0

Town of Watertown

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

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, January, 28, 2021, Remote Zoom Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

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

Others Present: Lisa Feltner, Town Council; Leo Martin, Conservation Commission; Larry Field, Community Development and Planning; Meghan O'Connell, and Michele Waldman.

1. **Call to Order**

   Elodia Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and read the Governor's order to suspend some provisions of public meeting law, allowing remote meetings.

   Lanae Handy called the roll and all committee members were present, except Susan Steele who joined at 7:22 PM.

2. **Acceptance of 11-19-20 Meeting Minutes**

   Motion: Dennis Duff made a motion to accept the 11-19-20 minutes with two amendments:

   1) Add the time Maria Rose left the meeting; and

   2) Add the time Susan Steele joined the meeting.

   Allen Gallagher seconded.

   Vote: Elodia Thomas, Jason Cohen, Jon Bockian, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Dennis Duff, Allen Gallagher, Bob DiRico, and Maria Rose voted to accept the minutes with the two amendments.

3. **Review and Discussion of Design Layout - CPA Application Manual and First Section of CP Plan**

CPC members made general comments about the documents. Maria asked whether the town would be printing them out. Elodia stated Lanae would print copies upon request. She further noted documents would be accessed through an online platform and made available online in fillable pdf format. Related to the online forms, Elodia mentioned she and Lanae met with Chris McClure about CPC IT needs, including the CPA online application forms.

Jon and Jason made general positive comments about the design layout and the writing in the sections reviewed.

First Section of CP Plan

Elodia suggested that the committee go through Jon's comments. Simple changes such as replacing the word settlers with colonists and the word luxury with market-rate were agreed upon. Elodia quickly went through other minor edits to simplify or clarify statements and fix typos.

Maria wanted to ensure the open space acreage figures were accurate. Leo stated he checked the numbers on GIS and Gideon had rechecked them.

While Mark thought the financial statement in the plan would be confusing, he agreed that it needs to be included in the CP Plan.

The committee had a lengthy debate about allowing consideration of an off-cycle application based on an emergency in addition to time-sensitive real estate transactions or grant opportunities. Jon advocated for the addition of the word emergency. Susan researched language from other plans and Elodia confirmed the language in the draft materials is standard for most plans. Elodia thought Massachusetts Housing Partnership and the Community Preservation Coalition looked at this issue thoughtfully during the pandemic. She wanted to stick with the protocol and leave out the word emergency. Jon didn't feel bound by the text in other plans and wanted it to be included. In his opinion, the language wouldn't bind the committee to consider such applications. Dennis agreed with Elodia and thought it should be left the way it was written.

Elodia emphasized that the CPC is designed to fund capital projects that are the extras that will improve the community. Jason preferred not to limit the CPC, noting the Committee could decide not to fund such applications. Susan raised the issue of the time lag between consideration and a grant award. Given the time lag, the projects would not be considered emergencies. She doesn't think emergency is the correct term, because it gives the impression that the CPC can consider and fund projects with a quick turn-around time.

Dennis asked to make a motion to vote on keeping the language as written and Jon thought taking a vote was not appropriate.

Maria envisioned an emergency situation where money can keep community intact. Lisa Feltner stressed people are looking to governments to be flexible and responsive and believes including emergencies would cover such applications.

Jason thought the debate was not resolving and the CPC needed to vote on the issue. Elodia called for a motion and Dennis noted he had already made a motion. Maria asked for a restatement of the language in Dennis' motion.

Motion: Dennis moved to leave the language as written and Allen seconded.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Dennis Duff, Allen Gallagher, Bob DiRico, and Susan Steele voted yes. Jason Cohen, Jon Bockian, Mark Kraczkiewicz, and Maria Rose voted no. The majority voted in favor of the motion.

In the discussion about the Guiding Principles, Elodia asked Jason for guidance and he stated accessibility and sustainability have different meanings, while Mark emphasized guiding principle, 1a. referred to the broader definition of accessibility. The Committee agreed to separate the ideas under 1b. into two bullet points by adding the bullet point 1e., focused on accessibility related to ADA and MAAB. Then 1b. was changed to "Environmentally sustainable practices and design, including for the long-term maintenance and lifespan of the resource." Jason suggested "Incorporate universal design principles in addition to meeting all accessibility state and federal accessibility codes and statues (ADA and MAAB) for 1e. Elodia asked Jon to send language for 1b. to Lanae and asked Jason to write the language for 1e. and send it to Lanae.

Application Manual

Elodia led the Committee through suggested edits to the Application Manual. After minor edits the following topics were discussed:

1. Mark asked why the evaluation matrix was removed? Lanae noted the matrix, if used, would be an internal tool and was not included in other plans she reviewed. Susan proposed making the document available to applicants as part of the workshop. Jason suggested adding it as an appendix. Maria proposed holding the matrix and inserting it as a later as a hyperlink. Lanae also mentioned that the online forms will have internal workflow where the CPC members would have the opportunity to evaluate the applications. She doesn't have enough information about that yet to determine how it would impact whether the matrix would be used or not because the online forms are still in development.
2. Mark thought the presentation of the Co-Applicant Consent form needed something because it didn't look like a form. Jason recommended adding the word form to the title and Maria agreed that would help.
3. CPA Funding Application Questions - Mark wanted to ask applicants how their application references other town documents. Elodia emphasized that was spelled out in the application steps and the CP Plan is underpinned by the town planning documents. Jason proposed rewording a question "How does this project

incorporate universal design as well as comply with accessibility codes and statutes?" to reflect changes made to the guiding principles. Jon noted the application needed a question about how the project incorporates environmental sustainability as well.

Other changes were called for including: add resumes and references for project managers; change language on checklist to "land survey or certified plot plan"; and add a question about whether there is a mortgage holder who needs to give consent to the project. Larry Field thought there needed to be a balance between making requirements too burdensome for applicants and getting necessary information. He would ask the question and not require signatures or documentation at this stage. Dennis agreed it is important to ask the question. Elodia reminded CPC members that Town legal counsel would be involved in the process and would review the forms.

4. **Election of CPC Chair**

Elodia reminded CPC members her term is up on February 1st and asked whether CPC members had given any thought to the new Chair. Maria asked if Elodia would continue on and she said she would not. The committee agreed to solicit nominations and have a vote at the February CPC meeting. Elodia emphasized that by the Feb. 18th meeting the issue of her replacement needed to be addressed. She further noted there are options such as a Chair and Co-chair or a Chair and Vice-Chair.

Motion: Dennis made a motion to table election of a chair until the next meeting and Maria seconded the motion.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Jason Cohen, Jon Bockian, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Dennis Duff, Allen Gallagher, Bob DiRico, Susan Steele, and Maria Rose voted in favor.

Aside from the chair election issue, Jon wondered whether it was appropriate to vote on approving the CP Plan documents reviewed. Elodia recommended that first Jon and Lanae ask Stuart Saginor about the timing for filing a deed restriction and whether other towns ask for a mechanics lien wavers. She also suggested that the housing and open space sections be sent to the committee next week.

5. **Adjournment**

Motion: Dennis made a motion to adjourn and Jason seconded.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Jason Cohen, Jon Bockian, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Dennis Duff, Allen Gallagher, Bob DiRico, Susan Steele, and Maria Rose voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Documents reviewed:

Draft Watertown Community Preservation Application Manual

Draft Watertown Community Preservation Plan