

TOWN OF HARWICH

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Community Preservation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes December 7, 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.

Call to Order

Harwich Community Preservation Committee Meeting called to order with quorum of committee members present by Chair Dave Nixon at 6:02 PM, on Thursday, December 7, 2023 at the Harwich Town Hall, Donn B. Griffin Room.

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

REGULAR CPC MEETING

1. Public Comment

A. Harwich Town Resident Jill Potello, speaking for Carolyn Burnet and their grass roots effort toward an outdoor multi-town community pool project. It was offered that there is a lack of swimming lessons available for children outside of what is offered at the ponds and ocean. They have also reached out to other Council of Aging members and have heard of their limited resources and limited swimming options available to them. They are trying to organize as a non-profit group. The group is not asking for funds at this time, but wanted to put the idea out there, and inquire about the next CPC application funding cycle. Chair Nixon explained the next CPC funding cycle – the application deadline is October 1st, 2024. The committee does not speak to subjects during Public Comment.

2. Approval of Minutes

CPC Meeting – November 16, 2023

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Bob Doane to approve the Nov. 16, 2023 CPC meeting minutes.

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

Motion PASSED unanimously.

3. New Business

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

R 6 Senior Memorial Softball Field Fencing Project

Applicant: Town of Harwich - Recreation

Project Manager: Recreation Director Eric Beebe

Amount Requested: \$110,000

Recreation Director Eric Beebe presented this funding request.

- He listed this project as the Rec. Department's first priority of the submitted four project funding requests.
- A couple of years ago this Fencing Project at Senior Memorial Softball Field was applied for and Town Meeting approved, but by that time the bids were sent down for the project's work, prices increased to \$90,000, exceeding the approved \$40,000. The project didn't go forward; CPC rescinded the amount.
- The fencing would cover two softball fields, Potters Field and Senior Memorial Field.
- Many groups use the fields: the high school, Senior Softball Club, among others. It hosts the Senior Softball Classic, where some 100 teams play.
- This is the same field that is getting the new restroom.
- The existing fencing is down in places, the poles are rusted. The Highway Department has patched as much as they can, but it is now a safety issue. The fence completely needs to be replaced.
- The new request is for \$110,000. The Rec. Department is comfortable with this amount to complete the job as they have now done other fencing projects. The costs have just gone up for steel, etc. The Rec Dept. has been told the bids are good for a year. They will return any unspent funds after install is complete.
- The timetable: Do the job in September, following the season.

R 5 Veterans Memorial Complex Electric Irrigation Replacement Project

Applicant: Town of Harwich - Recreation

Project Manager: Recreation Director Eric Beebe

Amount Requested: \$37,000

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Recreation Director Eric Beebe presented this funding request.

- He listed this project as the Rec. Department's second priority of the submitted four project funding requests.
- This project is to replace the electronic system. It controls all the irrigation for the fields. (It is not for the well.)
- This project is recommended by the Highway Department. The Highway Department is in charge of all field maintenance.
- A Letter of Support from Mr. Hawkins spells out without the new system, the electronics and irrigation will fail and the lawn will go brown.
- The system is 15 years old. The lifespan is estimated to be 10 – 15 years.
- The water is billed to the Community Center. The water source: Town water.
- The Monomoy School System uses the town's baseball and softball fields for their JV and varsity. The tennis courts too. McFee track handles overflow.
- The area sees more use every year, beyond sports played there, the area sees use from events, like the Cranberry Festival, the Chatham Hooker's Ball, the Rugby Tournament, to name a few. In 2024 the area will host Circus Smirkus.
- Outside groups pay of use fee. This fees can cover smaller projects like repairing a fence or well. This project is too big.
- Eric offered that irrigation is limited under drought conditions.
- The timetable: They plan to replace the system in early fall if they are approved.

Follow-up: Environmental investigation: Has there been any thought regarding the reduction of fertilization and water use? Can the system use solar? Eric will ask the Highway Department if it can be considered.

R 7 Beach Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Acquisition

Applicant: Town of Harwich - Recreation

Project Manager: Recreation Director Eric Beebe

Amount Requested: \$39,000

Recreation Director Eric Beebe presented this funding request.

- He listed this project as the Rec. Department's third priority of the submitted four project funding requests.
- A Letter of Support from the Harwich Fire Department is presented.
- These lifesaving devices will be matched up with lifeguards stationed at Red River Beach, Pleasant Road Beach, and Cohoon. The "suitcase" will go out with the lifeguards every day.
- Lifeguards are trained in CPR and First Aid. They will be trained to use these devices. The Rec. Department trains their staff annually.
- In the off seasons, other programs will have access to the units. Exact plans of where the units will be stored have not been determined. How will the staff have access to the units if they are stored in Eric's office? It was offered a staff member can carry the unit in the gym for afterschool programs or the personnel can be supplied with one for the indoor soccer program. They currently pick up a first aid kit, so now they will be supplied with the unit.
- They will add signage showing the units are on site.
- Recharging? In the summer, the units will be recharged every night following the same practice they do for the beach radios. They have enough charging stations. The radios are five years old and still working properly.

Follow-up: Eric hasn't seen any grants to cover the units come up. But he will investigate. It was offered that there are grants out there. Hingham received a grant for these units recently.

If the 16 units are needed in the off season, could they be rented out? Eric will look into it.

R 3 Brooks Park Landscaping and Beautification Project

Harwich Recreation and Youth Department and Commission

Applicant: Town of Harwich - Recreation

Project Manager: Recreation Director Eric Beebe

Amount Requested: \$25,000

Recreation Director Eric Beebe presented this funding request.

- He listed this project as the Rec. Department's fourth priority of the submitted four project funding requests.
- This project is the improvement for the grassy area next to the pickleball courts, just beyond the Pavilion that is rented out for parties. It would be great to fix it up, including irrigation and benches for additional opportunities for the public to rent out for parties, picnics, etc. It is near the bike path.
- The feedback for past renters offered they wanted to use the adjacent land for the kids to play near the pavilion.
- The site plan needs to be reviewed by the Planning Board and the HDHC.
- Rec pays for the water bill. The water source: Town water.
- The project was questioned. Does landscaping an area qualify for CPA monies by grading it, adding irrigation, loam, and plants?

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Follow-up: It was questioned if the town should add more lawn area with its nitrogen additions and irrigation needs, in looking at water conservation and limiting fertilization factors. Would adding a clover cover be more workable?

Have they investigated using native plants? It was suggested they ask the conservation agent to see “no more grass” options, like clover or wild strawberries. What about creeping red fescue?

Eric offered that the Rec. Department and the Harwich Police Department have spoken regarding the Soccer Pitch Project. They are looking at sites for the pitch.

A. CPC Numbers Update

- The CPC has not received the accounting from the Town of Harwich Finance Director yet. The committee may not receive the report until the end of January. The committee may have an idea of the numbers, but they need to come the town.
- The committee discussed ways to consider the presented projects without knowing if there are enough funds to pay for the projects. It was mentioned last year the committee came very close to spending the anticipated amounts. Without the numbers, the committee could set priorities, take a straw vote, evaluate the projects based on the value, benefit to the town, and the applicant’s prioritizing order.
- It was decided the committee wants to know the numbers first. Is there enough money to pay for a project is an important factor for voting support.
- It was decided that the committee will cancel the planned CPC meeting for next Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023. Without the numbers, there isn’t a point.
- The CPC’s Annual Report had to be submitted to the town already. For a second year in a row, it did not contain the numbers.

4. Old Business

A. Discussion: Bundling Warrant Articles idea

- The past project managers’ responses that were received on the question of bundling the CPC projects into one article on the town warrant were emailed to committee.
- It was noted the warrant is controlled by the town BOS, not the CPC Board. This committee can offer what we want, but the BOS will decide if they will bundle the CPC projects into one warrant article or not.
- A few times in the past the town warrant listed CPC projects that were requesting funds under \$50,000 all in one article.
- The CPC project applicants address the projects on the town meeting floor, not the CPC. They are requesting funding and know the project’s ins and out to present it to its best ability.

Pro and con ideas were offered by committee members:

- If the CPC projects bundled together by funding category, similar to the Town of Yarmouth’s practice, that might work. They present the projects in a table by category, followed by an explanation for each project.
- The Yarmouth’s Town Meeting Moderator keeps the taxpayers focused and keeps the confusion down by asking for the public to speak to “X” project, one at a time.
- Even if it is the taxpayer’s responsibility to pay attention, it was countered by concern that bundling articles together might take away things from taxpayers at town meeting and possibly hurt a project’s chance at approval by confusion or limiting the time to add comments or ask questions on the town meeting floor. Not all taxpayers come prepared to decide on the project until the presentation and vote. We want time for the taxpayers to feel free to discuss/question the project. We don’t want the taxpayers to feel projects were “buried” in one vote. A committee member heard this complaint following a town meeting on another article vote. If one category has many projects, it may be hard to separate out one or more projects and get the comments/questions that may be offered.
- Is this new system really going to be a time saver? In past years, it hasn’t taken much time to vote on the CPC projects. This new system may take more time in comparison and limit the voter’s ability for evaluation if there is confusion.

An amended motion was made by Mary Maslowski, and seconded by John Ketchum, that we send a letter to the Board of Selectmen stating we would appreciate our CPC articles remaining unbundled as town meeting articles and we would be happy to discuss with the Board of Selectmen in a joint meeting.

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

Motion PASSED unanimously.

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B. Update: Signs

- Kathy has not ordered the additional signs yet.

Additional signs' locations still to be determined:

- Kathy first needs to speak to Town of Harwich Conservation Agent Amy Usowski, Town of Harwich Cemetery Administrator Robbin Kelley, and South Harwich Meeting House's Judy Ford.
- Emily reported a small 9" x 6" sign/plaque could fit on the lifeguard stands.
A sign would work at the entrance to Pleasant Road Beach.

C. Update: Website

The website is the Town of Harwich website, on the CPC webpage.

- John spoke to the town's IT person, Sara, about the town's upgrading of their system. It turns out it won't happen until June. They will start testing in April. So, we have a few months to work out what we want.
- John gave Sara the updates we wanted to the CPC webpage.
- John is working on updating the lists on the site.
- John will request website login credentials for Emily. He will work with Emily, going over the steps of working on the website.

D. Update: Social Media

The Facebook postings are on the Brooks Free Library Facebook page.

- No updates yet. Kelly will get working on it.
- Posts can include Kathy's completed projects list. Kathy will update and send to Kelly.
- She will also follow up with Emily to review the content for Cape Cod Chronicle.

5. Other

- Calendar of Meeting dates were emailed to committee. No questions about the dates.
- Kathy will update the lists.
- Marcy volunteered to help on Mary's idea about an application workshop.

6. Next meeting's Agenda points – Thursday, January 11, 2024

- Follow-ups reminders will be emailed to the project presenters.
- Dec. 14th meeting will be cancelled – but use the agenda for Jan. 11th meeting.
Begin meeting with an Executive Session. Include Discussion and possible voting on the presented projects.

7. Adjournment

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

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

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Adjournment at 7:48 PM.