

TOWN OF HARWICH
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Approved 11.16.23

**Community Preservation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2023**

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.

I 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, November 2, 2023 at the Harwich Town Hall, Donn B. Griffin Room.

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

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 John Ketchum, to move into 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.

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; Emily Brutti – Aye.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Exited Regular CPC Meeting to move into Executive Session.

Returned to Open Regular CPC Meeting at 6:16 PM in the Donn B. Griffin Room, Harwich Town Hall.

CPC member Marcy Vigneau joined the meeting in progress.

II REGULAR CPC MEETING

1. Welcome Guests

A. No Public Comment

2. New Business

A. Update from Harwich Finance Director Kathleen Barrette

Handouts Finance Director Barrette provided old financial reports showing an example of what the Harwich Community Preservation Committee accounting layout looks like. This year's financial reports are not available yet, as the Finance Department is still closing the books. Kathleen will forward the financials when they are ready. Kathleen offered that everything is planned to be completed by the end of November. The tax rate has not been set yet. The tax bills will go out by Dec. 31st.

The financial report shows:

- Everything is in terms of fiscal year, not calendar. The fiscal year begins July 1st.
- Prior year's ending figure becomes this year's current beginning balance.
- When state funds come in, they are divided into the three – Historical Preservation, Community Housing, and Open Space - reserve accounts at 10% each, plus in this year's example, a warrant article approved to put \$25,000 into an operating account, then the remaining funds go into the Undesignated account.
- At the end of each fiscal year, any unspent money in the three category reserve accounts and the Undesignated account will roll over and continue to do so every year.
- At the end of each fiscal year, the unspent funds in the annual operating account are to be returned. So, every year, a warrant article should be voted on for general admin expenses and held in the annual operating account. This is different from what the committee had thought. Recently, \$30,000 from the operating account was spent for the Judith Eldredge property tax title expense.
- All the CPC warrant articles/projects are listed. The report shows the projects' appropriations, how much was spent, and how much balance there is for each project. The funds are rolled over every year until the project is completed.
- The bank interest on the funds is on the back page.
- The state usually disperses CPA funds three times a year. The amounts are not fixed.
- Estimated revenue projections are a conservative amount because you don't have the funds in the accounts yet and you don't want to overspend.

TOWN OF HARWICH

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

- The Finance Department estimated revenues numbers are reported to the state. The state will require the estimated revenues to be adjusted if they don't like the town's reported numbers. Estimated numbers vs. actual figures are usually pretty close. The state has to certify the reports.
- The committee needs to know how much is available to spend in – Historical Preservation, Community Housing, and Open Space - reserve accounts, and plus the Undersigned account. The breakdowns should include the balances forward in each category. The state has instructed the CPC to not use the current Fiscal Year funds, but rather the certified balances and/or the estimated revenue.
- Kathleen offered it is not recommended to spend more than last year's estimated revenue.
- The "Committed funds" are the sums that have been voted for the projects.
- Rescinded funds need to be certified by the state before those funds can be available for new projects. The state certifies once a year.
- Kathleen offered to email the committee the MUNIS monthly reports of all the CPC accounts.
- It was requested for Kathleen to verify if the town has overpaid the Land Bank Debt Service. It has been discovered, for the past two years, the Town has included the payment of the Land Bank Debt Service as part of the town budget. As has been our practice for years, the CPC included a warrant article for a payment of the Land Bank Debt Service from CPA funds. Both those warrant articles were approved by the town meetings. Both those numbers must have been recorded twice. Was the state paid twice? Kathleen will investigate.
- Kathleen offered the town has received the L.A.N.D. grant, some \$400,000 at the end of June. It has not been recorded yet.

B. Presentations of the 2023/2024 CPA Funding Requests continues:

Each applicant will be given 5 minutes to present, followed by a 15-minute increment of time for discussion with CPC members.

HP 1 South Harwich Gravestone Conservation Project
Applicant: Town of Harwich Cemetery Department
Project Manager: Town of Harwich Cemetery Administrator Robbin Kelley
Amount Requested: \$23,000

Harwich Cemetery Administrator Robbin Kelley presented the application.

- This cemetery conservation project would address the needed repair of some 15 broken headstones and 29 leaning stones at the South Harwich Cemetery.
- Countless individuals have contributed to our country and community and their headstones are a record of their lives. We should address the repairs.
- Before and after photos will be taken on site.
- This is Harwich's smallest cemetery and since 1984, the only one listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.
- A few of the stones have been cleaned. A few have received repairs. But if you don't fix the leaning stones, they will fall and break. Let's fix this before they break.
- The written estimate provided is for the whole job. The work will be done on site.
- The work to be done is labor intensive. The stone's entire foundation needs to be dug out, then repair the stone if needed, a new foundation needs to be poured, and then the stones will be reinstalled.
- This job is similar to the conservation work that was done at the East Harwich Union Cemetery.

Handout Robbin formally invited the committee to the Veteran's Day Ceremony and Dedication of the New Veterans Memorial Circle on Saturday, November 11th to be held at the Evergreen Cemetery in East Harwich at 10:30 AM. Robbin thanked the CPC and the town voters for their contribution to this new venue.

R 4 Harwich Police Soccer Club Street Soccer Pitch Project
Applicant: Harwich Police Soccer Club, Bob Bracket
Project Manager: Harwich Police Soccer Club, Bob Bracket
Amount Requested: \$48,700

Bob Bracket of the Harwich Police Soccer Club presented the application.

A short video was played about the pitch they want to purchase.

- The Club wants to build community through play, to build confidence. Unstructured play will help that.
- For the past couple of years, the Club has borrowed a pitch, where they have accommodated up to 100 kids a night. As people drive by, they are attracted to the pitch because it is unusual.
- The town can offer free play in an unstructured environment. This would be unique in Harwich. Kids and their parents don't have to go to other towns to find this.

TOWN OF HARWICH

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

- On the Cape, only Hyannis has one.
- This pitch, the playing field fencing, is completely portable and can be moved and set up anywhere. Harwich has multiple town property locations. The pitch can be used for other sports play, not just soccer.
- Families have to pay to play activities in the organized recreational programs.
- Bob has spoken with Harwich Rec Director Eric Beebe in the past. Harwich Rec has been very good to them. But in Harwich, they don't allow any other play than that for which a court is designed. They had asked to use the pickleball courts because they have lights, but the courts are for pickleball play only.
- In South Dennis, they play street hockey on the grounds of the John Kelly Park.
- In 2021, the Club's free play attracted 200 players to their indoor program.
- The Club used to set up at Red River Beach in the summer. It was a challenge to find a stretch of beach where people were already there.
- The pitch can be set up on pavement. Setting up the pitch on a grass surface would be great.
- Long term, a turf with padding can be purchased, but that is not part of this funding request.
- They can set up at the Community Center, but it takes parking spaces away.
- Monomoy School was asked in 2021, but they declined. The school has scheduled other uses for their site and in the summer their parking spaces are used for the Mariner's and other baseball games.
- The Club would like to use the pitch year-round. It would be nice to be at the Community Center during the summer and a secondary location elsewhere. Hyannis rotates their pitch to various locations to give different neighborhoods access to it.
- If you use this pitch on a soccer field in Harwich, a lot of kids are needed to play in a program. If the pitch isn't part of a program, it allows for flexibility in playing whatever with as few or as many come to play. The pitch offers an unstructured environment, inviting kids to play, anything from a few kids who just want to kick the ball around to a full-on game if loads of kids show up to play.
- Other groups can use the pitch. The Club plans to use it weekly.
- Longevity of this pitch? It may last twenty years.
- The Club has liability insurance. The town also has insurance.
- If the Club doesn't receive funding for purchasing the pitch, they will try to continue to borrow one.
- **Follow-up:** It was suggested the Club speak at the next Rec meeting.

CH 6 Lower Cape Housing Institute Project

Applicant: Community Development Partnership (CDP)

Project Manager: Director of Housing Advocacy Amanda Bebrin

Amount Requested: \$7,500

Director of Housing Advocacy Amanda Bebrin presented the application.

Bob Doane left the room for the presentation, recusing himself.

- The program is instructional about community housing; what it is and how it works.
- All eight towns, from Harwich to Provincetown, have contributed to the program in past years.
- The requested funds cover mostly the staffing costs.
- The program offers workshops and organizes peer groups for people to work together. They try to connect people with what they need.
- The participants are municipal employees and others involved in community housing. We want town employees to be well educated on housing.
- So far, there have been 42 participants from Harwich.
- Amanda now coordinates with our Harwich Housing Advocate Brianna Powell. Amanda will establish a relationship with the new town planner. She can email an invite to anyone to participate in the program.
- There is no charge to attend.
- The workshops are on YouTube.
- The program has received Harwich CPA funds in the past. If they don't receive funding this year, they will try to find funds another way. The CDP is a non-profit. They pursue grants, etc. to fund their programs.
- It was suggested that their marketing could be enhanced by using these digital fliers for each workshop and peer groups.
- It was offered that holding the workshops during the workday makes it hard for some people to attend and wondered if any other timing had been considered.

CH 7 The Old Bank Street Firehouse Housing Project

Applicant: Harwich Fire Association, Joseph Rego III

Project Manager: Harwich Fire Association, Joseph Rego III

Amount Requested: \$850,000

TOWN OF HARWICH

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Harwich Fire Association President Bruce Young and Joseph Rego III presented the application.
Bob Doane remained out of the room, recusing himself from the presentation.

Handouts The project is to create workforce housing apartments on the second floor of the firehouse. The apartments would be rented to individuals that meet the HUD medium income levels, adding to our town's 10% affordable housing goal. It is important to have local tradespeople live and work in the community.

- The application has estimates, not bids.
- It was questioned what the requirements are to get this project going. It was offered that when CPA funds are used on affordable housing projects, there are restrictions that limit the renter's income. As this is a private organization, they don't have to go with the 40B option.
- The Fair Housing Act requires the Association to hire a management company and a lottery will determine who the renters will be.
- The Association wants to go local, but the Act doesn't allow for lottery restrictions, so it would be open to all Cape applicants, workforce or not. The Association's goal is to support the community.
- The Association has been told the management fees may be about \$5,000 per apartment. They will be doing their research.
- The Association didn't supply a financial statement, but they have a fundraising subcommittee that has a goal to raise some \$270,000 through selling T-shirts, hosting events like meeting Santa in December, a cocktail party with HCT donors, and maybe a road race. They applied for two grants. They are in discussion with the Harwich Affordable Housing Trust for funding. And their sweat equity will reduce the costs.
- The application's estimated numbers were questioned. They can go through and review the plans and double check the estimated numbers. The estimate includes the design to use the existing waste system.
- The second-floor office on the plan is new. It will be for administration.
- The units are not planned to be ADA compliant. There are less than four units planned, so they aren't required to be.
- If they don't get the CPA funding, the project may be put on hold or the Association may go in a different direction.
- If the parking lot project doesn't go forward it will affect this project.
- **Follow-up:** Confirm with Building Commissioner if their planned second egress is appropriate.

Bob Doane returned to the Regular Meeting.

C. Approval of Minutes:

CPC Meeting – October 12, 2023

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded John Ketchum to accept the October 12, 2023 meeting minutes.

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

Motion PASSED. 6 in favor; 1 abstention.

D. Discussion: Hold a workshop on submitting applications

How the committee can improve dialogue with the public on the application process:

- It was suggested the committee could hold office hours to work with applicants and walk them through the process. Mary volunteered her time.
- It was offered that the committee hasn't been hard to contact in the past to answer questions. Committee members have had conversations with applicants.
- With the new online application process, John was the go-to person once the applicant submitted their application. Only then could they contact him through his info. We recognize that didn't address the last-minute applicants' issues.
- We know the online process may be changed next year with the town's new system.
- Applicants don't really seem to use the town provided CPC email to ask for assistance. Maybe we could set up something else. Individual committee member's emails are not favorable. Personal emails have been hacked before.
- It was suggested a google survey could be emailed to current applicants to get a read on their difficulties with the process. The survey could be done after we vote on this year's round of projects.

E. Discussion: Possible changing of CPA funding

The committee members have heard the town may want to make changes in CPA funding.

- It was offered that there is concern about this. We understand there are limited pools of money needed for town project expenses like the new wastewater system. But the town has benefited from CPA funded completed projects. By using CPA

TOWN OF HARWICH

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

funding, those projects' costs have been kept out of the town's operating budget. Maybe the town wouldn't have been able to fund those projects. A lot has been done with the CPA funds.

- By showing the townspeople the fruit of the CPA funding with signs marking the projects around town, maybe they will understand where their money has been spent.
- Recently the BOS assigned the Town Administration to investigate making a change from the 3% surcharge on the Real Estate tax bills to 1% for the CPA funding. It is not straightforward. A few other communities have made changes in funding their CPC and funding other town budget projects with the surcharge.
- Reducing the CPA percentages, a point or two, would have a larger impact on our budget than for covering the wastewater costs with that potential money. It may just amount to a drop in the bucket for that project. We want to maximize the additional state matching funding. We can only do that if we keep the rate at the 3% level.
- We don't owe the Land Bank Debt Service anymore. That frees up about \$300,000 to spend on other CPA projects annually. But to divert so much of our budget, as is being considered, will really reduce what projects we can accomplish.
- A town meeting vote would be required to make any change.

3. Old Business

A. Update: New CPC signs – 5 banners and 4 road signs.

Chair Dave Nixon and Vice Chair Kathy Green has installed the new CPC signage at: Brooks Academy; in front of the Affordable Housing Trust property on Queen Anne Road; the Pickleball Courts; and the Old Bank Street Firehouse.

Marcy and Dave have each straightened the banner that was falling down in front of the Brooks Academy. Maybe the stakes need to be driven further. Dave will ask the DPW for help.

The Chair of the Board of Selectmen has given us the approval to place our signs in front of projects on town property.

Possible new locations were suggested for the remaining signs:

- South Harwich Meeting House. Mrs. Ford will be asked. They used to have a sign recognizing CPA funding.
- At one of the trailhead's kiosk
- On the bike path where the crossing lights are crossing
- Hinkley's Pond marking the water treatment site
- Maybe at one of the restroom projects
- It was suggested to recognize the ball fields behind the Community Center by placing a sign at the Center. It would be very visible during town meeting. But the Community Center wasn't funded by the CPA funds.
- Maybe cemetery projects aren't appropriate
- There are security concerns for some sign locations

FU: The road signs are double sided.

- Social Media posting suggestion: "Community Preservation Committee signs have gone up around town. What do you think?"
- Maybe we could create buzz with a contest, give a little prize to people who spotted all our signs. Maybe they could use the QR code to mark their sightings. Possibly we can ask Cyndi at the Harwich Chamber of Commerce for help with goodie bags. We can address this idea next month.

4. Other

Handouts. The CPC decided to go digital this year. The CPC members received all the material handed out at tonight's meeting by email. All paper copies handed out during the CPC meetings are for recorded keeping purposes, not for the committee members to keep. Is this idea working?

5. Next meeting's Agenda points – November 16, 2023

Presentations continue.

6. 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 8:44 PM.