



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 Monday, October 19, 2023, at 7:00 PM, held remotely via Zoom.

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

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; George Proakis, City Manager; Michael Albano, Department of Public Works; Michael Cookson, Department of Public Works; Nicole Gardner; District City Councilor; Leo Martin, Conservation Commission; Joyce Kelly, Historical Society of Watertown; Libby Shaw, Trees for Watertown; Patrick Fairbairn; Margie Wayne; Jamie Gordon; Jacky van Leeuwen; Joan Gumbleton; Linda Scott; and Josh Roshmarin.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Acceptance of Minutes

A. 2023-9-25 CPC Minutes

Mark Krackiewicz asked if there were any changes to the minutes other than the addition requested by Allen Gallagher which was attached to the agenda and Jon [Bockian's and Joyce Kelly's requested changes](#) that were emailed to the CPC and are linked to these minutes. There were none.

Motion: Jon Bockian moved to accept the minutes with the requested changes. Matt Walter seconded the motion.

Vote: Matthew Walter, Elodia Thomas, Mark Krackiewicz, Allen Gallagher, Jon Bockian, and Dennis J. Duff voted in favor. Bob DiRico was absent from the last meeting.

3. George Proakis, City Mgr. - Remarks on CPA

George Proakis remarked he had the opportunity to work with the CPC in Somerville on CPA projects and supervised the staff person managing the CPA program. Looking to the CPA in Watertown, the city is taking steps on design work at Walker Pond and a performance pavilion in Saltonstall park as well as possible Affordable Housing Trust projects.

Elodia Thomas asked about obtaining quarterly reports from the auditor. George replied that Munis should be able to generate straight forward and up to date reports. Lanae Handy said she had spoken with Megan Langan, (City Auditor), who assured her quarterly reports would be produced going forward.

When asked about moving contracts along, George noted contracts over \$50,000 were as difficult as those for \$50,000,000. He mentioned a new staff position in the procurement office would be posted soon. George took the blame for getting so many projects going at once and that created a jam in producing contracts.

Jon Bockian asked about allocating a certain amount of dollars to the Housing Trust. George commented that the Housing Trust in Somerville had a long track record of working on housing before the CPC was formed there.

Bob DiRico inquired about George's experience or opinion on off-cycle proposals. George answered that there were a few off-cycle proposals in Somerville, but he was unaware of the specific circumstances. Mark added that the DOR prescribed evaluating applications against one another.

Elodia mentioned she could not get a clear answer about the status of state funding for the Saltonstall Park project. George responded the funds, "were in a good place but for access to CPA funds".

Dennis J. Duff asked if George had a number in mind for housing related to housing vs. open space. George agreed there needed to be a balance between housing and open space. He said in Somerville where there is twice as much density, planners believed they didn't lay out enough open space. They built places of employment without enough housing created for employees to live, thereby creating a traffic issue. George said the city was rebuilding open spaces, creating destinations spaces like Walker Pond, and community gathering spaces like Saltonstall park and neighborhood greens.

When asked how the number of housing units to be built by right was determined in the MBTA Communities Law, George said he didn't know the formula, just that it was a complex one. Also, he did not consider 1701 units of housing difficult for Watertown rather the issue was developing the zoning that allowed for the capacity to do so. George stated the city is in the midst of the planning process to figure out where to zone for those additional housing units.

Mark worries that the CPA fund has accumulated quite a bit of money and doesn't seem to get an increasing number of applications each year. Further, the city is overwhelmed and there are not many non-profits in Watertown eligible to apply. George interjected that the city was spending its own funds to assess the North Branch library building to see if it is salvageable. He noted there are some options before the city and if the building is not salvageable, the property could be viewed as a parcel of land or open space.

Elodia reminded Committee members that the CPA funds were the people's purse and good planning takes time. She added there were many planning projects in the pipeline that would lead to implementation of large projects in the future.

4. Coordinator Update

A. CPA Projects

Lanae gave an update on the Irving Park Celebration event, noting it was well-attended and that George Proakis, Councilor Feltner, and Representative Owens made remarks. George spoke about the opportunities CPA funds create, and Councilor Feltner directed attendees to the wealth of information on the CPC webpage. Finally Representative Owens commented about the state and local government partnership created by CPA local funds and the state match.

For signage at Irving Park, Lanae contacted Marcia. She retired and no longer does graphic design. Marcia suggested straight text etched in stone, noting engravers would provide font style options. She also pointed out bronze plaques could be stolen.

Bob said DPW has a sign budget and that it wouldn't be unreasonable for the DPW to cover the cost to recognize the CPA's contribution to the project. He also said the stealing of bronze plaques was not an issue rather it was a matter of preference.

Mark proposed that Lanae email language for the sign to committee members for comment.

City Hall Paintings - Lanae said there was finally a contract for the conservator and hopefully painting restoration would resume soon.

Cemeteries - Ray Dunetz, landscape architect; Ivan Meyjer, stone conservator; Laurie Soave, Vertex project manager(HS); Mike Micieli, Tree Warden; Bob DiRico, Supervisor of Parks and Cemeteries; Joyce Kelly project manager (cemeteries project), Elodia Thomas, CPC member, Greg St. Louis, DPW Superintendent; Mike Cookson, DPW Assistant Dir. Administration and Finance, and Lanae Handy CPC Coordinator met to discuss the trees on the border of the Common Street Cemetery and the high school. Mike Micieli and Greg prescribed that no trees were to be removed at this time and what measures should be taken to protect existing trees. There was also discussion about how to protect gravestones in the same area. Ivan recommended plywood housing and Ray recommended scaffolding. Ivan also previewed his assessment of gravestones from his draft report indicating that the stones were not in such bad condition. He also wanted to understand how the city handles gravestones and learn more about city policies to help align his recommendations with current city practices.

Edmund Fowle House - So far there hasn't been rotted wood found beyond the fascia. There was an increase in some material costs that can be covered by the contingency. Completion is estimated by October 27 to early November.

Commander's mansion - The landscape architectural team is reviewing city documents and National Archives records. They also plan to look at historical maps at DPW. The surveyors are wrapping up and will produce a document soon. Liz Helfer, Commander's Mansion project manager is planning a site visit within the next two months.

B. CPA Financials

Lanae stated at the close of FY2023 that a total of \$62,433 was spent on administration and as of 10/12/23 a total of \$14,117 was spent on administration. She

intends to post a revised CPA financial statement showing FY2023 and 2024 as of October 2023 on the CPC webpage. Lanae will also send financial tracking of project expenditures to committee members.

5. Committee Discussion: FY2024 CPA Application Evaluation Process

Mark introduced the discussion on the committee's process for evaluating applications. He said in the first round a committee member or two had taken on an application, citing its strengths and weaknesses as well as proposing some questions. In the second round, Christine Rogers started the discussion with her evaluation of the 103 Nichols Ave. project followed by a summarization of the remaining project applications by Mark and Lanae.

Jon liked the model used in the first year with 2 committee members assigned to open the discussion of a project application and allowing all members to chime in later.

Committee Assignments for Project Applications

Walker Pond	Dennis Duff and Elodia Thomas
Scots Charitable Fence	Matt Walter and Jamie O'Connell
Browne House	Allen Gallagher and Mark Krackiewicz
80 Mt. Auburn St.	Jon Bockian and Jason Cohen
Saltonstall Park	Elodia Thomas and Bob DiRico

Mark proposed committee members describe the project, cite the positives, and propose questions or list what further information was needed.

Jon asked Lanae to find a second date for presentations and distribute that information to the CPC.

Before adjourning Bob mentioned the bids for Saltonstall Park were expiring at the end of the month. The total budget would likely go up and could reach as much as \$3.5M. He asked if the project could go off-cycle? Mark said the project would still need City Council approval. Lanae asked what if the project was approved for the current request and after the bids come in higher, having the applicant seek additional funding off-cycle. Elodia asked about the status of the \$900,000 in state funding. Michael Cookson said the contract with the state expired 12/31/26. Elodia stated she and Bob would meet and send a memo to the chair on how to proceed the off-cycle request.

6. Adjournment

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

Vote: Matt Walter, Elodia Thomas, Bob DiRico, Mark Krackiewicz, Dennis J. Duff, Jon Bockian and Allen Gallagher voted in favor.

Adjournment: 8:34 PM