

TOWN OF HARWICH
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Approved 12.1.16

HARWICH Community Preservation Committee

November 10, 2016, Harwich Town Hall, Small Meeting Room

Present: Chair Bob MacCready, Vice Chair Kathy Green, Daniel Tworek, Walter Diggs, Jim Atkinson, David Nixon, and Robert Bradley

Absent: Cindi Maule and Selectmen Liaison Michael MacAskill

Vacant: Housing Committee representative

Guests: Arthur Bodin, Harwich Housing Committee Chairman; Jennifer Pickett, Brooks Free Library Reference Librarian; Charleen Greenhalgh, Town of Harwich Assistant Town Administrator; Carolyn Carey, Harwich Community Center Director; Anita Doucette, Town of Harwich Town Clerk; Linda Cebula, Town of Harwich Selectperson

- Meeting called to order by Chair Bob MacCready at 6:02 PM.
- Guests were welcomed.
- A motion was made by David Nixon and seconded to approve the October 13, 2016 CPC Meeting minutes. VOTE: Yes 6; No 0; Abstain 1. Motion approved the minutes.
- A motion was made by Walter Diggs and seconded to approve the October 27, 2016 CPC Meeting minutes. VOTE: Yes 6; No 0; Abstain 1. Motion approved the minutes.

New Business

Presentations of CPA Applications:

H1 Harwich Port Buy-Down, submitted by Harwich Housing Committee, Harwich Housing Committee Chairman Art Bodin, project manager.

Art Bodin presenter:

The Buy-down program will use the requested \$100,000 to provide funds to make one unit market rate in a soon to be built 5-unit Harwich Port housing development to be affordable. The development is in the permitting stage with breaking ground set for the first of the year. On the former Dino property, the current building will be coming down and replaced with the new structure, with the parking at the rear. The ground floor will be retail commercial; the second floor will be residential. The 5 units will each be 2-bedroom condos. This one unit will be part of the affordable housing offered to those that live and work in Harwich; to keep them from leaving the area.

The Housing Authority will run the program. A lottery is involved to select who gets it.

Committee questions:

- Where does the \$100,000 come from?

Response: The HHC doesn't know the condo price yet, but is using an estimate from previous projects. If the \$100,000 isn't sufficient, then this project will not go forward.

- Construction time period?

Response: The construction will begin at first of the year and should be completed within one-year.

- Town support?

Response: The Planning Board just approved the project. The demo will begin soon. The expected completion date is Memorial Day.

- How is this affordable housing?

Response: The unit will be made affordable via the buy-down program. This is not an affordable housing section of the development. There has not been any discussion with the property owner.

- Is this project premature at this point?

Response: No. Working against the CPC's timeframe and on the chance to have one of these units become an affordable housing unit, this is a place holder before the intended unit sale price is known.

- Status?

Response: The Planning Board has approved the project. They reviewed the project as presented based on their plans. This is a private, not a public project.

- So the building is moving closer to the street. What is the size of the building/units?

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Response: Not sure. Maybe 20,000 sq. foot for both floors; the 2-bedroom units maybe 850-900 sq. foot. Chairman Bodin did not have the plans available at the meeting.

- How long is the deed restriction?

Response: Now to all in perpetuity.

- In 2010 and 2013 the CPC funded a Buy-down program. Why go now for this funding.

Response: Small window timeframe.

- The timing and cost of the project?

Response: \$100,000 may seem like a lot of money, but with the other condos as seen in Chatham, \$100,000 may not be enough.

- How is this project eligible under the Community Preservation Act's community housing limitations?

Response: Big affordable housing is community housing. Buy-down meets the Act.

- Marketing of any kind needs a process, the "Fair Housing Marketing Plan"

Response: A pool of vetted people will go through a lottery. For the chosen people they will have an on-going monitoring process.

- Prior Buy-down programs?

Response: In the prior programs brought to the CPC, the people were selected, and then they find a property to meet the guidelines. This is a target property.

- The timing of this project still questioned.

#HP9 Digitization of the Harwich Oracle Newspaper 1986-2007, submitted by Brooks Free Library, Brooks Free Library Reference Librarian Jennifer Pickett, project manager.

Jennifer Pickett presenter:

BFL and Jennifer have successfully completed two other projects of digitization newspapers. The library's collections of these newspapers are breaking down. They will not be microfiche. Everyone loves this. The hard drives are searchable and will be available to the library, Harwich Historical Society and the cemetery dept. The collection is not complete, many issues are missing. The BFL will ask residents for help in finding the missing issues. The newspaper office doesn't keep old papers, not even digitally. If the project moves forward with the current collection, the cost would be \$35,850. With all the issues, the cost will be \$41,250. The digitization will be a full scanning with OCR process for search ability.

Committee questions:

- Is the full newspaper going to be preserved?

Response: No, there is no particular plan to preserve them. The newspapers should be lying flat, in a climate controlled area, and not just out there in the stacks for people to put their hands on them.

- Could this be priced out while the committee evaluates the project?

Response: It is possible to get those costs.

- What is the timeframe to get those missing issues?

Response: Jennifer has not given up hope. The publishing company didn't have them. The Harwich Historical Society has shared their copies. There is time to find them. The library will do the project as soon as the money is available.

- Currently the newspapers are where?

Response: The papers are stored in cardboard files on one shelf of the library.

- What originally was planned for the hard copy?

Response: Not sure what the return condition of the newspaper will be. One plan is to put the papers in archival boxes.

- Support for the project?

Response: The Harwich Historical Society has written a letter of support.

- But do you have a designation from the HHS that this is a historical resource?

Response: No, the other two projects didn't require that. But we do have their letter of support. Maybe the HHS wasn't sure what that process would be.

- Maybe at a HHS meeting, they could vote on the newspapers as a historical resource?

Response: Jennifer thought that could be arranged.

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- Thought microfiche would stand up as a legal historical resource and that of the ACT's concept of a historical resource?

Response: Not sure. But the newspapers could be microfiche prior to digitization.

- The state archives maintain newspapers. Could they provide any resources? Could they store the newspapers?

Response: When researching project, Jennifer sought out Massachusetts companies to do the work. There will be more control. Chatham had a similar project. They sent their work out of state and it was lost. Jennifer is concerned about that. A company she has selected dives down to collect the material, insures it, then also returns it the same way.

- Are there any other mechanisms to help fund this type of historical activity?

Response: There might be. There are other types of brands for this type of thing. MFA has an on-going project for their books, but no money. Jennifer did a lot of research, but didn't find many companies that did newspapers. The end goal is to get these on the internet. Jennifer receives a lot of requests. The papers provide many facts, including obits.

#HP 10 Albro House: Building Conditions Assessment and Evaluations, submitted by Town of Harwich, Town of Harwich Assistant Town Administrator Charleen Greenhalgh, project manager.

Charleen Greenhalgh presenter:

The request is for \$12,500 for a professional assessment of the Albro House. The Board of Selectmen has voted in favor of this assessment as part of the Capital Plan with the hope of getting CPC funds. Baseline assessments of historical restoration of other CPC funded assessments have been done. Questions repeatedly asked on the Albro House is what are the building's needs, use and future ownership? Getting this assessment would provide the BOS with the necessary information to move forward.

Committee questions:

- Last year's approved projects for the Albro House have not been done; the assessable staircase, back door, etc. It's "Certificate of Occupancy" was questioned.
- Termites?

Response: That is unknown. This assessment would determine that.

- The CPC funded re-roofing, among other projects. Doubtful the work would have been done if termites known.
- The "Life Safety System" listed – What is that?

Response: Not sure. ~ Maybe emergency fire alarms.

Coastal Engineering provided this estimate. They will hold true to these numbers. This project would be done immediately. The town will solicit three estimates prior to selection. Then the town would entertain a contract with the lowest bidder once money was available.

- The list of recommendations. Would this be in accordance with the historical preservation assessments?

Response: Work would be done in a manner that preserves the building as a whole. Most of the building's parts are historically old, like the kitchen.

The BOS wrestled with the occupancy. The Albro house lost one of the renters.

- If the town is still debating the use and future ownership – why should we proceed?

Response: This assessment would guide the town. If it shows the building needs some \$300,000 in work, then the town can assess where to go, after grants, etc.

- This project can trigger other things. Does the building comply with codes? That can make the cost explode from \$25,000 to \$30,000.
- What instigated this study?

Response: The project came from past and present selectmen.

- Any structural failure?

Response: No idea.

- What is the study aiming at? This seems like a general study?

Linda Cebula answered: The selectmen worked on the study to know the status of the house. Posing some twenty questions to determine the structural needs of that building, this would drive what this building would be used for. The town engineer is not a registered structural engineer; nor is the town building superintendent. No one employed by the town can make an assessment of the building structure. There are exterior and plumbing questions too.

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- It was commented that the town engineer did assess the Brooks Free Library columns.

#HP 11 Public Records Storage at the Harwich Community Center, submitted by Harwich Community Center, Harwich Community Center Director Carolyn Carey, project manager. \$62,000 requested to create a storage facility in the Harwich Community Center's basement for the town records.

#HP12 Records Management, submitted by Harwich Town Clerk Anita Doucette, Harwich Town Clerk Anita Doucette, project manager. \$40,000 to archival the multiple departments' town records to be stored at the Harwich Community Center.

Carolyn Carey, Anita Doucette, and Charleen Greenhalgh presenters for both projects. Both projects presented together as both projects work together. The committee commented the estimates provided in the packets were confusing.

Estimate from King not in CPC packets. Town Clerk Anita Doucette will get Chairman MacCready a copy of the 96-page proposal. Town Engineer and Facility Manager agreed with the estimate and the work needed to be done.

The Harwich Community Center's basement back wall will hole the new records facility. A note was sent out to all town departments for the records that might come forward to be stored. The Police and Fire departments might add on since the application was submitted. Each department's records will be a separate section of the caged storage area. There will be a viewing table. Access will be limited to just a few personnel.

- Will it be climate control?

Response: There will be a sprinkler system. The Fire Department, Town Engineer, and the King rep. have all looked at it, and that is a part of it.

In addition to protecting and cataloging the records, part of the project's work is to box and store the records on the special shelving units. Wellfleet Police has done this system. Town Clerk Doucette was invited to see their system. Everyone loves it. When Provincetown rebuilt their Town Hall, they did the same system. Harwich's storage of records is pretty bad.

- Chair MacCready has seen other storage systems for physical files. He requested photos for this committee to see. What are the state laws for record retention?

Response: There are many different laws that require all different time periods for different records. They can't keep microfiche. The state requires by law to keep the paper copy. Former CPC projects did other paper preservation of records.

- At what point does a record become "a historical record"?

Response: Not all the records will be historical records, but some will be. Any Town department can ask the Secretary of State at what point can a record be destroyed. This company will set all those records aside.

- Microfiche is a less expensive form of keeping records. Can that be used?

Response: They have to follow the state laws.

- One request is to build a physical storage area. Is it more difficult to store the records in the town hall's basement? It is a more convenient area. Closer for everyone.

Response: The town clerk has a safe for some records, but the basement storage area is bad for the others' records.

- Are these records the original records?

Response: In most cases, yes.

The Records Law is changing January 1, 2017. A records manager will be needed. The selectmen will probably appoint Town Clerk Doucette. She, along with a few others who will be able to help, will have limited access to the records.

When a record is requested, she will be 10 days to provide it.

- In 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 the town funded CPA projects for town records.

Response: The town vault holds those records. The records were digitization on CDs. By law the paper copy must be keep. The town has records dating back to the 1600s. There are births, death, marriage, town meetings records. Every department has records; the Building Dept., the Health Dept., etc. Many departments' records will be part of this project and stored in the Community Center basement. The company went through these records and based their estimate on the whole need. It is a huge project.

- There needs to be an easy access to get these records. It the community center that? There might be multiple, duplicate copies, what about that?

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Response: The state law will be training on the records retention; a session is planned for Nov. 21. If anyone wants to attend let Ann, or Sandy, or Charleen know.

- What does the estimate mean by “exterior of structure work”?

Response: Tweaking the sprinklers in the basement; funneling the water away for the area.

- Has there been any Harwich Historical Society recognition of these records as an historical resource?

Response: Community Center Director Carey will get on their meeting agenda.

The community center as a good location for the storage. It is a newer building. Nothing will be stored on the floor.

- Can many of these records be categorized as support records?

Response: There are records from too many departments to answer that. Accounting has to maintain all their records; every single bill. All the personal records. If the town gets into litigation, it will be required to produce the original documents.

- There is a conflict of “supporting documentation” mixed with “historical documents”.

Response: The town has known about the new state law regarding the records. They are just trying to get easier access of the records.

- How big will this storage unit be?

Response: Height – maybe 4 boxes high, to the ceiling. Length of the basement’s back wall, maybe 17 feet. They can get the actual dimensions to the committee.

- Is there room for expansion?

Response: Yes. There is room. This is a solid section. There are two fire egresses from the basement. The area will not be manned, but caged locked. The community center is staffed. There is an elevator to the lower level. There will be limited access. When the town clerk receives a request for a record, we will email the community center director, and she will send the personnel down for the item. Then an email will be sent back to the town clerk. The new law will be interesting.

- We will want to see the spec sheet on the project. Want to see how the waterproofing, document sealing, etc. will be done.

Response: The company went through their plans with the Town Engineer and Facility Manager; all reviewing the plans. They will provide this committee with the specs.

- Will this provide proper storage for all the records?

Response: The records could be stored at the King Company’s storage building, off cape, climate controlled, etc. Wellfleet’s records program is in the attic of the police station.

- Was there a proper review of the town hall’s basement for storage?

Response: Yes. It is cost prohibited. The basement has many issues, moisture, lighting, mold, etc. The air is so bad it is hard to breath, producing an asthmatic reaction.

Old Business

- No new Community Preservation Plan (CPP) Updates.

- Update on town financial records:

Chair MacCready will contact the town accountant to get explanation on the figures. He has the June 2016 closed ledger. It explains the differences on the audit; it doesn’t get posted to the general ledger. It also makes it clearer about last year’s talk with the town accountant and the auditor regarding segregating the separate reserves. There are unspent reserves from open projects mixed in with the figures. This different presentation format doesn’t show how much is really available to spend. Chair MacCready also doesn’t believe their figures are correct. He is confused; his figures maybe correct and he may have overestimated the new year’s amount. The state’s distribution is due soon. We know the amount will be smaller and there won’t be a year-end bonus.

Other

- October Payroll for Board Secretary:

A motion was made by Kathy Green and seconded to pay the Board Secretary for 5 1/2 hours.

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VOTE: Yes 7; No 0; Abstain 0. Motion passed unanimously.

Kathy Green did reach out to the Bikeways Committee; no word yet. She also asked them for an update on the past CPC funded projects.

Adjournment 8:06 PM.