



Town of Watertown
Community Preservation Committee
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Committee Members
Mark Krackiewicz, Chair
Jason Cohen, Vice Chair
Jonathan Bockian
Bob DiRico
Dennis J. Duff
Allen Gallagher
Jamie O'Connell
Susan Steele
Elodia Thomas

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, March, 25, 2021, Remote Zoom Meeting, starting at 7 p.m.

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

Others Present: Lanae Handy, CPC Coordinator; Leo Martin, Patrick Fairbairn, Conservation Commission Conservation Commission; Janet Buck, and Joan Martin.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mark Krackiewicz called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and read the Governor's order to suspend some provisions of public meeting law, allowing remote meetings.

Lanae Handy called the roll. Jon Bockian, Jason Cohen, Bob DiRico, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, Mark Krackiewicz, Jamie O'Connell, Elodia Thomas, and Susan Steele were present.

2. Acceptance of 3-18-21 Meeting Minutes

Mark asked for discussion before approving the 3-18-21 meeting minutes. Jon requested confirmation that participants could ask questions and the committee would answer questions at the public hearing. Mark reminded members that the primary purpose of the hearing will be to hear comments from the public. He added that as time allows questions would be answered.

Motion: Allen moved to accept the 3-18-21 meeting minutes and Susan seconded.

Vote: Jon Bockian, Jason Cohen, Bob DiRico, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, Mark Krackiewicz, Jamie O'Connell, Susan Steele, and Elodia Thomas voted to accept the minutes.

3. Discussion about CP Plan Revision - March 20, 2021

Mark pointed out that he, Jon, Jason, and Jamie made comments to the document. Jason had formatting comments. Jamie had minor comments and suggestions for clarifying a few paragraphs. Committee members agreed there was no need to go through all of Jamie's comments and that Lanae and Elodia would handle them.

Jon noted that he reviewed the appendices produced by Goldson. Based on that review, he found the list of potential open space initiatives selective. Jon further found the detailed descriptions appeared to advocate for certain projects and favor them. He thought the list could be pared down. To make it clear CPC is not endorsing any particular project, he thought the heading should be titled samples rather than suggestions. Jon declared some items on the open space and recreation list were not found in the community engagement materials.

Mark asked for comments from others. Jamie responded that she was surprised to see all the parcels listed when the Conservation Commission had to go into executive session in order to discuss them. She wondered how to balance the fact that information on the parcels came up during community engagement with the details in the plan. Though Jamie liked Jon's clarification, she would leave the detailed information on the remediation components.

Elodia was surprised that at this late date there were so many comments. She pointed out that much of the included was in the open space and comprehensive plans. Elodia said whether the parcels listed could be purchased or not, they are all the land that is left. As a foundational document, Elodia noted the plan should include this baseline information.

Jamie proposed changing the title from potential initiatives to natural areas. Jason was concerned about the balance between open space and the other categories. He agreed with Jon that the document doesn't appear even-handed when comparing categories.

In comparing open space to other sections of the plan, Elodia stated that generally residents don't know enough about affordable housing and housing will be generated by the Town. Regarding historic preservation, there is not much left to preserve. She and Lanae reached out to the historic preservation stakeholders and didn't get much back. Elodia objected to the notion that the open space section is advocacy and asserted it is reality.

Mark also found it imbalanced. He reminded the committee that they did not like his idea that the committee could initiate projects and the plan clearly states the committee does not initiate projects.

Lanae read a comment from Janet Buck proposing the CPC flesh out the other categories rather than cutting back on the excellent description of the open space opportunities. Lanae added that there was not enough content available to flesh out the other sections.

Susan thought the open space section stands out from the other sections. She also thought the details appeared to be what would be found in an application.

Joan Martin favored the detailed description in the document and pointed out it would give good information to anyone who planned to submit an application.

Jason said the CPC should be unbiased. Joan pointed out the Watertown community was savvy enough to realize the committee was not advocating.

Dennis agreed with Joan and further said it was highly insulting that after all of Elodia and Lanae's work on the plan to suggest that. Bob thought it was well-written and very informative. He agreed with Dennis.

Jon thought while the community engagement appendices would show who made comments, the items listed in the plan were selected. He stated the language should be pared down and if initiatives were identified in other plans that should be made clear.

Jon made a motion to revise the community suggestions list in the draft plan for open space so that it would be comparable in style to the other sections. Identify the list as a sample list from community and that the CPC does not endorse any of the items at this time.

Jason seconded. Mark called for discussion.

Susan thought the open space section could be condensed but wouldn't want to condense it too much. She thought it should be condensed enough so there was no appearance of bias. Allen asked whether it would help to preface each section with a statement that the committee is not advocating for these projects. Elodia pointed out the process and the plan states the committee does not initiate projects, but simply vets them.

Jamie suggested a way to retain most of the very informative language would be to list the projects as properties. Lanae suggested moving the information to the needs and resources area to retain the detailed descriptions. Jon would not be uncomfortable if the needs and resources area included a description of the properties.

Jamie also suggested prefacing the list with a paragraph that declared "through the course of CPC outreach efforts there was overwhelming demand from the public for acquisition of natural properties. The following are examples drawn from the Open Space Plan as well as properties identified by the public that would fulfill this need."

Jon asked whether it would be appropriate to write more information about a housing trust in the housing section. Lanae noted that there were not many calling for establishment of a housing trust during the community engagement process. Susan liked Jamie's suggestion. She didn't mind that the descriptions were longer in open space as long as the CPC didn't appear to be advocating. Susan inquired if there was an introductory sentence that made clear the CPC was not advocating.

Elodia said the information is not a surprise and that Walker Pond was cited in the effort to pass the CPA in Watertown. Jason agreed that was true and that the open space section is well written, detailed, and compelling. According to him, that was precisely what made it appear to be advocacy when compared to the other sections.

Elodia pointed out that all of these details have been discussed by the Bike and Pedestrian Committee and Gideon had spoken about connectivity.

With regard to the Open Space Plan, she noted the community gave it the color and cited the activities. Elodia said, the CPC's "plan is supposed to be inspirational, and many more ideas were generated for open space because it was a much more important part of people's lives."

Mark asked about Jon's motion on the floor and whether he wanted to amend his motion.

Motion: Jon restated his motion as, revise the community engagement list in the draft CP Plan conforming the four lists to be comparable in style to one another and identify the lists as sample initiatives from community outreach efforts. The CPC does not endorse any item at this time.

Jason seconded. Elodia would be happy with statement that the CPC doesn't endorse any project at this time. Allen said he would also be happy with that. Jason pointed out there was more to the motion than the last sentence.

Jon restated his motion again and Jason seconded.

Vote: Jon Bockian, Jason Cohen, and Mark Krackiewicz voted yes. Bob DiRico, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, Jamie O'Connell, Susan Steele, and Elodia Thomas voted no.

Dennis moved to add the statement, "the CPC does not endorse any suggestions at this time." Allen added the word "specifically" before endorse and place this under the heading of each category.

Jamie noted that the statement made it appear that the CPC is against the suggestions they put in the plan.

Motion: Elodia moved to add please remember that the CPC does not initiate, implement or manage projects under community suggestions. Dennis seconded.

Vote: Jason Cohen, Bob DiRico, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, Mark Krackiewicz, Jamie O'Connell, Susan Steele and Elodia Thomas voted yes. Jon Bockian voted no.

The CPC went through Mark's, Jon's and Jamie's comments and agreed to keep the inaugural committee where it was found in the first section of the plan. The letter to Watertown would be signed by the inaugural committee and dated February 2021. The title inaugural members would be added to the table listing CPC members.

Minor changes that were agreed upon included but were not limited to:

- Changing language to "for open space acquisition projects, conservation or agricultural restrictions are required.";
- Moving a paragraph in the recreation section listing amenities that can be funded to CPA Eligibility paragraph;
- Changing artful to creative under recreation projects;
- Labeling page numbers on the left in table of content to indicate they are page numbers; and
- Adding artificial turf to not allowed in Allowable Uses of Funds table.

Motion: Mark moved to accept the plan as redrafted with changes and edits. Lanae and Elodia will incorporate changes into a final draft plan. Elodia seconded.

Jon said he would vote no due to his concerns raised earlier.

Vote: Jason Cohen, Bob DiRico, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, Mark Krackiewicz, Jamie O'Connell, Susan Steele and Elodia Thomas voted yes. Jon Bockian voted no.

4. Planning for the Public Hearing

Mark planned to get together with Lanae to plan a slide presentation for the public hearing. Dennis asked if it would be a Zoom meeting and Mark confirmed it would.

5. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis moved to adjourn. Allen seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 p.m.