing. Individuals interested in affordable housing development should educate themselves with free materials produced by Massachusetts Housing Partnership. She also mentioned the Watertown Affordable Housing Trust had hired an intern to look at city owned sites and other potential sites for housing development. Elodia emphasized the CPC would not likely recommend fully funding a project rather act as seed funding to leverage state, federal, and other sources of funding.

4. Open Public Comment

Mark opened the public comment.

Name	Address	
Tony Palomba Councilor-at-Large	14 Bates Rd. Response	Difficulty in spending CPA funds on housing. Joyce's role with HSW demonstrates the importance of having group dedicated to historic preservation activities to initiate projects. Would the CPC consider putting 10% into the MAHT each year? He views the Trust as the source for developing affordable housing. Elodia - It's documented how MAHT's are developed and need time to get established. She further noted there are different standards for how CPCs and MAHTs can spend funds. She had suggested to Manager Driscoll that a CPC member be appointed to the MAHT to foster a relationship between the two bodies.
Linda Relson Watertown Community Gardens and Pollinator Pathways	23 Stuart Street Response	In reference to a community garden/pollinator garden project; are there preferred methods of public outreach? What did you find most successful or lacking in success? Mark - In the case of a historic preservation project it would be important to have support from the Historical Commission. Elodia - Joyce gave the CPC a tour of the cemeteries and the Fowle House. Additionally, the architects for Irving Park and Saltonstall Park solicited feedback from the community in meetings. Jamie O'Connell - Look at the Application Evaluation Matrix and determine what would be needed for an excellent review, such as letters of support from other groups, demonstrated neighborhood support by canvassing near the proposed space, reach out to users and potential users. Ask what segment of the population will benefit from the project. Jon Bockian - Get letters of support from municipal bodies. Jamie - If applying for planning funds include plans for soliciting community input in the application. Jason Cohen- There seems to be trepidation over the application process. Though there is quite a bit of funding accumulated now, as the program builds there will be more competition for funds. Apply for funds now ("get in on the ground floor").
Pam Phillips Friends of Bees	132 Lincoln Ave.	Acts as more of a consultant rather than an implementer of projects.

Name	Address	
Nicole Gardner District A Councilor	18 Windsor Ave.	What access does the CPC have to use unused administrative funds for project work? Does the Council have the discretion to change the 5% allocated to administration to 4% as the dollar amount increases over time?
	Response	Mark - Administrative funds are used for staff and may be used to perform studies to help the CPC evaluate project proposals. Elodia - At the end of the year, unused funds return to the fund balance. Jason - The Committee hired a housing consultant to help evaluate a housing application.
Jamie Gordon	84 Fitchburg St.	Related to Linda's question about a Community Garden project, can the CPC connect applicants to organizations with expertise and current or past applicants to foster collaboration between community residents and not duplicate past efforts?
	Response	Lanae - CPC retains contact information for community organizations and all the past applicants. Connecting those with expertise to new applicants would be possible.
Sam Ghilardi	17 Derby Rd.	Has a potential idea of supplying building plans (pre-approved, certain size units, by-right) to housing developers to cut construction costs. How much room is there for creativity in addressing construction costs in the short term.
	Response	Jon - CPC is open to any idea that meets eligibility guidelines. The economics of affordable housing is biased towards bigger projects. Jamie - Uncertain whether the CPC can study zoning and permitting regulations not related to a specific project and thinks contacting city councilors would be a better approach. Contact Lanae to research whether that is allowable. Elodia - City Manager has allocated \$50,000 to review zoning issues and the Watertown Square central business district.

Mark closed the public hearing at 8:58PM.

5. Committee Discussion - Saltonstall Park Extension

Dennis J. Duff moved to grant the requested extension of the Saltonstall Park project. Jon asked for a discussion. Mark noted the DPW should have applied for planning funds first and then construction funding. Elodia pointed out the city had interfered delaying the design process as well as the time sensitivity nature of the project due to the park's seasonal activities. Dennis suggested sending the DPW a sternly worded letter and let them know this would be the last time they would be granted an extension to present their project.

The committee agreed to require the DPW to submit the following by the meeting materials deadline for the 7/20/23 CPC meeting:

- Full revised design plans
- Cost estimate and request
- Other sources of funds and deadlines to use funds

Also ensure that Greg St. Louis, MDLA, and Seger be available to answer CPC's questions at the meeting

The CPC would make a decision whether to allow the DPW to present the project in September after bids are obtained at the July 20th meeting.

Motion: Jason Cohen moved to send a letter to DPW outlining the requested information per the CPC discussion. Dennis J. Duff seconded the motion.

Vote: Committee members present voted unanimously in favor.

6. Acceptance of 2023-5-18 Minutes

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to approve the minutes and Jon Bockian seconded the motion.

Vote: Committee members present voted unanimously in favor.

7. Adjournment

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

Vote: Committee members present voted unanimously in favor.

Adjournment: 9:40 PM