



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Community Preservation Committee

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

Minutes of CPC Meeting Thursday, July 20, 2023, at 7:00 PM, held remotely via Zoom.

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

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Mike Albano, Department of Public Works; Chris Golden, Michael D'Angelo Landscape Architects; John Seger, Seger Architects; Anthony Palomba, City Council; Larry Field, Department of Community Development and Planning Joyce Kelly, Historical Society of Watertown, Annie Martin, Belmont Watertown United Methodist Church; Jamie Gordon; Jacky Van Leeuwen; Libby Shaw; Josh Rosmarin; and Margie Wayne.

1. Call to Order

Mark Krackiewicz opened the meet at 7:02pm and announced the meeting was being held remotely under the Governor's order extending the suspension of certain provisions of Open Meeting Law.

2. Acceptance of 2023-6-15 Minutes

Mark asked if there were requested changes and Lanae Handy mentioned Jon Bockian's request to change the acronym MAHT to WAHT on page 2.

Motion: Jon Bockian moved to approve the minutes with the change above and Elodia Thomas seconded the motion.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Mark Krackiewicz, Jamie O'Connell, Dennis J. Duff, Jason Cohen voted in favor. Matthew Walter and Bob DiRico were absent from that meeting and did not vote.

3. Committee Discussion

A. Request for Extension - Saltonstall Park Application

Elodia Thomas was concerned that the project went out to bid before the CPC had a chance to review the plans. Also, she wondered why Joe Levendusky, who according to him had been asked by the City Manager to review the plans for the pavilion, had not been invited to the three meetings regarding the pavilion.

Jamie O'Connell was concerned about changes to the amount of impervious surface and reduction of tree canopy when the summers are going to be hotter. She felt the CPC was constrained in providing feedback on the plans because the project had already gone out to bid.

Jon provided his understanding of the process now regardless of whether the CPC should have gotten time to review the plans. He explained the current plans were the plans to be used and bid numbers will be provided by the time CPC meets in September. He asked if the CPC should proceed with the September presentation and decide whether to recommend the project for funding or not.

Jason said taking the project out of cycle was not working for this project and it needed to return to the queue for 2024.

Dennis Duff stated there may be some merit to that. He asked why caliper was being used to measure trees as opposed to DBH and why four inches of mulch was specified when the standard is 2-3 inches.

Chris Golden said the specifications could be changed.

Elodia shared Joe's comments regarding building infrastructure with the room for lighting and sound mixing equipment as well as making room for future additions and improvements. He also was concerned about the power levels specified.

Jamie was concerned that there was no opportunity to provide feedback because the plans were at 100%. She suggested the DPW may be able to approve change orders or make modifications to fund some items raised by the CPC or the Committee may be forced to reject funding the project.

Jason said he didn't see a path to vote for the extension since Greg St. Louis was not at the meeting to answer questions. He added that it was his impression the DPW was viewing the CPA as an automatic source of funding, and it was a precedent he did not want to set.

Mark questioned what would be done if the bids exceeded the amount of funds the CPC would likely grant to the project. He raised whether the project could be value engineered to bring it back within reasonable costs.

CPC members agreed that there should be a new application and that the DPW seemed to be taking CPC funding for granted or feeling certain they will receive CPA funds without the benefit of the Committee's input on the design plans.

Motion: Jon Bockian moved to deny the DPW's request for a presentation in September and invite the DPW to submit a new CPA Funding Application for FY 2024 without the need to submit the Project Eligibility form. Jamie added an amendment to reject their application without prejudice. Jon restated the motion with the amendment denying the project application for FY 2023 without prejudice. Elodia seconded the restated motion.

In the discussion, Elodia said she felt very bad for the project architects and assured them they were not to blame.

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

B. FY2024 Project Eligibility Forms

Walker Pond - The Committee deemed the project eligible though found it there was minimal information provided and the application may be premature.

Councilor Palomba suggested there were a number of ideas as to how the Park might be used and the city was committed to hiring someone to conduct a robust community engagement process.

HVAC Upgrade for Fowle House - The Committee deemed the project eligible.

Watertown Historical Records Preservation- The Committee deemed the project eligible pending a local historic significance designation from the Historical Commission. Larry Field noted the application was on the Commission's September agenda. Mark added the project should adhere to preservation guidelines for documents.

North Branch Library Rehabilitation Planning - The Committee deemed the project eligible. Elodia had a letter from David Russo concerning the property and will forward it to Lanae.

80 Mt. Auburn St. Historic Building Safety and Accessibility Redevelopment - Lanae said she forwarded the Project Eligibility form to the city attorney. Jon agreed with getting an opinion from the city attorney and thought more information may be needed based on that legal opinion. Matt wanted to hear from the attorney and said Newton approved a similar project.

Scots' Charitable Society Fence Preservation - The Committee deemed the project eligible. Dennis remarked that CPA funds were for projects that would not otherwise be done, and Mt. Auburn Cemetery just sold property for a lot of money.

Brown House Structural Engineering - The Committee deemed the project eligible.

4. Chair Update

Mark summarized his meeting with Cliff Cook, (Watertown Affordable Housing Trust Chair), Larry Field and Lanae Handy. He described the WAHT process to identify potential sites for affordable housing projects, noting an intern had been hired and sites were narrowed down to 19. Larry had narrowed that number down further and the Trust planned to hire consultants to determine the feasibility of sites identified. If there were suitable sites the Trust planned to work with an affordable housing developer. Though the Trust is not seeking funds now, if they obtain site control of a property that may change.

5. Coordinator Update

A. Status of CPA Projects

FY 2022

City Hall Paintings - Lanae reported that the initial work of removal, stabilization, and some cleaning had been performed. The project was stalled due to delays in obtaining a contract for the conservator. Some of the initial delays were caused because of the conservator's confusion about the Certificate of Insurance requirements, and now the Purchasing Department needed to produce a contract.

Irving Park - Lanae believed some pathway and the ornamental fencing remained to be installed. She asked Bob to confirm, and he said the pathway had been completed and the fencing was in production. Bob added the bike racks would be installed outside of the park and more street trees would be planted in the fall.

Elodia suggested adding signage to notify park users the park was not a dog park. Bob agreed this was a good idea since dogs had badly damaged the turf at some other parks. Elodia also suggested sending an update to the park neighbors.

FY 2023

Lanae informed the CPC that all the Grant Agreements and Memoranda of Agreement had been executed and she is getting purchase orders and contracts produced for the projects so they can begin.

B. FY 2023 Tracking Project Expenditures

The invoices for the initial work on the City Hall Painting had been paid. The Irving Park account was within budget and funds were available from the contingency for the change orders for the addition of irrigation and sod.

C. FY 2023 CPC Administrative Expenses Detail

The only additional from the Administrative Expenses as of May 17th are the coordinator's salary from May 17th through June 30th.

D. Events

Lanae asked if Committee members thought it was a good idea to host an event to celebrate the first completed CPA project. Also, she asked if some committee members would volunteer to help with planning. Mark and Dennis were interested in working on the event.

Lanae asked about interest in hosting a booth at Faire on the Square again. The CPC was interested and Lanae planned circulate a sign-up.

6. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to adjourn, and Matt Walter seconded the motion.

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

Adjournment: 8:40 PM