

TOWN OF HARWICH

Community Preservation Committee

Approved July 11, 2019

Community Preservation Committee Regular Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes June 13, 2019

Meeting Electronically Recorded

I. CALL TO ORDER

Harwich Community Preservation Committee Meeting called to order by Chair Dave Nixon at 6:00 PM, on Thursday, June 13, 2019, in the Harwich Town Hall, Donn B. Griffin Meeting Room.

Present: Chair Dave Nixon, Vice-Chair Kathy Green, Mary Maslowski, Chris Rockett, John Ketchum, and Bob Doane.

Vacant: 2nd Selectmen's Appointment Representative, Housing Committee Representative, and Housing Authority Representative

II. GUESTS WELCOMED

III. PUBLIC INFORMATION HEARING

Notice of Public Informational Hearing read aloud:

The Harwich Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will hold a Public Information Hearing on Thursday, June 13, 2019 at 6:00 PM in the Donn B. Griffin Room, Town Hall, 732 Main Street, Harwich, MA 02645 pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.44B, Community Preservation Act ("Act"), Section 5(b)(1):

"As part of its study, the committee shall hold one or more public informational hearings on the needs, possibilities and resources of the city or town regarding community preservation possibilities and resources, notice of which shall be posted publicly and published for each of two weeks preceding a hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the city or town."

Your attendance is encouraged to learn about the Act and to discuss possible projects consistent with the Act and to review the submittal guidelines. The Act includes projects related to: open space, community housing, historic preservation and recreation. Application information is available online at <http://www.harwich-ma.gov/community-preservation-committee> or at the Town Administrator's office.

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Bob Doane to move into the Public Information Hearing.

VOTE: Yes 6; No 0; Abstain 0. Motion carried unanimously.

6:02 PM

Town Administrator Chris Clark presented some of the town's needs as they relate to the CPC areas of funding, the CPA buckets, including some that appear in the town's Capital Plan.

Community Housing: Mr. Clark is also the Chair of the Harwich Affordable Housing Trust. The trust has had success with land transfer parcels for affordable housing projects during the last town meeting. The Trust will be meeting shortly to discuss how they will go forward to develop those parcels, and other identified parcels. He has visited Yarmouth's and Eastham's projects. In Yarmouth, they have committed two million dollars; in Eastham, their investment is over one million dollars. In Harwich, we have over eight hundred thousand dollars in the Trust, but costs are significantly higher than that. A few private developers have come forward, pitching "Friendly 40-B's" or partnership projects with Harwich. For example, one project idea would require three million dollars from Harwich.

The town would need approx. an additional 300 units to reach closer to the State's minimum of 10% affordable housing. Currently, Harwich is at 5.5%.

Note: Funding can come from the town contributions, State funding, affordable housing tax credits, future rent payments, and the developers. It was noted that developers will be informed of the Trust budget. Anything over that, the developers may come to the CPC and ask for additional funding.

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Recreation: Whitehouse Field is a town treasure. The Harwich Mariners play there. They are a non-profit organization. The field lights are defective, and replacements costs are about \$400,000. The Mariners have been trying to come up with a comprehensive plan, maybe as a joint venture with the town. Monomoy uses the field. The field doesn't have ADA bleachers. ADA was passed in 1990; Harwich should try to remedy that. Another area is Sand Pond. The Recreation Dept. is studying the area beyond the beach, to make it a more attractive area, maybe adding picnic areas, a playground, and even paddle boarding. The town swimming lessons used to be held there but were moved over to Long Pond years ago.

Historic: More project funding will be requested for Brooks Academy. The reno has been broken down into three phases. The Albro House – The CPC funded needs assessment project will go forward. A private meeting was held with developers in West Harwich concerning Captains' Row. The State is committing some six million dollars to sidewalks and roadway in 2023/2024. We might have the opportunity to add some historic elements to that project that might require CPC funding; like adding acorns, which is a historic feature. Maybe requests will also come from additional projects like renovating period homes in that area.

Open Space: The Town and Harwich Conservation Trust have been active in this area. The CPC has funded almost a project a year. REOS is currently looking at land on Deacons Folly Road; land that borders HCT and Town of Harwich conservation lands. A joint venture with housing will be investigated.

Andrea Aldana, part of the Harwich Housing Coordinate team and with the Community Development Partnership, spoke to the housing crisis; the pressure from seasonal and year-round housing demands keeps increasing. Harwich is projected to have a modest increase in population over the next decade, 1.5%. The household size though is decreasing. It takes more than one income earner to cover the cost of buying a house on the Cape. The more income providers in a house means a better opportunity to own a house. Looking at the five highest growth industries on the Cape, like healthcare, it takes 1.4 to 3.3 income providers in a household to purchase a medium-priced house. The demand is there. They would like to affect the supply of housing. It was noted that other towns' CPCs have strongly increased their funding in affordable housing. For example, in Provincetown, 70% of their CPC funds go towards affordable housing.

Patricia A. Tworek, President of the Board of Trustees of the Chase Library, spoke. The library building was built in 1907, and the original front door and entryway are in serious disrepair. (The door, frame, and glass sidelights.) The library trustees have begun their research and are gathering estimates from specialized woodworkers for this project, to keep it historically correct. It was suggested they contact WGBH, and *This Old House* for assistance. Kathy Green thanked her group for taking good care of this historic building.

Town Resident Sally Urbano came to share some ideas for feedback from the CPC. She stressed her concern over the loss of another building in West Harwich's historic Captains' Row area, and the possible introduction of a large retail store. She feels it is a struggle to keep this area intact.

- 1) She would like to find funds to create a proper inventory for some twenty-five plus buildings in Captains' Row, a requirement for the National Register districting. This is a very detailed historic inventory, more so than the current historic inventory the town has.
- 2) To find funding for the West Harwich Schoolhouse roof replacement. This project would stabilize the building, keeping it intact, as well as reducing the town's insurance costs.

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- 3) Similar to the Harwich's Affordable Housing Trust, could funds be set up to create a Historic Preservation Trust? In addition to CPC, it could also accept private funding. This trust could respond in a timelier manner to preserve historic projects around town and have possibly a large enough pocket of funds to do the job.
- 4) Establish Captains' Row as a Historic District to try to preserve it. Can funds be found to hire a historic preservation conservator to conduct a feasibility study on the designation of a historic district? This idea was suggested by the Cape Cod Commission.
To protect this area, declaring it as a historic district would: 1. Create stop steps prior to demo buildings. 2. Provide tax rebates to do work. 3. National recognition.
This idea might be able to be included in the Special Town Meeting.

Town support is needed. The West Harwich neighborhood support is strong, but the whole town needs to be included. Town-wide public hearings are needed to get public input.

It is unclear if the work needed to be designated on the National Historic Register follows CPC guidelines. The HDHC did try to get funding, three or four years ago, to get West Harwich on the historic registry, but it failed.

Town Resident Ed McManus came forward to support Mrs. Urbano and historic preservation. Harwich is losing its historically rich buildings. Ed echoed his support for funding to create proper historic districts, through the town, the State, or through the National Historic Registry. In addition to West Harwich, other areas in town, say Bank Street, could benefit from this designation. There have been many attempts to preserve the West Harwich Schoolhouse, but nothing sticks. The Schoolhouse's re-roofing is critical. Other preservation projects have also failed to garner support except for the historically correct preservation of the South Harwich Meeting House project, which was done with primarily CPC funds.

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Vice-Chair Kathy Green to leave the Public Information Hearing and return to the Regular CPC meeting.

VOTE: Yes 6; No 0; Abstain 0. Motion carried unanimously

IV Regular CPC Meeting reconvened at 6:51 PM.

1. No public comment.

2. Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Kathy Green, seconded by Mary Maslowski to approve the May 9, 2019 CPC Meeting minutes.

VOTE: Yes 6; No 0; Abstain 0. Motion carried unanimously.

3. New Business:

- a) Harwich Historic District and Historical Commission follow-up report. HDHC Representative Bob Doane presented oral report.

When the HDHC reviewed this 2016 CPC Article #31 Historic Inventory Update, it was written to identify a cluster of houses in town that would be more historically significant. It was designed for hiring a consultant to conduct the study. This project's funds have been idle, and unspent, for many years. The town and HDHC have seen many personnel changes over time. When funds were requested for this cluster study project, the original 2006 CPC Article #50 Historic Inventory was still on going. The Historic Inventory is now complete. The HDHC have since discovered many flaws, incorrect dates, etc. with the Historic Inventory. They had thought they could use these

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funds to correct the Historic Inventory (HI) problems, but that isn't what these funds were approved to do. The HDHC will continue to deal with the HI problems as a one-off.

It was discussed the most prudent way to go forward. Is it to rescind the project funds or to direct the funds to be spent a certain way? It was questioned if Captains' Row could be a cluster study area? Would this be a good starting point? Would Captains' Row emerge more quickly as a historic district? The National Historic District requires a survey of all the properties in that area, not just historic homes. That's a problem. The cluster project has some \$20,000 available to identify three or more houses as a cluster. Captains' Row is much larger than that. The HDHC is more inclined to do a more comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, instead of a cluster study. The Planning Board will soon start the town's Comprehensive Plan, and it needs the Historic Preservation Plan, so that is the HDHC's number one priority. That plan could provide direction for the historic preservation CPC funding bucket.

It was stressed that going forward, projects need to have a clear plan, a clear objective.

Regarding 2016 Article #31, \$20,000:

A motion was made by Chris Rockett, seconded by John Ketchum to rescind the funds.

VOTE: Yes 5 – Chair Dave Nixon, Vice-Chair Kathy Green, Mary Maslowski, Chris Rockett, John Ketchum,
No 0;
Abstain - Bob Doane Motion carried.

New Business continued

b) Discussion on website updates: John Ketchum

Current goal: Electronic project submissions and getting CPC content/information on-line.

John Ketchum has spoken with Mr. Foster, the town's tech guy, but it is clear more research will be needed to go to the next step. Nothing else will be done but the posting of this year's application on the town site, by July 1st, 2019. But we can start talking now about future changes.

John and Mr. Foster need to see about the town's website handling electronic project submissions.

Problems:

Limits to file size. The email server limits to 100 mega bites. The spam filter limits to 35 mega bites. Could this be manipulated?

File uploads. Could these files be transferred to someone in town with Windows and user account credentials?

Also, file records retention rules still apply. So, a paper copy is mandatory.

CPC content/information on-line.

John was able to post the new tri-fold informational flier PDF on-line, though it is a different layout. It was suggested maybe turning the trifold into a mini power point presentation.

When looking at the town's CPC web page, John thought there might be better options. The page is not as natural for content as say what the Cultural Center displays. The layout is set in three columns and is limiting. There may be costs involved to figure out a better format on the existing town page. Maybe a stand-alone website might be the ticket. Many departments have their own websites. It would require a separate domain name and a third-party hosting platform, with an estimated cost of \$100-200/year subscription fee. A stand-alone site would give us endless options. If the pages are static, it really isn't too involved, maybe a volunteer or paid staff can maintain the site. Though someone would need to know how to make changes to keep the site current. It wouldn't do to have an outdated site.

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The town's website needs corrections now. John will update the committee member list and the meeting start time. He will contact Caleb to work on the CPC page. John volunteered to maintain the town's CPC webpage going forward. Chris volunteered to review the current webpage content. Chair Nixon will speak with Mr. Foster regarding John receiving credentials to authorize changes to our webpage. John will see what can and cannot be done on the existing website. The webpage may have more space available to add more content.

What does the CPC want on a website?

All committee members will do homework, researching what other towns have on their sites, and bring suggestions to the July CPC meeting.

For example, on the Town of Dennis website – for over ten years, they have posted their applications, projects and updates.

5. Old Business:

a) Our new application will be posted on-line soon. Kathy has prepared it. Mary will proof it.

6. Other:

7. Next meeting's Agenda points:

a) Website ideas from committee members' homework.

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Kathy Green to adjourn.

VOTE: Yes 6; No 0; Abstain 0. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment 7:35 PM.