

Community Preservation Committee

March 31, 2015

City Hall Auditorium

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Mike Dissette called a regular meeting of the Community Preservation Committee to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Mike Dissette, Don Little, Judith Grohe, Paul Healy, Dan Koen, Jane Healey, Leah McGavern and Linda Smiley.

3. FY 2016 Application Presentations for Community Preservation Funds

Mike Dissette said the Department of Revenue anticipates a record-low 18% would be distributed this fall. As a result the estimation of the funds available to be awarded in this grant cycle has been reduced to \$560,345.66.

Open Space Reserve Fund

Newburyport Open Space Committee

\$150,000

Michael Frey said the Open Space Committee is requesting that \$150,000 be added to the open space reserve. In the past year the committee worked with the Department of Conservation Resources and the Essex County Greenbelt Association to purchase over ten acres along Curzon Mill Road. This acquisition withdrew \$535,000 from the reserves, leaving a balance of \$325,000. The committee wishes to replenish the reserves in order that funds might be available when the opportunity to acquire open space arises. One near-term opportunity might be the Colby Farm property, where the City has the right of first refusal for Lot 8 at a cost of \$275,000.

Bradley Fuller Athletic Complex Improvement and Expansion

Friends of Newburyport Track and City of Newburyport

\$150,000

Lisë Reid said the city's athletic fields are in need of improvement. She outlined the plans for the field improvement projects as a whole. The Cherry Hill soccer field is currently being designed. Construction will be completed in the summer and the field will be available for partial use next spring. The stadium project has gone out to bid and will be constructed in the summer. That field, which has artificial turf, would be ready for use in the fall. A baseball diamond will be constructed behind the Nock/Molin schools this summer and will rest for one year. The design of the Bradley Fuller Athletic Complex would begin in the fall of this year and the facility would be ready for use in the fall of 2016.

Ms. Reid said the Fuller track and field complex is in a state of disrepair. The track is cracked and the field to its north is poorly drained. The complex lacks parking and the drop-off area on Low Street creates a safety issue. The new facility would include a drop-off lane with parallel parking on Low Street and a turn around area with additional parking. Landscaping would be installed to reduce the impact of wind on the track and grandstands would be added.

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Soccer and lacrosse fields would also be a part of the complex. The cost of the project is estimated at \$1.7 million. Existing funds totals \$1,420,584, leaving a shortfall of \$179,406.

Tom Carleo of the Friends of Newburyport Track; Roger Fuller, son of Bradley Fuller; and Nancy McCarthy, owner of Natural High spoke in favor of the project. They said the track has a broad reach in the community and athletics are an important part of the educational system. An improved track could be used for large invitational events, which would bring many people into the city. The Special Olympics track team is seeking a safe local track to hold small meets with other summer programs.

The committee members asked if the elimination of the plans for parking or the grandstands could reduce the cost of the project.

Cherry Hill Parcel B Soccer Field Improvement □

City of Newburyport and Newburyport Youth Soccer Association
\$150,000

Kevin Wynn said half of the children in the city are involved in the NYSA program on some level. Many members of the community use the fields as well. Non soccer-related events are held on fields throughout the city that NYSA helped to develop. When the project was first presented to the CPC in 2013, NYSA was asked to develop a three-phase project. The three phases were presented to the CPC in 2014. The first two phases were put out to bid in July 2014. These phases include the construction of the field and the seeding of the grass. The bids were \$100,000 higher than anticipated. The group looked into delaying some of the program elements, but found this would not result in any cost savings. NYSA has invested an additional \$30,000 for geotechnical and electrical consultants and new construction documents. The group would not be able to close the funding gap on its own. Mr. Wynn said the project would not happen if NYSA receives anything less than \$100,000 from the CPC. He would like to receive at least \$125,000.

Lisë Reid said the project must be completed in order to provide the fields that would be used while work is being done at other locations throughout the city. The goal is to plant the grass seed in last August so the field might rest and be ready for use when construction of the track facility begins in the fall of 2016. She said this project has the highest priority of the applications the City is submitting. She said CPC funding is essential to the project and the project must begin this spring. NYSA would like the committee to make an early commitment to fund the project.

Colby Farm Acquisition

Newburyport Parks Commission
\$150,000

Lisë Reid said the City is interested in acquiring a portion of the Colby Farm property for recreational purposes, such as an off-leash dog park or athletic fields. The land is adjacent to City property and is in close proximity to walking trails. The City currently has the right of first refusal for Lot 8. Lots 1 and 2 would be the best location for an athletic field and parking. Lots 7 and 8 are valuable because they provide a view of open space from Low Street. The Parks Commission is considering acquiring three of these four parcels.

Mayor Holaday said the support for the acquisition of this property is tremendous. Bruce

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Vogel said many members of the community have spoken to him in favor of the purchase. Jared Eigerman said the area around the traffic circle is to be developed and the open space would be important for providing visual relief. The City Council will show its support for the acquisition of multiple parcels by acting on Lot 8 before the right of first refusal expires. Patty Myers, 14 Sylvester Street, urged the CPC to fund a portion of the purchase, saying she is in favor of tax money being used for land preservation and open space.

Inn Street Fountain Restoration & Interpretive Signage

Office of Planning & Development, City of Newburyport

\$121,608

Andy Port said the fountain was at the center of urban renewal efforts and its stones were taken from the central waterfront. It has been out of order due to concerns about the quality of the water. The fountain would be restored and elements would be added that would make it interactive. The bricks that have settled around the fountain create a tripping hazard and would be reset.

The design of the fountain has been completed. Funds are now being sought for construction, the cost of which is higher than had originally been anticipated. The tanks have been purchased and are being stored until the work can be completed. Mr. Port would like the fountain to be operational this summer. He added that not many other funding sources exist for fountains.

Mayor Holaday said the fountain is important to the downtown. Esther Sayer said families gather by the fountain, which has historic value and should be maintained. Jared Eigerman and Lisë Reid also spoke in favor of the project, as did Michele Dunner, who represented the Newburyport Mothers Club and said residents of all ages enjoy the fountain.

4. Minutes

The approval of the minutes of the March 24 meeting was tabled.

5. General Business

The next meetings of the CPC will take place on April 9 and April 28.

6. Adjournment

Judith Grohe moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Mike Dissette seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.