

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 9, 2021
(Conducted via Google Meet)**

Members Present: Betty Slade, Chair
Timothy Gillespie
John Bell
Elizabeth Collins
Janet Jones
Hugh Morton
Mark Schmid
Dale Weber

Absent was: Philip Weinberg

Also present: Leonardi Aray, Affordable Housing Trust
Albert Lees, Jenny O'Neill and Yvonne Barr
of the Westport Historical Society
Fernando Larginha

The meeting was called to order by Chair Betty Slade 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.

A. Public Hearing - Notice of this public hearing was published in the Shorelines on September 2, 2021.

Public Hearing Agenda Items:

At the outset, Chair Slade stated that Sam Manley was expected to address the Committee to discuss restoration of Westport's first fire engine, however, he was unable to attend. Chair Slade said she received several responses from people who restore fire engines, one of which was from Sandwich, Massachusetts.

Also unable to attend was Ross Moran from the Westport Land Conservation Trust, who was expected to address the Committee regarding a project in open space.

1. Leonardi Aray, Housing Specialist of the Westport Affordable Housing Trust addressed the Committee. He noted that Elizabeth Collins, a member of the CPC, is the Chair of the Trust, and is present. He also said that, by statute, a member of the Select Board (Ann Boxler), and other qualified professionals in banking, housing and real estate are members of the Trust.

Mr. Aray displayed an informative report as to many topics explaining:

(a) The mission of the Trust - building new construction, creating projects of housing and convert existing buildings into affordable housing.

(b) The projects that had been completed by the Trust and future projects being contemplated.

(c) The Trust office is headquartered on the second floor of the Town Hall, and is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., as is permitted by the pandemic.

(d) Persons applying for housing must meet affordable housing income limits.

(e) Housing Opportunity Purchase Program (HOPP), which converts existing structures into affordable homes.

(f) The Trust is in the process of groundbreaking for building a duplex built by Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Aray invited everyone to attend the ceremony to be held on Friday, September 10, 2021.

(g) Small scale development.

(h) Housing Rehab Grant Program. Persons applying must meet several criteria. A 10-year restriction is attached to the property, and should the property is sold prior to the expiration of the 10-year restriction, a portion of the loan must be paid off.

(i) Noquochoke Village was a Trust project with a total cost of \$17 million and the cost to the Town being \$1.1 million.

(j) Land Acquisition Program - to acquire larger parcels of land to sponsor larger development (e.g. Noquochoke Village II). The \$200,000 being requested will be utilized with this program.

(k) School conversion

Ms. Collins said she was excited with the completion of Noquochoke Village and with the future of the Trust.

Chair Slade asked Mr. Aray what the Trust was looking for at this time from the Committee.

Mr. Aray stated that the Trust would be submitting an application for \$200,000, primarily for the Land Acquisition Program. These funds would provide the Trust with a \$400,000 account balance, which will put the Trust in a better position to make acquisitions. Mr. Aray explained that, years ago, \$175,000 was worth more than it is now, in that the same parcel or project will now cost \$200,000 for a single-family home. The goal is to construct a house that will be affordable in perpetuity.

Mr. Gillespie commended Mr. Aray and Ms. Collins on the progress of the Trust. He said that he was pleased to see the Trust's work and to see what the future brings.

Mr. Morton inquired as to whether the entire amount of \$400,000 can be spent all at once to acquire property, or is the Trust limited as to the amount it can spend on a particular project.

Mr. Aray said the entire amount will be used to acquire land.

Chair Slade said that generally the AHT funds are fungible, however, the \$400,000 must be used for the 30-unit project.

Mr. Aray also noted that acquisition of the property across from Noquochoke Village was not accomplished; however, he said that the Trust will meet to discuss whether to make another attempt to acquire the property.

Ms. Collins said that there have been good efforts to acquire the land and would like to see another attempt in the future.

Mr. Aray said that the property would not support 30 units; however, it possibly may support 21 bedrooms, with capacity for septic system and parking.

Ms. Collins noted that all projects are different and, perhaps, if the Trust is able to do so, the old high school building conversion would be another different project.

Mr. Aray said that an application by the Trust to the Committee would be forthcoming.

2. Albert Lees and Jenny O'Neill of the Historical Society addressed the Committee regarding restoration and rehabilitation of the Bell School House at the Head of Westport. They discussed:

(a) The significance of the Historical Society and its work.

(b) The historical nature of the bell at the Bell School House, that it was believed to have been cast by Paul Revere's apprentice.

(c) How the Head of Westport has been revitalized, including the new Westport River Watershed Alliance, the Middle School and Library, as well as the Bell School House and the Westport Historical Society.

(d) The amount of funds that will be requested is undetermined as of now.

(e) Use of existing space in the most effective way.

(f) Issues with code compliance.

(g) Interior of the Bell School House is not being gutted out.

(h) Improve preservation of collections in the Bell School House, including photographs, archival materials, maps, clothing, paintings, school desks and Native American artifacts.

(i) Increase of square footage from 800 square feet to 2,400 square feet by dedicating the second floor to collection storage

and by utilizing the basement, which will be finished and waterproofed.

(j) Repair roof leak.

(k) Install climate controlling mechanicals.

(l) Install handicap accessible entrance and bathroom.

(m) The House will contain a history center, visitor center and information center.

Mr. Morton noted that traffic on Old County Road heading into the Head of Westport has increased substantially with the existence of the new middle school. This may be an issue for future traffic to the Bell School House and that area.

Mr. Lees stated that the foundation at the Bell School House does not conform with the building that is on it because, previously, the building had been lifted to install a basement and, at that time, the foundation was not refurbished to comport with the size of the building. Therefore, the foundation is not steady. This project will be funded by the Historical Society.

Mr. Morton said this seems similar to Handy House project.

Mr. Gillespie inquired whether this project is appropriate for CPC funding.

Chair Slade said that CPA funds can be used for installation of septic, electrical, and for rehabilitation for current use. The amount may be an issue, but it is eligible. The CPA recognizes that historic buildings may be refurbished inside as long as the Department of Interior Standards are followed. The Historical Commission helps in that case to ascertain the proper changes.

Discussion ensued regarding various methods of fundraising.

Ms. Collins said that the CPC exists for a purpose and, although there may be some projects the CPC cannot fund, it is important to fund historic projects.

Mr. Bell agreed, stating that his children have had exciting visits to the Bell School House and Handy House on school trips. He said that he supports historic preservation as well.

Ms. Weber noted that CPA funds are important as seed money.

Mr. Schmid commended the Historical Society for its efforts in preserving the history of the community, as well as the artifacts at the Bell School House that are unique to Westport.

Chair Slade said that the CPC provided funds several years ago and could support the project.

The public hearing was closed at 7:45 p.m.

B. Regular Meeting

Chair Slade opened the regular meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Agenda Items:

1. Reorganization of the Committee - Ms. Collins made a motion to nominate Betty Slade as Chair. Mr. Morton seconded the motion, which was passed with Dale Weber, Hugh Morton, Elizabeth Collins, Janet Jones, Mark Schmid, Tim Gillespie and John Bell voting aye in a roll call vote. Chair Slade abstained from voting.

Ms. Collins made a motion to nominate Tim Gillespie as Vice-Chair. Mr. Bell seconded the motion, which was passed with Dale Weber, Hugh Morton, Elizabeth Collins, Janet Jones, Mark Schmid and John Bell voting aye in a roll call vote. Mr. Gillespie abstained from voting.

2. Minutes of the June 10, 2021 meeting - Mr. Bell made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 10, 2021 meeting. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, which was passed with Dale Weber, Hugh Morton, Janet Jones, Mark Schmid, John Bell and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote. Elizabeth Collins and Tim Gillespie abstained from voting because they were absent.

3. Fernando Larginha of Westport United Youth Soccer addressed the Board. He stated that, in FY19, the Town Meeting approved funding for electrical work. However, due to COVID-19, the project did not go forward. He presented three (3) bids that he had received to install electricity. Those were Armand Larginha - \$24,100; Reynolds Electric - \$22,045.85; and Fall River Electrical Associates - \$23,900. The CPC is not required to approve the lowest bidder. Mr. Larginha said that Reynolds Electric has done work at the field in the past and has children in the system. Reynolds has also done work for the WUYS in the past at no charge. Chair Slade noted that Reynolds Electric has submitted the lowest

bid. Mr. Larguinha stated that the bids are higher than those originally submitted due to increases in the cost of copper due to COVID-19. Once this project is completed, he will be soliciting bids for the well in the near future. Mr. Gillespie commented that, although Mr. Larguinha has done an amazing job with obtaining the bids, the contractors should be voted on their merit and not solely on the work they may have done pro bono.

Ms. Collins made a motion to accept the bid from Reynolds Electric in the amount of \$22,045.85. Ms. Weber seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Dale Weber, Hugh Morton, Elizabeth Collins, Janet Jones, Mark Schmid, Tim Gillespie, John Bell and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote.

4. CPC Expense Accounts Updated and Sweeps - Chair Slade explained the projects on the list. Regarding the gravestone restoration, she said that more than 80 gravestones have been restored since the end of June and the project will continue going forward. Chair Slade also discussed the various expenses and funds to be swept. She said the funds will be swept back into reserves of the proper category: Mr. Gillespie made a motion to sweep the funds as noted in the report, namely: FY 19 WUYS Athletic Fields II - \$9,430 (recreation); FY 19 South Coast Greenway Bike Path - \$13.46 (recreation); FY20 Handy House Wood Shingle Roof - \$10,519.64 (historic preservation); and FY20 Bell School Roof & Tower Restoration - \$12,219.64 (historic preservation). Chair Slade will ask Mr. Larguniha to send a letter requesting the sweep of the Mr. Morton seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Dale Weber, Hugh Morton, Elizabeth Collins, Janet Jones, Mark Schmid, Tim Gillespie, John Bell and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote. Once the minutes are approved at the next meeting of the Committee, the Clerk will submit the minutes and a list of the funds to be swept to the Town Accountant.

5. Audit Report of the Affordable Housing Trust -- The audit report for the period ending June 2020 will be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Correspondence - None.

7. Bills - Chair Slade said that several bills were paid. \$150,000 for Walt's Farm Conservation Restriction was paid. Jonathan Appell (Atlas Preservation), one of the leading gravestone restoration experts in the country, conducted a 4-day workshop. The cost of \$1,000 per day is a one-time expense, as the volunteers may now train others in the restoration of the gravestones. The \$6,000

provided by CVS and Baycoast Bank will also be used for cleaning and preservation of the gravestones.

Mr. Gillespie addressed the Town Hall Annex Rear Recreation Project. He had expended \$3,902.44 from his own funds to purchase various items and was seeking reimbursement. A bill for \$850 for electrical work performed by William Plamondon; and the paving work performed by Chris Coville in the amount of \$850 was to upgrade the basketball court. The electricity is being used for movies and concerts. Mr. Gillespie said that there is not much else that remains to complete this project. Mr. Bell made a motion to approve payment of the bills. Ms. Weber seconded the motion, which was passed with Dale Weber, Hugh Morton, Elizabeth Collins, Mark Schmid, John Bell and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote. Mr. Gillespie abstained from voting.

Mr. Bell suggested that someone with information regarding the baseball fields attend the next meeting to discuss issues with the infield.

Chair Slade said that Keith McDonald will attend the next meeting to discuss the bike and pedestrian path; and a member of the WYAA will be scheduled to attend the meeting to discuss the status the baseball fields.

8. Other business not anticipated - None.

9. Adjourn - Mr. Gillespie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Mr. Morton seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Dale Weber, Hugh Morton, Elizabeth Collins, Janet Jones, Mark Schmid, Tim Gillespie, John Bell and Betty Slade voting aye in a roll call vote.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for October 14, 2021, to be held via Google Meet, unless otherwise decided.

Respectfully submitted,


Maria I. Branco, Clerk
Community Preservation Committee

APPROVED: Betty Slade
Betty Slade, Chair

Attachments:

CPC Minutes of June 10, 2021

Three bids for electrical work for WUYS

Expense Account Lists, including approved sweeps

List of bills approved for payment