

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
THURSDAY
JANUARY 12, 2023
(Conducted via Google Meet)**

Members Present: Betty Slade, Chair
 Timothy Gillespie
 John Bell
 Hugh Morton
 Philip Weinberg
 Mark Schmid
 Garrett Stuck

Absent Members: Elizabeth Collins and Dale Weber

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chair Betty Slade at 6:32 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements by Chair were as follows:

Under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), the meeting is being recorded.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Westport Community Preservation Committee is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to listen to or view this meeting while in progress may do so by following the remote links listed on the posting online. An audio recording of this meeting will be posted on the Town's web site.

Chair Slade noted that the CPC meetings will continue to be held virtually as a member is unable to meet in person.

Mr. Schmid said he appreciates that the Committee is meeting virtually.

Regular Meeting

1. Approval of Minutes of December 15, 2022 Meeting

Minutes of December 15, 2022. Mr. Bell stated that, on page 3, the word "weathered" is incorrect. Mr. Gillespie said the word should be changed to read "shingles with weathering stain."

Mr. Bell also noted that, on page 7, the word "Congressman" should be changed to "Representative."

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2022 meeting as amended. Mr. Morton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously with Hugh Morton, Garrett Stuck, John Bell, Tim Gillespie, Philip Weinberg and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote. Mr. Schmid abstained from voting as he was not present at the meeting on December 15, 2022.

Public Hearing

2. Review Project Proposals for Recommendation for Annual Town Meeting Warrant FY24

Historic Preservation

a. Historic Town Hall Preservation and Rehabilitation

Town Administrator Jim Hartnett addressed the Committee. He said the amount being requested is \$265,000 (\$115,000 for exterior restoration (painting and trim) and \$150,000 for electrical upgrades). He said that there was a fire in the Town Hall as a result of an electrical outlet malfunction. He said that the entire project will cost \$913,000. The Town has received a \$467,000 grant from Green Communities, allowing for installation of a new heating system and new air conditioning system at the Town Hall. The original amount of \$499,000 was anticipated from Green Communities and the difference should be funded in other ways. This will be decided once all the amounts are accounted for. Westport was awarded the highest amount in the State by Green Communities. It is anticipated that \$129,000 will be received from energy incentives and rebates.

The Committee discussed the issue of whether Town offices would be moved to the former high school. Chair Slade said that the Select Board has voted to place a non-binding question on the April Town's voting ballot to solicit ideas and suggestions from residents as to how best to utilize the former high school building or sell it.

Chair Slade said that there is the continuing issue with CPA funds being granted for Town buildings because, if the buildings are sold to private parties, how does the Town make sure that any external change would meet historic standards.

Mr. Hartnett noted that since the buildings are in need of restoration and preservation, doing so will add value for future owners. In any event, Mr. Hartnett said that, even if Town offices were to move to the former high school, that would not be for many years in the future and the restoration is needed at this time.

Chair Slade said that CPA funds are granted for restoration of historic buildings and the Town Hall is a historic building.

Mr. Morton agreed that the Town Hall is in need of the funds to do these upgrades, which would put more value to the building if it were sold in the future. The funding request could always be retracted at Town Meeting, should the decision be made at that time that Town offices will be moved; however, Mr. Morton stated that the building requires the upgrades at this time.

Mr. Gillespie also agreed that the Town Hall is worth preserving, as the building is one of the most historic in Westport.

Mr. Schmid said that the issue of how to best utilize the former high school building is a complex one and the timeline for a final decision is farther into the future. He said that he endorses the granting of the funds as the Town Hall should be preserved and the employees should enjoy working with proper heating and air conditioning systems.

Mr. Stuck also concurred that the Town Hall should be renovated. He said that he believes that it is important for the Town offices to be in the Central Village; and if Town offices are relocated to the former high school building, he would hope that the Town would retain the building and use it in another manner.

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to approve the project forward to Town Meeting in the amount of \$265,000. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The Committee discussed the issue of whether a historic preservation restriction should be placed on the exterior of the building once the funds are granted. Mr. Hartnett said that it is definitely something worth pursuing.

Chair Slade said that a grant agreement would be drafted, which would include language that a preservation restriction would be placed

on the exterior facades of the building. The grant agreement would be executed by all parties, including the Select Board, and would include language that the Westport Historical Commission hold the restriction as was similarly done with the Handy House.

Accordingly, the CPC would ask the Select Board to agree that if the building were sold in the future, there should be a stipulation in the sales agreement that any changes to the external facades be approved by the Westport Historical Commission.

Mr. Stuck suggested that another alternative could be that a restriction be placed on the front of the building only, since that is the side that is seen from the road. Chair Slade said that it is too complicated to only make the restriction on one side because circumstances may change over the years.

With all projects to be approved at the end of the meeting, Mr. Gillespie withdrew his original motion and Mr. Bell withdrew his second of the motion.

b. Historic Sanford School Preservation and Rehabilitation

Antone Vieira said that the members were surveyed and a few were not in agreement with going forward with the project. The majority of members were supportive. He said the project is going forward with the request for \$180,000 of CPA funds.

There was discussion regarding the handicap ramp's compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, as well as the type of shingles to be used for the exterior of the building.

c. Town Farm Apartment Restoration (addressed later in meeting).

Open Space and Recreation

a. Westport Youth Athletic Association Playing Fields Irrigation (addressed later in meeting).

b. Snell Creek Property Conservation Restriction

Allen Decker from the Buzzards Bay Coalition stated that he has obtained an independent appraisal for the conservation restriction in the amount of \$240,000, well above the amount that is being requested from CPA funding. Also, Mr. Decker stated that an agreement has been reached with the prospective buyer, Stephanie Cormier, for her purchase of the house and land as had been

discussed at the last meeting. This sale will not affect the mission of the BBC to preserve Snell Creek.

Mr. Decker asked to revise the original submission to increase the amount requested to \$150,000, so as not to need to appear before the Agricultural Open Space Fund Committee. Chair Slade directed the Clerk to revise the amount on the application/submission form to \$150,000.

Chair Slade said that, by law, the CPC will obtain a review of the appraisal of the value of the conservation restriction prior to Town Meeting. She will arrange for that appraisal review.

Historic Preservation

c. Town Farm Apartment Restoration

Tony Millham addressed the Committee, stating that the Westport Historical Commission is requesting CPA funds in the amount of \$36,625 for emergency repairs and restoration to the Town Farm buildings that are not leased to the Trustees of Reservations. The structures at the Town Farm are most likely the oldest historic buildings of that type in the State.

Chair Slade that the existing trust fund holding funds for maintenance of the Town Farm has very little money in it. Therefore, the request is being made to CPC to recommend funds to perform a variety of tasks and restoration.

Mr. Morton said that the Finance Committee had recently addressed the issue of the oil tank, which apparently may now be handled through this submission.

In response, Mr. Garrett stated that he thought the purchase of the oil burner would be part of this submission, however, in light of this request being an emergency, he believed that the oil burner issue was already being handled by the Town.

Mr. Millham said that the maintenance has been costly for the past several years and the trust funds are minimal at this time. He also noted that it is unlikely that the Committee will be addressing the Town Farm in the future, because the goal is to have the Select Board allocate more money from the rental income.

Open Space and Recreation

a. Westport Youth Athletic Association Playing Fields Irrigation

Ken Sullivan stated that he does not have any new quotes than those already submitted, although he does have someone visiting the site next week and will provide a quote thereafter. The amount being requested is \$180,450, which will cover the cost of wells, irrigation and generators.

c. Town Playgrounds Project

Dana Stewart, Recreation Director, said the request is for \$350,000 of CPA funds as was submitted to the Committee at the prior meeting. She said that she met with Gina Palmer, the Westport Manager at Baycoast Bank, and had a very good discussion with her. Ms. Palmer believed this project would be an asset to the community and one that Baycoast Bank would support. Ms. Stewart then received a letter from Nicholas Christ, President and Chief Executive Officer of Baycoast Bank, extending his support as well. Ms. Stewart said that Baycoast bank has an application process that she may go forward with for a grant. She also stated that there are other grants that she will be applying for, as well as discussions with other local businesses to get their support.

Ms. Stewart noted that the Town Annex Playground is older and in bad condition. The Bicentennial Playground has significant rust (i.e. the rusted-out stairwells) and she received a quote of \$7,000 for the two (2) stairwells, which does not include installation. To make the playground ADA compliant with rubberized flooring, the cost would be approximately \$100,000.

Ms. Stewart has made significant efforts to research various companies and the cost of improving both playgrounds could range from \$750,000 to \$1,000,000.

Chair Slade inquired as to whether ARPA funds would be available for this project. Ms. Stewart stated that she and the recreation committee members believed this was an appropriate project for CPA funds initially, with applying for ARPA funds at a later date.

Mr. Morton said that, although he is in favor of the project, the cost of the entire project is expensive and, hopefully, there can be grants and other sources to acquire funds.

Mr. Gillespie said that other towns have expended substantial amounts of money for their playgrounds. He said that, unfortunately, these playgrounds are very expensive.

Ms. Stewart gave a few examples of other local towns receiving funds. She said that the Town of Tiverton received a \$375,000 grant from the Department of Environmental Management and the Green Space Grant Program, as well as a \$5,000 legislative grant. Also, the Town of Dighton received \$210,000 of CPA funds, as well as \$37,000 of in-kind contributions, as well as the Dighton Highway Department supplied volunteers, and donated materials and labor to the project. The Town of Dartmouth received \$500,000 of CPA funds for their project.

Mr. Bell asked whether there was further information as to what the school had paid for its playground. Ms. Stewart said that she was unable to obtain that information from the school and had been informed that the project was complete.

Mr. Stuck stated that other towns receive ARPA funds and that Westport should pursue those funds as well. He also thought that new playgrounds have a lifetime of 30 years.

Ms. Stewart stated that the lifetime of the new playground is definitely longer than the equipment currently at the playgrounds.

The Committee briefly discussed security/vandalism issues at the playgrounds. Mr. Bell said that, typically, the Town Hall Annex playground has minimal security issues; however, the Bicentennial playground does have a few vandalism issues.

Mr. Gillespie said that any upgrades that were made to the playgrounds in recent years now require further repair and replacement.

Ms. Stewart said that, once the Annex playground is complete, she plans to have an event that would welcome the public to view the new playground, as well as the renovations at the rear of the Annex, perhaps a naming ceremony as well.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

a. Westport Affordable Housing Trust (WAHT) Housing Office

Bob Barboza, the Interim Housing Specialist, addressed the Committee. He said that Leonardi Aray is returning as Housing Trust Consultant. He will do more consulting and grant writing

and less office administration. The WAHT is looking to acquire CPA funds to operate the staff office for the year.

Mr. Barboza said that, once Mr. Aray is back in the office, requests for proposals will be sent out to acquire property for housing projects.

Chair Slade noted that past allocated CPA funds of \$400,000 have been set aside for future acquisitions of land.

Mr. Barboza said that \$210,000 is currently budgeted for land acquisition; and \$200,000 is budgeted for the SEED Program that subsidizes private development doing projects of 10 units or more. He also noted that the Trust members have looked at several parcels owned by the Town, however, none is being pursued any further at this time. The Trust has presented options for redevelopment of the former high school building, including affordable housing.

Mr. Schmid said that he recalls that, not too long ago, the WAHT had submitted ideas to the Long-Term Building Committee for utilizing the building.

Mr. Barboza said that a fairly-comprehensive concept proposal had been submitted to the Long-Term Building Committee with various options to occupy the building.

3. Sources of Available CPA Funding

Chair Slade presented a chart that shows the funds available for the projects that are being submitted to Town Meeting. She said that there are reserves of \$972,000 and new revenue projected in the amount of \$934,000, for a total of \$1,907,548,87 available. Each year, CPC must show certain information in the warrant article, which includes sources of funding and the projects being forwarded to Town Meeting for approval. The Town Accountant has approved the funding amounts. Chair Slade said that there are enough funds for all the projects presented.

Mr. Schmid noticed an error in the chart regarding the amount listed in the chart for the Sanford School project, which should read as \$180,000.

4. CPA Funding Sources for FY24 Town Meeting Recommendations

Chair Slade itemized each project and sources of funds as follows:

Open Space and Recreation

Snell Creek Conservation Restriction - \$150,000
(estimated fund revenues of \$150,000)
Westport Youth Athletic Association - \$ \$180,450
(estimated fund revenues of \$189,000)
Town Playgrounds Project - \$350,000
(undesignated reserves of \$350,000)

Community Housing

Westport Affordable Housing Trust Housing Office - \$60,000
(estimated fund revenues of \$60,000)

Historic Preservation

Town Hall Preservation and Rehabilitation - \$265,000
(budgeted reserves of \$151,000 and estimated
fund revenues of \$114,000)
Sanford School Preservation and Rehabilitation - \$180,000
(estimated fund revenues of \$180,000)
Town Farm Apartment Restoration - \$36,625 - Mr. Morton asked
to put a hold on this amount; there was discussion as to whether
the oil tank is included in the amount. The total amount was
increased to \$51,625.
(estimated fund revenues of \$51,625)

Community Housing Reserves - \$34,000
(FY24 estimated fund revenues of \$34,000)

Administrative Funds - \$35,000
(FY24 estimated fund revenues of \$35,000)

Budget Reserves - to be determined.

Mr. Schmid raised the point that the WYAA had formally requested
\$180,450.

The adjustment will be made to the funds being requested by WYAA
as \$180,450.

5. Vote on Recommendations for Annual Town Meeting Warrant FY24

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to approve the sources of funds and to advance all the projects to Town Meeting. Mr. Morton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously with Hugh Morton, Mark Schmid, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck, John Bell, Philip Weinberg and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote.

6. Any Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated

None.

7. Correspondence

None.

8. Bills

The bills paid since the prior meeting were as follows:

1. Hudson Microimaging, Inc. - FY17 Town Records Preservation Phase IV - \$205
2. Home Depot - FY22 Gravestone Restoration Supplies - \$861.98
3. East Bay Media - Publication of Public Hearing - \$78.00
4. Holmes Plumbing and Heating, Inc. - FY Town Hall Annex Rear Recreation Area Supplies - \$367.88

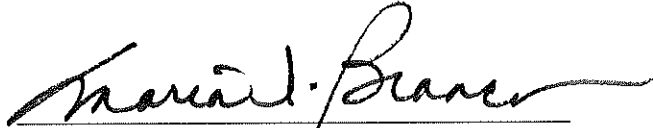
Chair Slade said that the other bill is for the annual membership dues to the Community Preservation Coalition in the amount of \$2,875.00.

Mr. Bell made a motion to approve the bills and the dues. Mr. Morton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously with Philip Weinberg, Hugh Morton, Mark Schmid, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck, John Bell and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Gillespie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m. Mr. Stuck seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with all members voting aye.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for February 9, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. to be held via Google Meet, unless otherwise decided.

Respectfully submitted,



Maria I. Branco, Clerk
Community Preservation Committee

APPROVED:


Betty Slade, Chair

Attachments:

CPC Minutes of December 15, 2022

New Submission Form presented: Town Farm Apartment Restoration Bills

Note about adjustments: After the meeting, it was ascertained that Town emergency funds had already been used to remove and replace the oil tanks at the Town Farm Apartment. Therefore, the project request is reduced from \$51,625 to \$36,625 with funding from estimated fund reserves of \$36,625. The final table was sent to the membership and to the Town Administrator's office for inclusion in the town meeting warrant.