

TOWN OF HARWICH
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Approved 2.8.24

**Community Preservation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2024**

Recording and Taping Notification: As required by law the Town may audio or video record this meeting. Any person intending to either audio or video record this open session is required to inform the chair.

Call to Order

Harwich Community Preservation Committee Meeting called to order with quorum of committee members present by Chair Dave Nixon at 6:01 PM, on Thursday, January 11, 2024 at the Harwich Town Hall, Donn B. Griffin Room.

Present: Chair Dave Nixon, Vice-Chair Kathy Green, Bob Doane, Mary Maslowski, John Ketchum, Marcy Vigneau, and Emily Brutti

Absent: Kelly Barber

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(6), to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate if the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body – A Land Purchase.

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Kathy Green, to move into Executive Session as stated on agenda, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(6), to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate if the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body – A Land Purchase.

The Community Preservation Committee will return to Regular Meeting following the Executive Session.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon – Aye; Vice-Chair Kathy Green – Aye; John Ketchum – Aye; Bob Doane – Aye; Mary Maslowski – Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; Emily Brutti – Aye.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Exited Regular CPC Meeting to move into Executive Session.

Returned to Open Regular CPC Meeting at 6:21 PM in the Donn B. Griffin Room, Harwich Town Hall.

REGULAR CPC MEETING

1. Welcome Guests

A. No Public Comment

2. Approval of Minutes

A. CPC Meeting – December 7, 2023

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Marcy Vigneau, to approve the CPC Meeting minutes of December 7, 2023.

VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon – Aye; Vice-Chair Kathy Green – Aye; John Ketchum – Aye; Bob Doane – Aye; Mary Maslowski – Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; Emily Brutti – Aye.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

3. New Business

A. Review of newly submitted CDP's Update Status Report - 2023 Article #26 Lower Cape Housing Institute project
Written report accepted.

B. Review of possible follow-ups on presented 2023/2024 CPA Funding Request Projects

Chair Nixon, Vice-Chair Kathy Green, Mary Maslowki, Harwich Board of Selectmen Chair Julie Kavanagh, and Town Administrator Joe Powers met with Harwich Finance Director Kathleen Barrette. No Community Preservation Committee financial report is available yet.

The BOS Chair and the Finance Director have instructed the CPC to follow the same process as last year, to use conservative estimated figures in funding projects' motions. Last year, the committee voted to approve spending some \$2.5 million on projects.

With that thought, for the Anticipated Revenue for 2025, we will add the amounts of the State tax levy of some \$1.6 million to come and the State revenue contributions of some \$395,000. We should be able to include the return of the L.A.N.D. grant of \$400,000 and other funds the committee has rescinded, some \$600,000.

The buckets of Open Space, Community Housing, Historical Preservation Reserves should each receive 10% of the State tax levy of and State revenue combined, with the remaining balance to be placed into the Undesignated Fund.

Follow-ups: 1) The rescinded funds should be returned to the buckets they were appropriated from

2) Interest earned on the accounts, approximately \$100,000

3) The current balance in the accounts – the certified funds

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C. Discussion and possible voting on presented 2023/2024 CPA Funding Request Projects:
The committee decided to discuss but not vote on the projects tonight.

OS 1 North Woods & Water Supply Protection Project – Conservation Restriction

Harwich Conservation Trust M. Lach, PM – HCT Executive Director Michael Lach, Requested \$100,000

Comments made:

- 3rd HCT priority of their submitted projects
- Not the highest priority of projects to support if funds are limited
- Noted of the 10.29 acres, 7 are in Harwich, 3.29 are in Brewster
- REOS supports the project because it is in Zone 2, with wells and recharge area
- Land conservation requests are critical for Harwich

OS 2 Red River Valley Land & Water Protection Project – Conservation Restriction

Harwich Conservation Trust, PM – HCT Executive Director Michael Lach, Requested \$150,000

Comments made:

- 2nd HCT priority of their submitted projects
- REOS voted the project a priority, demonstrating CPA concerns on conserving land in water shed area, preserving the water supply, the water quality and any impact on Red River Beach.

CH 2 Rental Assistance Program

Town of Harwich, Housing Advocacy Department, Applicant: Brianna Powell, Housing Advocate, PM - Brianna Powell,
Requested \$250,000

Comments made:

- Not enough information has been provided on the project.
- We want to help people find affordable housing with a good program; we just don't know the details of the program.
- Concerned about the budgeted 20%, some \$50,000 of the requested amount, for admin fees. Is the project going to pay for a new employee? How does this work with the job of the part-time housing advocate?
- Concerned about the Harwich Housing Authority's stagnant rental assistance program. Applicants/Participants have slowed. How would this program be a bigger mover without a gap/lag in supporting people? We know rents are high but the HHA program parameters leaves too few rentals to qualify.
- Are there grants available?
- We haven't received follow-ups from the applicant.

CH 3 Harwich Affordable Housing Trust Funds

Harwich Affordable Housing Trust, PM – HAHT Chair Larry Ballantine, Requested \$500,000

Comments made:

- Happy that Chair Ballantine is providing more information, more than we have ever received.
- Happy to see the HAH Trust making progress, moving in the right direction
- Want to see the Trust sign the Grant Agreement. Suggested withholding funds until GA signed. Funds from 2022 and 2023 have not been transferred into their account yet.
- Chair Ballantine is concerned with CPC funding requiring the three-year limit to complete project. It was noted the project manager can ask the CPC for an extension.
- Still waiting for follow-up on additional funding revenue from cell towers and short-term rental tax. Noted Ballantine's email request to Finance Director for answers.

CH 6 Lower Cape Housing Institute Project

Lower Cape Cod Community Development Corporation d/b/a Community Development
Partnership, Applicant: Community Development Partnership, PM - Amanda Bebrin, Director of Housing Advocacy
Requested \$7,500

Comments made:

- Positive comments to support
- Would like to see more Town of Harwich employees and community people participate in the program
- Program is available online.

CH 7 The Old Bank St. Firehouse Housing Project

Harwich Fire Association, PM – Joseph Rego III, Requested ~~\$850,000~~ NOW \$400,000

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Project request has changed to \$400,000. On January 8th, 2024, the Harwich Affordable Housing Trust voted to approve \$450,000 towards this project.

Comments made:

- Positive comments to support
- Happy with the non-profit group's progress made on this building's exterior project; a compliment to their ability to complete this project. Nice to see what they have accomplished.
- Affordable housing is critical to Harwich
- Cost of the units by square foot very reasonable; plus getting contributions
- Happy they sought additional funding source
- Instead of the Old Firehouse costing the town to remove, we are getting a restored historic building, and now it could provide affordable housing units.
- Their supplemental letter will be added to application for revised funding request, no need for revised application

HP 1 South Harwich Gravestone Conservation Project

Cemetery Commission, Applicant: Cemetery Department, PM – Robbin Kelley, Requested \$23,000

Comments made:

- Positive comments to support
- Cemetery Department's projects are consistently completed; a compliment to their ability to finish projects.

R 1 Cold Brook Trailhead & Public Access – Parking lot Project

Harwich Conservation Trust, PM – HCT Executive Director Michael Lach, Requested \$250,000

Comments made:

- 1st HCT priority of their submitted projects
- Positive comments to support
- Happy project would provide parking for both Old Firehouse and Cold Brook Trailhead.
- Important to address drainage issues

R 2 Monomoy Regional School District Press Box Project

Monomoy Boosters Club, Applicant: Michelle Claire Canto, PM – TBD, Requested \$100,000

Comments made:

- Project cannot move forward without the Town of Harwich providing letter to assume control of the Press Box on the school's leased land.
- Is the Chatham CPC also supporting project?
- Recreation supports the project (letter provided)
- Comments were good about project if get letter from Town, but questioned if it is a priority.

R 3 Brooks Park Landscaping and Beautification Project

Harwich Recreation and Youth Department and Commission, Town of Harwich – Recreation, PM – Rec Dir Eric Beebe, Requested \$25,000

Comments made:

- Questioned if project qualifies for CPA funding. If it is just a landscaping project, does it create a recreational project?
- Concerns were expressed about conservation of water and reducing use of fertilizer.
- Was an alternative ground cover explored?
- Waiting on Follow-ups
- Not a top priority project

R 4 Harwich Police Soccer Club Street Soccer Pitch Project

Harwich Police Soccer Club, PM - Bob Brackett, Requested \$48,700

Comments made:

- Positive comments to support - clever idea; encourages pickup games to engage kids; group seems resourceful
- Question - where is it going to be stored?

R 5 Veterans Memorial Complex Electric Irrigation Replacement

Town of Harwich – Recreation, PM – Rec Dir Eric Beebe, Requested \$37,000

Comments made:

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- Project is needed. Without the funds to replace it, the system will fail and the lawn will go brown. The town uses these fields.
- Supporting the project to be proactive as the fields need to be well maintained. If you don't maintain the fields, injuries will happen on poor surfaces.
- Concerned about the water consumption and type of fertilization used, as not all organics are the same. Nitrogen issues in our water tables. We have been funding water quality clean-up projects in our ponds.
- Are there ways for the turf to be managed with a limited process?
- Could town take responsibility to address this issue?

R 6 Senior Memorial Softball Field Fencing Project

Town of Harwich – Recreation, PM – Rec Dir Eric Beebe, Requested \$110,000

Comments made:

- Positive comments to support.
- This project is important. This committee has already funded this fencing project before, but unfortunately the costs increased requiring the Rec Dept. to return the approved funds and reapply.
- The new restroom project is located here.
- The fence is not repairable. It is a safety issue. The rusty old fence can cut people.

R 7 Beach Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Acquisition,

Town of Harwich – Recreation, PM – Rec Dir Eric Beebe, Requested \$39,000

Comments made:

- Positive comment to support
- Providing proper training and putting up signage are crucial factors to ensure the units are available and can be used correctly
- Don't want to limit their use to just the summertime and at the beaches. Units need to be available for year-round use, then accessibility and usage makes the cost more acceptable.
- How can we measure the use in the off season?
- Recharging the units – if they recharge the units at night, like their radios, how will they be available for evening use if needed?
- Accessibility to their storage location still needs to be thought out.
- Plans for training need to be thought out. Coordination is needed.
- If the first-aid bags and radios go out to all sporting events, these units can be included – if staffed trained.
- In six months, they may be able to address the coordination giving us answers to our questions.
- Bruce Young of the Harwich Fire Association offered the batteries are good for five years. The units have an indicator instructing when they need to be changed.

4. Old Business

A. Update: New CPC signs

- Cemetery Dept. said they would be happy to display signs
- South Harwich Meeting House. Waiting to hear back from Mrs. Ford. It is Town owned property.
- At Bell's Neck trailhead – John will ask and get back to the committee
- Still need to contact Amy for conservation project locations OK
- Maybe at the Albro House
- A banner at one of the town's fields
- Banners may be hard to stake now. Better for use on fences. In the future, the banners could have wind slits
- Brooks Academy's banner staked banner came down in the wind. We have some new ideas for hanging the banner.
- There are security concerns for some sign locations

B. Update: Website

- John has uploaded: Updated Current Approved Projects List and Updated Projects in Progress List. Last year's applications are online. A separate document lists which projects were approved at last year's Town Meeting.
- Kathy offered her observation that the number of projects still in progress will be down to eight by fall.
- Today Emily received her website credentials. John will work with Emily, instructing her on what he can do on the town site.

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- The town's new system will be live July 1.
- John was thanked for all his work on our webpage – showing the public how the CPC works. Great transparency.

C. Update: Social Media

- Emily reported Kelly has a post ready to go
- Emily and Kelly have been talking about a Press Release. Emily suggested working on the 20th Anniversary of the CPC. One good angle would be to write about CPC by the numbers. Another idea would be to bring in spokespeople to talk about completed projects around town. It was also suggested we acknowledge past CPC Chairs – Jack Brown and Bob MacCready. History Teacher Rich Houston pushed the CPC through at the 2004 Town Meeting. Bill Gavin helped as well.

5. Other

Penrose Update.

- Penrose asked for a corporate name change on their Cape Cod Five Housing project. Harwich Town Administrator, the CPC, the lawyers, and all the other towns were involved. The new grant agreement will need to be signed by the BOS. Dave is not comfortable with the changes made to the document; he has declined to sign it. If approved, the BOS will sign.

6. Next meeting's Agenda points – February 8, 2024

- Discussion and possible voting on the projects
- Revisit the 2023 Article #30 Oak Street Bikeways Crossing Lights Project. Invite Bikeways Committee representative and Department of Public Works Director L. Hooper to the meeting.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by John Ketchum, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon -- Aye, Vice-Chair Kathy Green - Aye; Mary Maslowski - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; John Ketchum – Aye; Emily Brutti – Aye.

Motion PASSED unanimously.
Adjournment at 8:18 PM.