

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
ANNUAL AND REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY
OCTOBER 12, 2023
(Conducted via Google Meet)**

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

Absent Members: Dale Weber and Veronica Beaulieu
Hugh Morton entered late

A. Annual Public Meeting.

Chair Slade called the Annual Public meet Hearing to order at 6:30 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.

Chair Slade said that the public hearing was advertised in the Shorelines, to gather input of the needs and resources of the Town

regarding Community Preservation Act, funding for FY25. She said that the public has been invited to the hearing to submit their requests, however, no one is present to do so. Chair Slade said that the annual hearing is for CPC members to also present ideas for projects that they have heard about or talked about with others.

Mr. Gillespie said that the Recreation Department is finally firming up its plan for the Playground Replacement Project. \$350,000 was awarded by Town Meeting toward renovating the playgrounds in Town. He stated that there is a grant that the Recreation Department is hoping to receive that will renovate one of the playgrounds. Mr. Gillespie noted that plans for the Bicentennial Park Playground may wait until next year, in which case, depending on what other fundraising efforts produce, there may be another request next year for funds. As of now, he said, the \$350,000 is being split between the two playgrounds and hoping to fill the gap with grants and fundraising for the Annex, leaving the remainder of funds in the Bicentennial Park Playground budget. A project application may be submitted next year.

Chair Slade asked what the amount is that would be requested.

Mr. Gillespie said he was not certain at this time because not all the information is available at this time. He did say, however, that it may be as much as \$350,000.

Mr. Schmid said that, as liaison with the Bell School Project, he thought someone might be present this evening to discuss the status of the project. The project went out to bid in early summer and it was difficult to get bidders. A bid was finally submitted, the amount of which was more than expected. Mr. Schmid said that there are discussions with the contractor to find ways to lower the cost. But, unfortunately, the funds that were awarded to the Project by the Town Meeting are not enough. He also noted that, although fundraising efforts have been fruitful, the funds they have are not sufficient to begin the Project.

Mr. Bell said that, about a month ago, he was at the Council on Aging to discuss the painting of the trim, which included the Bell Tower. Beverly Bisch mentioned to him that she may attend

tonight's meeting to explain that the Council is looking to have the trim painted all around the building, which would also finish the trim on the Bell Tower.

Chair Slade said that Ms. Bisch had contacted her with a list of items that she thought could be paid without being approved by Town Meeting. It seems that Ms. Bisch understands the process after her discussion with Mr. Bell.

Chair Slade said she talked with Jim Hartnett about the Town Hall projects that were provided CPA funds at the last Town Meeting. Unfortunately, the funds will not be sufficient to support all the projects. Mr. Hartnett said that they will work with what they have and then, perhaps, submit a new application the following year. Chair Slade said that, with increase in costs, it will be difficult to complete all the projects for which funds were awarded last year. The funds will be used as best as possible at the Town Hall until a new application is submitted.

Chair Slade said that she has not heard from Tony Vieira about the status of the Sanford School Project. Mr. Vieira had planned to discuss this project with Mr. Gillespie, however, she has not heard back from him.

Chair Slade said she talked with Barbara Smith at the Westport Grange about artifacts at the Grange that need preservation. Chair Slade suggested that the Grange think about submitting an application for funds to preserve the artifacts.

Chair Slade said that she attended a meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust and asked that someone attend tonight's meeting and assign a member to be a liaison with the CPC. The AHT is independent and has the ability to make spending decisions without obtaining approval from the CPC. Chair Slade noted that Town Meeting has awarded CPA funds to the AHT, that there is a standing account to purchase property of about \$400,000 in it, and she was looking forward to hearing if there are any other ideas for affordable housing at the former high school.

Mr. Gillespie said that the CPC has not seen any recent reports from the AHT on prospective projects.

Chair Slade said she suggested a few properties that would give access to land. The AHT said that, in order to receive grants and other subsidies, affordable housing must be near restaurants and grocery stores.

Chair Slade said she talked with Ross Moran, who advised that the Conservation Trust will most likely be submitting an application for funds to purchase a farm.

Mr. Gillespie asked about the Blueberry Farm purchase. Chair Slade said that purchase is complete and, in fact, there was an article about that property in the Shorelines and that the CPC was not mentioned, unfortunately.

Chair Slade said that she was disappointed that no one was present to address the CPC tonight. She said, though, that she believes there will be a demand for funds in the future.

Mr. Schmid said that, in the case of the Bell School, he believed that they wanted time to meet with the contractor to discuss costs for the short term. Mr. Schmid said he would contact Yvonne Barr to discuss further.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Bell made a motion to close the annual public hearing at 6:45 p.m. Mr. Gillespie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with John Bell, Mark Schmid, Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote.

B. Regular Meeting.

Chair Slade opened the Regular Meeting of the Community Preservation Committee at 6:46 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes of April 13, 2023 CPC Meeting.

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 13, 2023. Mr. Stuck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie,

Garrett Stuck and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote. John Bell and Mark Schmid abstained from voting.

2. Approval of Minutes of June 8, 2023 CPC Meeting.

Mr. Stuck made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 8, 2023. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously with John Bell, Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote. Mark Schmid abstained from voting. Mr. Bell said that, although he was not present at the meeting, he had read the minutes. Chair Slade said that, even if not present at the meeting, you may still vote to approve the minutes.

3. Welcoming Veronica Beaulieu as Housing Authority Representative to CPC.

Chair Slade said that Ms. Beaulieu was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Committee will welcome Ms. Beaulieu at the next meeting.

Chair Slade said she would take a few minutes out of order to ask Lucy Chase, who had just entered the meeting, if she was attending to present anything at the public hearing. Ms. Chase's microphone was inaudible.

4. Nomination and Election of Officers: Chair and Vice-Chair.

Chair Slade asked for nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair. Tim Gillespie nominated Betty Slade for Chair and John Bell as Vice-Chair. Philip Weinberg seconded the nominations. There being no other nominations or further discussion, the motion was passed unanimously with John Bell, Mark Schmid, Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote. Chair Slade thanked Mr. Gillespie for all the years he acted as Vice-Chair of the CPC. She also noted that Mr. Bell has been working closely with her and is ready to fill the position of Vice-Chair.

5. Appointment of Liaisons for May 2023 Town Meeting-Approved Projects.

Chair Slade said that, with each project that is approved at Town Meeting, there is a liaison to monitor the project's progress and present information to the CPC. As noted in the chart, projects tend to exist for years because the projects are not always completed at once. At times, volunteer hours are a part of the project and, therefore, may be a reason for the project's length to completion. Some of the amounts on the chart may not be accurate as the Town Accountant will be providing the final amounts.

Chair Slade suggested the members review the chart to know whether or not they are a liaison on a particular project. The issue is with the Affordable Housing Trust with Elizabeth Collins' absence and there being no one on the CPC on behalf of the AHT.

The State Legislature advises that the CPC must have a Housing Authority liaison and, therefore, Veronica Beaulieu will be coming on board as the representative of the Housing Authority. Typically, the CPC is not involved in projects with the Housing Authority. Years ago, the CPC thought about funding a project with Greenwood Terrace, but the CPC was told that that was not allowed.

Chair Slade said that, because Ms. Beaulieu feels she does not have enough experience to be a liaison, she would be looking to someone to act in that role. No one volunteered.

Chair Slade asked for someone to work with Jim Hartnett on the FY24 Town Hall project. Mr. Gillespie said that he has been working with Mr. Hartnett and would be happy to be the liaison on the Town Hall project.

Mr. Bell said that he would be the liaison on the Sanford School Restoration project and will discuss with Tony Vieira.

Mr. Schmid said he would be happy to be the liaison on the Town Hall project, if Mr. Gillespie is too busy.

Mr. Gillespie said that he has been in discussion with Mr. Hartnett about costs and he has no problem staying with the project at this time.

Chair Slade asked Lucy Chase if she had a comment. Ms. Chase said that she was just observing the meeting.

Hugh Morton entered the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Chair Slade said that the Committee was reviewing the chart of liaisons and asked about the status of the dugouts, fencing and irrigation by the WYAA.

Mr. Morton said that the projects are progressing, but he has not been able to get a status report recently.

Chair Slade said that the irrigation is an FY24 project and no funds have been withdrawn as of now.

6. Request to Accept Winning Bid for Work on Town Farm Apartment by Chair, Vice-Chair and Liaison.

Chair Slade said that she is looking to have the Chair, Vice-Chair and liaison, Garrett Stuck, to review the bids for the work to be done at the Town Farm Apartment. She said that she discussed this process with Michael Walden. She stated that the Chair, Vice-Chair and Liaison would like to be given authority to review the bids and choose the winning bid -- which is not necessarily the lowest bid -- rather than waiting a month and coming back to CPC. Mr. Morton made a motion to approve Chair Slade, Vice-Chair Bell and Liaison Stuck to review and accept a bid for the Town Farm Apartment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gillespie. The motion was passed unanimously with John Bell, Hugh Morton, Mark Schmid, Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote. Chair Slade said she would report back to the CPC with the approved bid.

Mr. Weinberg stated that he notes he has been made liaison for the Snell Creek project. He said that Allen Decker from the Buzzards Bay Coalition had been before the Conservation Commission and the amount of \$30,000 had been expended from the account to the Town.

Chair Slade said that the \$30,000 payment is fine; however, the CPA funds will not be paid out until such time as the Conservation Restriction is recorded, which may not happen until early December. Mr. Decker will notify Chair Slade when the recording is imminent so that the payment can be processed through the Town Accountant's office.

Mr. Stuck made a motion to approve the drafting of the check and hold it until the Conservation Restriction is recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Mr. Gillespie seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously with John Bell, Hugh Morton, Mark Schmid, Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote.

Mr. Weinberg asked whether Mr. Decker should be asked to appear at the November meeting to discuss this project further. Chair Slade said that the purchase of the Conservation Restriction was approved at Town Meeting.

7. Renewal of Approval of Chair and Vice-Chair to Approve Payment of Bills.

Chair Slade said that, because there have been gaps of months between meetings, the Chair and Vice-Chair had authority to approve payment of bills. With the election of a new Vice-Chair, Chair Slade was asking for approval by the Committee to have the Chair and Vice-Chair approve bills and, then, bring them to CPC for approval. Mr. Bell made a motion to approve Chair Slade and himself, Vice-Chair Bell, to pay bills. Mr. Morton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with John Bell, Mark Schmid, Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck, Betty Slade and Hugh Morton voting aye in a roll call vote.

8. Approval of Payment of Invoice from Community Preservation Coalition.

Chair Slade said that, each year, the CPC is asked by the Community Preservation Coalition, who works with the Legislature to raise more money, for payment of annual dues in the amount of \$2,875. These funds pay for two (2) employees, among other expenses. Mr.

Gillespie made a motion to approve the payment of \$2,875 to the Community Preservation Coalition. Mr. Morton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously with John Bell, Hugh Morton, Mark Schmid, Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote.

9. List of Bills Paid and to be Paid.

Chair Slade itemized the bills that had been paid since the last meeting. See attachment. She called attention to the bill for renting of a trailer for the gravestone restoration project. That rental is making the work more efficient and less time is being spent on loading and unloading the volunteers' trucks.

Mr. Schmid asked about the progress with the gravestone restoration. Chair Slade said that, out of \$55,000 set aside for the project, only \$17,000 has been spent to repair 1,000 stones. In addition, 5,000 stones have been cleaned using donated D/2 biological solution. About 7,000 stones remained to be cleaned. She said it is remarkable the work that has been put in by the volunteers. She also stated that there is a Facebook page called Westport Gravestone Cleaning and Restoration Group that demonstrates the work being done on the stones. Chair Slade said there is a private fund account at the Historical Society, into which donations are being deposited, being used for the smaller cemeteries. She praised one of the volunteers, Sheri Boyle, who is John Bell's sister, who has been helping with other projects as well.

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

10. Correspondence.

None further to discuss.

11. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting.

1. Chair Slade mentioned the technical issues with the cemetery web site, which has two (2) aspects to it: public and administrative. The web site was built several years ago by a volunteer, who has been monitoring and maintaining it since then. About three (3) years ago, the web site was transferred to a server with Razorfish. However, there have been serious issues with the server. For example, it is impossible to upload photographs onto the web site, the GIS mapping has been erased and the administrative portion of the web site has been down for several weeks. Chair Slade contacted Jim Hartnett about rebuilding the web site. Mr. Hartnett suggested contacting Tony Tomah at the School Department, who said he would take on the project at no charge. The data will need to be downloaded. The web site is very important, as it is used by the Veterans' Office, the Cemetery Department and people in Town and all over the world.

Chair Slade said that this is kind of a historical preservation project because the information is being preserved. She noted that administrative funds could be used to initiate the web site and, perhaps, some private funds as well.

Mr. Morton believed this was a very good idea and was in favor of rebuilding the web site.

Mr. Gillespie agreed that administrative funds could be used for this project. If needed, CPA funds could be requested as a project next year.

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to use administrative funds to start repairing the problems with the cemetery web site. Mr. Morton seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bell said he had had difficulty accessing information from the web site. He had been researching location of graves of retired police officers to place markers at their graves.

Chair Slade said that the operation of the web site since transferring to the server operated by RazorFish has been erratic. The Town Accountant has been given the responsibility to deal with

the server for the web site, however, RazorFish is proving to be very difficult to deal with. We hope to move the website to a different server.

The motion was passed unanimously with John Bell, Hugh Morton, Mark Schmid, Philip Weinberg, Tim Gillespie, Garrett Stuck and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote.

Chair Slade said that Mr. Tomah's first task will be to download all the information and, then, look towards rebuilding the web site. She also wanted to recognize the Potters, Wes Norman and others who had made a difference in providing the information.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Bell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Gillespie seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with all members voting aye.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for November 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:

Minutes of April 13, 2023

Minutes of June 8, 2023

List of Bills.