



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, August 17, 2023, at 7:00 PM, held remotely via Zoom.

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

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Anthony Palomba, City Council; Katie Swan, Community Development and Planning; Mike Albano, Department of Public Works; Joyce Kelly, Historical Society of Watertown; Andrew Gambardella, Mt. Auburn Cemetery (applicant); Gus Fraser, Mt. Auburn Cemetery; Beth Brown, Mt. Auburn Cemetery; Jamie Gordon (applicant); Margie Wayne; Linda Scott; Michele Waldman; and Josh Rosmarin.

1. Call to Order

Mark Krackiewicz called the meeting to order at 7:03, noting it was being held remotely according to the Governor's extension suspending certain provisions of Open Meeting Laws.

2. Acceptance of Minutes

A. 2023-7-20 Minutes

Mark asked if there were requested changes to the minutes. Lanae noted the meeting date was listed as Monday instead of Thursday.

Motion: Jason moved to accept the minutes with the change. Matt seconded the motion.

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

3. Committee Discussion

A. Belmont Watertown United Methodist Church Eligibility

Mark asked for discussion on the item. Matthew Walter thought requesting funds for the exterior was clear cut though the request for interior renovations was not. Jason Cohen said if the application was only for sanctuary space renovations it would be clear

cut in the other direction. If CPC funds were limited to renovations to space that provided community benefits, he would vote to deem the project eligible.

Jon Bockian said it was premature to decide not to consider the application because the CPC needed more information to judge its merits. Also, the CPC might impose restrictions on the funding to avoid interference in church affairs. Elodia Thomas pointed out they had not yet sold any of the properties that would aid in the costly renovations. She went through the points in the letter from BWUMC trustee Annie Martin. Elodia does not want applicants to put a lot of work into applications for naught.

Bob DiRico found the letter from the trustee concerning and thought an organization in such financial jeopardy was grounds to disqualify it. Dennis J. Duff hoped letting the applicant go forward wouldn't guarantee a recommendation for funding.

Motion: Jon moved to consider a full application for the project described in the Project Eligibility form. Jason seconded the motion.

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

B. Eligibility Forms - Follow-up Comments and Questions for Applicants

Walker Pond

Dennis asked Jamie for clarification about whether the Conservation Commission had any authority over Walker Pond. Elodia answered only on wetland setback issues. Jamie requested a response from Katie Swan. Katie said the Conservation Commission had regulatory authority regarding the buffer zone. The Commission has no care or custody of the property and had not discussed the project.

Dennis hoped the park would be a passive recreation area because the city has very little open space. Elodia noted the property was not acquired with CPA funds and could not be rehabilitated as open space. She added that it was important to be specific about what the applicant wished to accomplish and preferred the space not be overrun by active recreation.

Jon would like to see language in the deed, or a conservation restriction included with a recommendation for funding as well as more specific information on what funds would be used for. Jamie wanted more details about what was being proposed as well as about the public process.

Elodia suggested providing examples of good applications to applicants. Mark recommended the funding application include a detailed scope of work, timeline, and budget as well as evidence of a quality project team.

Elodia emphasized there are many items that would be necessary for cleaning the site and that the DCDP needed to give Katie more support. She would like to see something extraordinary on the site in terms of connectivity and nature preservation.

Jason objected to putting the soccer field in the application and found it biased when there had not yet been a community process.

Committee members also discussed what steps should be undertaken, including environmental assessment, assessment/demolition of structures on the site, assessing cost of cleaning the pond, clarification on what is owned and whether the Waltham section had been acquired by the city, and the logical order in which the previously mentioned tasks should be performed.

Brown House Structural Engineering

Elodia pointed out the organization has \$130 million and is asking for the full amount of the project budget. Jon wanted to hear why they needed the full amount. Jason thought the project would engender goodwill, showing the CPC was doing something for the city. Jamie suggested the applicant make clear their needs and the CPC point out their value for cost sharing or contribution of funding from non-CPA sources.

Clerk Records Preservation

Jon asked about the historical significance of the records and Lanae noted the project was on the September agenda of the Historical Commission. Elodia added that the physical documents must be preserved and not digitized.

Mark wanted more details of what the records are, how they would be restored, where they would be stored and preserved, whether they would be accessible to the public, and more information about the other source of funding.

Scots Charitable Society Fence Renovation

Elodia asked if they had applied to Cambridge for CPA funds?

Matt thought Mt. Auburn's fundraising success shouldn't be held against them and pointed out they were requesting less than a 1/3 of the project budget. Granting funds would allow them to execute worthy projects they otherwise wouldn't be able to implement.

The CPC also wanted to know where the other funds would come from and more about the organization's financial situation to better understand why CPA funds are needed.

Edmund Fowle House – HVAC

Elodia noted that Senator Brownsberger wrote about the changing standards in his newsletter and recommended waiting for the changes to products/technology available on the market and any new efficiency standards.

Joyce stated it was recommended to keep two furnaces to use existing duct work. The Historical Society had an energy assessment performed at the Fowle house and was looking into installation of vapor barriers and insulation as well as other energy efficiency work.

The committee strongly recommended the applicant clearly define the equipment proposed and how the system would work.

N. Branch Library

Jamie applauded the thorough Project Eligibility form. She thought it was an interesting model to have an individual apply but wanted an explanation of why the city wasn't leading the project.

Dennis asked if the building would be rented from the city. Jon wanted to see detailed scopes of work and budgets in the funding application.

Elodia asked about the city's role because the applicant had no authority to act on behalf of the city. She also wanted to know who would maintain the building. Elodia pointed out it's an open space conservation site. Mark added, he would like to see someone from the city overseeing the project.

Jamie Gordon told the CPC that Liz Helfer had submitted a MA One-Stop application to look at the site with a narrower focus. She had a commitment from Steve Magoon to be the project leader and to figure out solicitation of quotes. She added DPW would maintain the grounds.

The CPC suggested having the tree warden assess trees and that the applicant carefully consider the order of the following: building assessment, community engagement, and feasibility study. Members also thought the committee should do a site visit. Dennis offered to provide advice on trees and shrubs.

C. CPA Project Permanent Signage

Due to the hour, Mark proposed deferring item 3C. and the committee agreed.

4. Coordinator Update

Irving Park Celebration Planning

Lanae told CPC members she informed them of the event time and dates by email. She stated that so far, 12 park neighbors, the project landscape architects, Steve Owens, Lisa Feltner and Nicole Gardner planned to attend. Lanae asked for those who were involved in planning, Allen, Dennis, and Mark to add comments. Allen said he would have a small public address system and play some music. As for the light refreshments, Lanae said the weather would determine the types of drinks and that some baked goods would be served.

5. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis moved to adjourn, and Jon seconded the motion.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Bob DiRico, Jason Cohen, Jamie O'Connell, Mark Krackiewicz, Matthew Walter, Jon Bockian, and Allen Gallagher voted in favor.

Adjournment: 9:21PM