

TOWN OF HARWICH
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Approved August 24, 2023

**Community Preservation Committee Public information Hearing & Regular Meeting Minutes
June 29, 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, June 29 2023 at the Harwich Town Hall, Donn B. Griffin Room.

Present: Chair Dave Nixon, Vice-Chair Kathy Green, Bob Doane, Kelly Barber, and John Ketchum

Absent: Mary Maslowski

II. WELCOMED GUESTS

III. PUBLIC INFORMATION HEARING

The Harwich Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will hold a Public Information Hearing on Thursday, June 29, 2023, 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 hearing 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."

A motion was made by Kathy Green, seconded by Bob Doane to open the Public Hearing.

VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon - Aye; Vice-Chair Kathy Green - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Kelly Barber - Aye

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Public Information Hearing Open:

Greg Winston, President of Pine Oaks Village Homes in Harwich has been here since 1974, consisting of 163 units of affordable housing for seniors and the handicapped. He announced he will be looking for funding for a new mixed income and intergenerational residential development of three 88-unit phases of one-, two-, and three-bedrooms, totaling 264 units. They will apply for State and Federal funding, the tax credits at 80% for affordable housing. They want to go above and beyond the tax credits limit to provide workforce housing. It is difficult to finance workforce and family housing, housing for firefighters and teachers, so they will be going after local funds that might be available, including the CPA monies, funding at the 60-100% range.

It was asked what the current median income for affordable housing is. The number depends on the number of people housed (less for one person, more for a family of four, say) and the number of bedrooms; the range is \$48,000/\$64,000 to \$92,000/\$120,000. So, AMI ballpark for a family of four has an income of \$120,000. The affordable housing range is 30% to 60% of the median income. Workforce, family is 60 to 100%. The Community Preservation Alliance lists a family of four in Harwich is \$124,300 for area-wide median income. Harwich Housing Authority Executive Director offered the State subsidized housing comes in at 80%, qualifying a family of four at \$92,000. The primary application she receives is for a family of four that has an income of \$120,000, falls in the 60-120% range. It was thought that CPA funding is at the 100% level.

At the end of this future project, Harwich will be at 94-96% of their 10% target of affordable housing. They will be applying for funding for all three phases of the development at one time, as they will do all the infrastructure in one go. Beyond State and Federal funding, they will reach out to the Harwich Affordable Housing Trust, and to local Chatham, Dennis, and Harwich CPCs for funding. They may create a foundation for this large-scale project. This will be the largest affordable housing development in this area. It is in a separate real estate rural location in Harwich.

Handout Pattie Tworek of the Chase Library thanked the CPC for funding past historical preservation projects at the library. Formed in 1905 and incorporated in 1907, the Chase Library was built in 1911. This public library doesn't have any dedicated funding. They receive \$10,000 from an annual town meeting warrant article and some additional funding via state library sources. So, money is tight. The trustees of this historical building are very thankful to the CPA funds to replace

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the heating system, install storm windows, restore the original flooring, the fireplace hearth, and firebox, and chimney flashing and repair crumbling bricks. The last project restored the original front door and entry. These projects were critical for the preservation of this historical building and helped it to receive placement on the national Register of Historic Places.

Pattie invited the committee to visit. They have received many compliments on their restored front door. The trustees appreciate the generosity of the CPC members. The trustees try to be good stewards. In 2020, via a Capital Campaign, the community raised \$20,000 necessary to replace the roof. Chair Nixon reminded Pattie it was the taxpayers of Harwich that supported these CPA funded projects.

Tom Evans, Harwich Conservation Trust thanked the CPC and told the group that he appreciated their work on three counts 1) In general he wanted to acknowledge the setup of the CPA with the separate funding buckets and how that has helped so many different types of projects in town. 2) He expressed his gratitude to the committee and their ability in managing the separate funding buckets, knowing how much time it takes to manage the task. 3) And lastly, pointing out the contribution the committee has partnered with the Trust and accomplishing all the important work they have done.

Amy Usowski, Harwich Conservation Administration has been with town for twelve years. She wanted to thank the CPC for their support of the natural resources of the town. Without the CPA support, they couldn't have been able to maintain the town lands. Harwich does a good job preserving town land.

A thought she has been thinking about is the question of how the CPA funds can be used to protect our natural resources - like water quality issues and resiliency? Currently her department is working on educating the public on alternatives to using fertilizers. We face alum treatments in ponds, storm water runoff, installing sewer system, but she is thinking how the CPA funds can be used to be proactive along the lines of water quality issues.

In the past, CPA funds weren't allowed to be used for water projects, but this is no longer the case. But more research is needed in what can be done. Among many ideas to investigate, data collecting is one angle to look at and Preservation Cape Cod another.

Ginny Hewitt, Brooks Free Library Director. The library has benefitted from many large- and small-scale projects funded by CPA monies. Three historic newspapers (dating back to 1880's) have been digitized and preserved. In the last year, these newspapers have been accessed and viewed over 3,000 times. Given these stats, they were accessed 345 days of the 365 days last year.

One idea she has been considering for the CPC going forward, in addition to historic preservation and how important that is to our heritage, but she thinks affordable housing is at a crisis and it is so important to dedicate our designated funding bucket towards it. She also wonders how climate change can be addressed. How can the town look at resiliency? Could the CPC asks applicants how have they looked at their project in regard to climate change/resiliency?

Beth Wade, Director of Land Acquisition and Project Development for Habitat for Humanity of Cape Cod, thanked the CPC for their help on the recently completed Murray Lane Project. This week they are closing on the project's very last home. Everyone will own their home this week. Habitat is a niche development, and maybe the only home ownership affordable housing developer. It was offered that their submitted CPC application are very thorough, but could they be reduced a bit in the future?

A motion was made by John Ketchum, seconded by Bob Doane, to close the Public Information Hearing.

VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon - Aye; Vice-Chair Kathy Green - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Kelly Barber - Aye
Motion PASSED unanimously.

Public Information Hearing Closed, returned to the regular CPC meeting.

IV. REGULAR CPC MEETING

Announcement: Chair Nixon announced that CPC member Kelly Barber recently received acknowledgment of her works, named as a finalist for Young Professional.

A. Approval of CPC Meeting Minutes: May 11, 2023

A motion was made by Kathy Green, seconded by Kelly Barber to approve the CPC Meeting Minutes of May 11, 2023.

VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon - Aye; Vice-Chair Kathy Green - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Kelly Barber - Abstain.
Motion PASSED unanimously.

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B. New Business:

i. Harwich Housing Authority Director Tracy Cannon Director, Update Status Report.

Handout Tracy provided an update of the Housing Assistance program the Harwich Housing Authority operates. The program is helping nine families afford their rent. They can add more families. They receive about a dozen calls a week. They need to meet income requirements and evaluation guidelines.

\$15,118 was carried over from the prior CPA funded project. They are going into the third year of this program and are on track to have used all the funds by the sixth year. They are using the funding at a slower pace. COVID Assistance is one factor, finding affordable rentals is another. The State and HUD (Federal) set the rent limits, and the HHA follows the guidelines. The Massachusetts Rental Voucher System is now allowing the HHA to go up a bit.

The HHA provides consistent help. Intermittent help is needed for expenses people aren't prepared for. Tracy sends those requests to HECH. The HHA hasn't discussed creating an intermittent help program, they recommend other entities to those requests.

If HHA creates a new CPA project request, they would most likely make changes to the program to accomplish the most with the funding.

HHA receives funding their for other programs from the State, not from the Federal Government. Harwich hires HHA to do the work for the town. No State money goes for this program.

ii. Discussion: Grants Agreements

It was offered that we need to vet out what the Town wants compared to what the CPC wants concerning grant agreements. The Community Preservation Coalition has information on grant agreements.

The CPA funding to the Harwich Affordable Housing Trust goes to their account. What accountability do they have to the CPC?

Dave has discussed grant agreements with Town Administrator Joe Powers. What Joe offered is different from what the CPC wanted. We want projects to have ownership. Grant Agreements create standards, "conditions". Is it preferential treatment if Town projects are not required to follow conditions? The CPC can enforce the conditions. For example, the Judah Eldredge land project has gone on for years. The project has not followed the conditions. The committee has the ability to adjust.

Only three grant agreements were signed by the BOS this year. Those three agreements were with outside town entities. The Trust was not one of the signed agreements. The Trust is not part of the Town projects. This isn't how Joe looks at the Trust. Joe Powers emailed us a letter on Grant Agreements. The document doesn't provide for signatures.

The Trust, like other CPA funded projects, has to report their progress twice a year. A Grant Agreement creates something stronger, in writing. The agreement states what needs to be accomplished. The committee voiced that they want a signed agreement.

We need to investigate how other towns handle grant agreements and see how Joe can revise Harwich's points. We can ask them to agree with our elements, but is that the same as a signed agreement? They already had a legal opinion on grant agreements, but they didn't want to follow it. It was offered Yarmouth has grant agreements with their town.

C. Old Business:

i. Follow up: CPC sign logo options with Executive Director Cyndi Williams, Harwich Chamber of Commerce

Cyndi brought in examples of a banner and a road sign with a revised CPC logo. The committee members were pleased with the outcome. These examples didn't carry the signature statement line. Kelly will email this tag line to Cyndi. Next: The committee needs to decide where to display the signs options. The signs cost \$170, including express shipping. The committee thanked Cyndi for all her hard work.

ii. Follow up: Online Application, John Ketchum

John updated the online application with all the prior recommendations. Both Bob and Kathy did a test run application and were happy with their experiences. If any bugs are detected, we can make corrections as we run through them. John will look at submissions of supplemental material and make a few other tweaks before the application goes live, maybe before our next CPC meeting, July 13th. We will email past project managers an announcement that the application is now an online application.

iii. Follow up: Facebook postings, Kelly Barber

Cyndi sent Kelly the new logo to use in her Facebook postings on the Chamber of Commerce page and Brooks Free Library page.

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Brooks Free Library Director Ginny Hewitt suggested to Kelly that we start our own Facebook page for the public. We could turn off the comment section to avoid conflicting with any legal issues. With the library's Facebook page, the public cannot link to the CPC, to our application, projects progressions, agendas, etc. The committee would need town approval for their own Facebook page. A person will still need to manage it. The Harwich Chamber of Commerce has offered to post our public announcements. They can even live broadcast on their page.

Kelly suggested the committee try getting our feet wet by doing this a number of times before getting our own Facebook page. Maybe over the next 3 to 6 months, try this as often as we can and then evaluate the issue. Both Norwood and Canton CPCs have their own Facebook pages.

Kelly will investigate over the next few months the Facebook interactions and how we can handle things. We will need to resolve the legal question, maybe by getting a legal opinion.

D. Other:

- a. Carole Ridley, a Selectmen Appointment, has stepped down from the CPC.
- b. Marcelle Vigneau, representing the Harwich Housing Authority, replacing Elizabeth Harder, introduced herself to the committee. She will attend the next CPC meeting officially.

E. Next scheduled meeting's Agenda points – July 13, 2023:

- a. John Ketchum - Follow up: online application.
- b. Kelly Barber - Follow up: Facebook postings.
- c. The Board of Selectmen's request to combine all CPC projects into one warrant article for 2024 Town Meeting.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Kathy Green, seconded by Kelly Barber to adjourn.

VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon - Aye; Vice-Chair Kathy Green - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; Kelly Barber - Aye; John Ketchum - Aye.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Adjournment at 8:15 PM