CITY OF WATERTOWN
Community Preservation Committee

Minutes of CPC Meeting Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 7PM, held remotely via Zoom.

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

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Michael Albano, Department of Public Works; Leo Martin, Conservation Commission; Anthony Palomba, City Council; Joyce Kelly, Historical Society of Watertown; Michele Waldman; Linda Scott; Sarah Scott; and Jamie Gordon.

1. **Call to Order**

   Mark Kraczkiewicz called the meeting to order at 7:02PM noting the Governor's executive order to extend the suspension of certain open meeting law provisions.

2. **Committee Discussion**

   A. **Saltonstall Park**

   Mark called for a motion to recommend funding the project.

   Motion: Jon Bockian moved to recommend $2,013,745 in funding to the Department of Public Works for the Saltonstall Park project subject to the standard conditions. Matt Walter seconded the motion.

   Mark moved to amend the motion to include the following specific conditions:

   1. In the maintenance of the trees and shrubs employ naturalistic pruning and avoid shearing.
   2. For the performance pavilion, post the schedule and application process for use on the city website.
   3. If there are significant changes to the cost, design, or materials, the CPC shall have the opportunity to review the changes before they are implemented.

   Jon accepted the motion as a friendly amendment.

   Discussion: Elodia Thomas added that Lanae should be included in key meetings and receive updates (This is a standard condition). Jamie O'Connell wanted to include obtaining input from Trees for Watertown because they had not provided a letter of support. Committee members were hesitant to condition the award on input from a non-municipal entity.

Jon asked if any work had begun in Saltonstall Park within the scope of the CPA project. Bob DiRico responded that the work being performed was outside the scope of the project.

He also informed the Committee that Adam Squatrito, a new project manager, would be overseeing the CPA project and construction would begin after the Faire on the Square.

Abigail Hammett pointed out that she agreed with some of Elodia's comments about the design regarding the mounts for a too-small, 10ft screen as well as the orientation of benches along Main Street. She suggested backless benches and Elodia noted those were not ADA compliant. Abigail then suggested benches with backs situated in the middle. Bob believed the design team took the feedback about bench orientation into account.

Jon and Matt accepted Mark's amendment to the original motion.

Vote: Matt Walter, Elodia Thomas, Jon Bockian, Jamie O'Connell, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Abigail Hammett, Dennis J. Duff, Allen Gallagher, and Bob DiRico voted in favor.

B. Browne House Structural Engineering

Mark called for a motion.

Motion: Dennis J. Duff moved to recommend award Historic New England a grant of $7,250 for the Browne House Structural Engineering project. Jamie seconded the motion.

Elodia would like to see the broken window fixed and the broken limbs cleaned up on the property.

Vote: Bob DiRico, Jamie O'Connell, Elodia Thomas, Allen Gallagher, Abigail Hammett, Dennis Duff, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Matt Walter, and Jon Bockian voted in favor.

C. Scots Charitable Society Plot Fence Restoration

Motion: Matt Walter made a motion to recommend awarding the Friends of Mt. Auburn Cemetery $300,000 for the Scots Charitable Society fence restoration. Jon Bockian seconded the motion.

Discussion: Dennis asked if the Scots Charitable Society was the same organization that purchased the Lexington History Museum property. Jamie thought the fence restoration was a good project but was confused about the funding structure. She did not know how the Friends of Mt. Auburn (FMAC) knew they needed $300,000 in CPA funds at this stage in their fundraising. Matt responded that they came up with an amount they deemed reasonable. Jon had the impression the Friends of Mt. Auburn determined an amount they were confident they could raise and would condition the release of CPA funds on FMAC securing the balance of the construction cost apart from the CPA grant.

Bob thought it was a good project though the presentation made clear funds raised in excess of the project budget would not be returned to the CPA fund. He found it to be a big ask given the assessment project in progress to restore the city's severely neglected cemeteries. Bob did not think contributing that amount to a private cemetery made sense. He said it was disturbing that the Mt. Auburn Cemetery staff didn't respond to the CPC's request for evidence of fundraising to date. Elodia agreed.

Elodia reminded committee members that when the CPA Plan was written the goals focused on municipal property. She pointed out that FMAC raised about $2 million per year. They paid $30,000 in Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). Elodia thought the project was inappropriate given the needs of the cemeteries and Commander's Mansion projects as well as decreased state matching funds.

Jamie thought there was a lot of money in the CPA fund so the CPC wouldn't be overcommitting, though she found Mt. Auburn's presentation presumptuous.

Abigail asked when the next application cycle begins and if less funding were approved could the applicant request more later. Mark said that was possible. He agreed FMAC made a big ask given their confidence in their fundraising ability. Mark would entertain a motion to approve a lesser amount.

Motion: Jamie moved to amend the original motion to $50,000 in funding for the Scots Charitable Society Fence project and permit FMAC to come back within one year to request more. Bob seconded the motion.

Jon asked if an additional request would be off cycle without a new application. He would permit that within a year and if later, FMAC would have to complete a full application process.

Lanae thought the fundraising campaign should be presented to the CPC because what Jamie and Jon described would give the FMAC a disincentive to raise more funds to replace the decrease from the original request.

Matt thought Mt. Auburn Cemetery was worthy of more and concerns about ensuring that fundraising occurs were reasonable. Mark agreed the CPC should recommend some funding though $300,000 was too much and he thought $100,000-150,000 was reasonable. Matt insisted the award should be $200,000 or more.

Dennis stated the CPC sets parameters on projects and if the CPC denied funding the project, he was sure Mt. Auburn Cemetery would still be able to implement the project.

Michele Waldman said from the perspective of the average resident this project was reverse-Robin Hood. She stated, "Mt. Auburn raises a lot of money, and they don't need CPA funds."

Leo Martin thought $300,000 was too much for the taxpayers to contribute to an ornamental fence that they wouldn't provide much benefit.

All previous motions were withdrawn.

Motion: Jon moved to amend Matt's motion to recommend $200,000 in funding to the Friends of Mt. Auburn Cemetery for the fence restoration project subject to the standard conditions and that CPA funds would not be released unless the entire project construction cost was available in cash or pledges, including CPA funds within one year of final grant approval by the City Council.

Matt seconded the motion.

Vote: Abigail Hammett, Allen Gallagher, Jon Bockian, Matt Walter, Bob DiRico, Mark Kraczkiewicz, and Jamie O'Connell voted in favor. Elodia Thomas and Dennis Duff voted against.

3. **Approval of CPC Minutes**

   A. **2024-1-18 CPC Minutes**

      Motion: Jon Bockian made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Also, Allan Gallagher confirmed he left the meeting early at 9:20PM. Jamie O’Connell seconded the motion.

      Vote: Jon Bockian, Elodia Thomas, Jamie O'Connell, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Dennis J. Duff, and Bob DiRico voted in favor.

   B. **2024-2-1 CPC Minutes**

      Motion: Jon Bockian moved to approve the minutes as amended and Jamie O’Connell seconded the motion.

      Vote: Matt Walter, Dennis J. Duff, Jon Bockian, Elodia Thomas, Jamie O’Connell, Mark Kraczkiewicz, and Bob DiRico voted in favor. Allan Gallagher voted present.

   Dennis asked to put discussion of returning to in-person meetings on the agenda. Mark said that item would be put on the agenda of an upcoming meeting.

4. **Adjourn**

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

   Vote: Jamie O’Connell, Abigail Hammett, Allen Gallagher, Bob DiRico, Jon Bockian, Mark Kraczkiewicz, Elodia Thomas, Matt Walter, and Dennis J. Duff voted in favor.

   Adjournment: 8:32PM