

Community Preservation Committee

March 25, 2014

Police Station Conference Room

Minutes

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Community Preservation Committee was called to order by Vice-Chair Mike Dissette at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were Mike Dissette, Paul Healy, Jane Healey, Linda Smiley, Don Little, Dan Koen and Kate Newhall-Smith.

3. Application Presentations

Down Payment Assistance and Multiple Listing Services for Affordable Resale Opportunities

Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust

\$100,000

Madeline Nash said the Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust is seeking funding to continue its down payment assistance program for first-time homebuyers. The program helps new homeowners acquire one of the city's existing affordable housing units. Ms. Nash said first-time homebuyers often have difficulty meeting the down payment requirements of lenders, which puts the city at risk for losing affordable units. Loans of 10% of the purchase price up to \$15,000 can be obtained through the program. The loans are forgiven if the purchaser remains in the unit for at least ten years. The \$50,000 in CPA funds the Affordable Housing Trust received for the program in 2012 must now be replenished. Ms. Nash added the use of the multiple-listing service is necessary for the retention of affordable units.

Affordable Housing Trust Reserves

Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust

\$400,000

Madeline Nash said the housing production plan that was completed in 2013 documented the need for affordable units. Six percent of the population of the city lives below the poverty line and 20% have an annual income that is less than \$35,000. These residents have difficulty finding rental units they can afford. The average rent for a two-bedroom unit is \$1,200, while those with low incomes can afford approximately \$620 per month. Over 393 rental units have been lost over the past ten years. As a result the city is becoming more economically homogenous. Several sites suitable for a multi-family development have been identified. Developers interested in creating affordable housing must have local matching funds in order to compete for affordable housing dollars. Ms. Nash said only 18.7% of CPA funds have been used for affordable housing to date.

Mike Dissette asked for comments from the public. Nat Coughlin said he supports the applications submitted by the Affordable Housing Trust. He said Trust members are knowledgeable and are good stewards of the funds.

YWCA Women's Residence

YWCA Greater Newburyport

\$54,000

Ellie Davis said the YWCA is requesting CPA funds to repair the roof on its building that houses 12 residential units for women. Ms. Davis said the use of CPA funds for capital repairs helps the YWCA keep the rent for the units low.

Madeline Nash and Nat Coughlin spoke in support of the efforts of the YWCA and the application.

Clipper City Rail Trail and Harborwalk Phase II

Office of Planning & Development, City of Newburyport

\$140,000

Geordie Vining said the second phase of the Clipper City Rail Trail project focuses on the 1.5 mile segment that would run from the eastern end of the central waterfront, along the waterfront and though the city's south end to Parker Street in Newbury. The 70% design phase should be completed in the next three months. The CPA funds would be used to complete the design phase, obtain cost estimates and provide some construction documents and oversight.

Linda Smiley said the firm for which she works is involved with the project and she would recuse herself from voting on the application.

Green Street Tree Restoration

Newburyport Tree Commission

\$39,670

Ed Taylor said CPA funds have been used to plant and water small trees throughout the city. The Tree Commission is seeking funds to restore the tree canopy on Green Street. The Committee would like to install between 27 and 30 trees along the street. Two types of elms and one species of hornbeam have been selected.

4. Minutes

Paul Healy moved to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2014 meeting as amended. Jane Healey seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Correspondence

Letters of support for the applications submitted by the Affordable Housing Trust were received from Mayor Holaday and John Feehan. A letter of support was received from the Affordable Housing Trust regarding the YWCA application. A copy of each letter of support will be added to the project files.

6. Curzon Mill Road Land Acquisition

The recommendation to expend \$535,000 from the Open Space Reserves for the acquisition of land along Curzon Mill Road was submitted to City Council and was referred to the Planning and Development and Budget and Finance subcommittees. The subcommittees will hold a joint meeting before the next City Council meeting to discuss both the land acquisition and the

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transfer of \$356,765.98 in unspent funds from two open space acquisitions to the Open Space Reserve.

7. Other Business

The Massachusetts Historic Commission has approved the Congregation Ahavas Achim preservation restriction. The restriction will be forwarded to the City Council and the Newburyport Historical Commission for approval.

An email was sent from Bob Uhlig to the other CPC members regarding the possible bonding of the stadium project. Mike Dissette requested that this email be attached to the minutes. He also asked that the City provide a bonding proposal for the Cherry Hill soccer fields and for combining this bond with a bond for the stadium.

8. Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the CPC will take place on Thursday, April 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Newburyport Public Library.

9. Adjournment

Mike Dissette moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Paul Healy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

10. Email from Bob Uhlig

To All CPC Committee Members:

I would have preferred to make this recommendation in person, but given that I will am unable to attend next Tuesday' meeting, as I will be away on business, I wanted to convey the following to the CPC Committee in advance of the meeting so the group could consider and make the following request of the city, if you agree:

We are being asked to consider providing \$1.5M in funding for the NHS Stadium improvements as the top priority & therefore first phase of a multi-phased athletic field master plan. As part of a separate CPA application, we are being asked to provide \$134,000 in funding for the second phase of the athletic field master plan, which is athletic field improvements at Cherry Hill. In order to get the biggest bang for our buck by getting both of these priority projects completed or underway in 2014, I suggest we ask the city for a alternative bond funding proposal that combines the NHS stadium and the Cherry Hill athletic field improvements under the same bond authorization for our consideration in advance of and for discussion and perhaps action at our 10 April meeting.

There are a few more facts that support this bonding approach, that may not be readily apparent, but are the conclusions of athletic field master plan as I have learned from Lise Reid (Parks Director), as follows:

1. NHS field is the most significant piece of the city's comprehensive athletic field master plan

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as it will be able to hold the largest number and provide the greatest flexibility for athletic and other events. However it cannot accommodate all the teams/leagues that will be displaced when we move forward with reconfiguration, improvements, and construction of baseball diamond on the Nock-Molin-Fuller field site. Having the additional full-size soccer field available at Cherry Hill makes space for High School Soccer and potentially lacrosse (on a temporary basis) during construction-improvements at Nock-Molin-Fuller.

2. NYSA currently has enough funding to accomplish Phase I (site prep and parking) at the Cherry Hill Site. They have a commitment from a local bank for Phase II funding (building the field and planting the seed) but that funding is based on NYSA receiving the requested \$134K in 2014 CPA funds. Phase III is curbing and sidewalks at Cherry Hill, which can be completed after the field opens for play. Funding the Cherry Hill project now means the field could be playable in spring 2016. Whereas, not funding it means the bank commitment to funding may be retracted and Phase II would not be playable at best until spring 2017, possibly later, meaning teams would have to seek costly out of town solutions during Nock-Molin-Fuller work.

Finally I would submit that this applicant, NYSA, is the type of public/ private partnership model would like to highlight and see replicated in other applicants. Why? Because they have consistently shown a long-term commitment to BOTH capital improvements and maintenance in their completed field project at Cashman Park and ongoing field projects at Cherry Hill.

Thank you for your time and I hope you agree that having the city provide this alternative bonding approach for our consideration on 10 April makes sense. Best wishes this week and I look forward to catching up on the results of the applicants presentations that will occur this coming Tuesday.

Sincerely,

Bob Uhlig
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