

Community Preservation Committee

April 23, 2013

City Hall Auditorium

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Mike Dissette, Paul Healy, Judith Grohe, Margaret Welch, Mary Lou Gagnon, Bob Uhlig, Jane Healey and Don Little.

3. FY 2014 Applications for Community Preservation Funds

Mike Dissette said this is the third of three meetings at which applications for funding would be reviewed. Seven applications are to be presented at tonight's meeting. After the presentation committee members will be able to ask questions of the applicant and questions from members of the audience will follow. Copies of the applications are on file in the Planning Office and may be reviewed by the public.

Exterior Woodwork Restoration

Newburyport Public Schools

\$250,000

Steve Bergholm said the high school is a critical city building that is used by many groups in the community. He introduced Lynne Spenser of Mendors, Torrey and Spenser, the architectural firm that conducted the existing conditions survey of the exterior woodwork of the high school. Ms. Spenser said her firm has prepared an existing conditions report on the 1938 building and cost estimates for the repair and painting of the woodwork. She said the colonial revival portico with its Corinthian columns is an expression of civic pride. Painted wood requires care, especially in the New England climate. Parts of the woodwork are showing visible signs of deterioration. The front portico, which faces north, is in the worst condition and is of the highest priority for repair. It would not be necessary to remove the existing paint, but the surface must be properly scraped and sanded. The cost estimate of \$567,000 would cover the repair or replacement of the woodwork, the proper preparation of the surfaces for painting and the application of primer and two coats of high quality paint. The estimate applies to the first two phases of the projects, which includes the work on the portico and the remainder of the north façade.

Margaret Welch asked about the possible use of fiberglass for the columns. Ms. Spenser said the decision would be made when the design process is further along. One of the columns might need to be replaced and fiberglass might be considered, but it is also a material that deteriorates over time. Wood ideally would be replaced in kind, but as white pine has become difficult to obtain, Spanish cedar or mahogany might be recommended as a replacement. Don Little said the portico is seen by many members of the community because of the variety of events held in the auditorium and he was pleased with the amount of detail contained in the report.

Kelley School Preservation Project

City of Newburyport Youth Services

\$375,000

Andrea Egmont, Director of Youth Services, said the original request of \$375,000 has been revised to include \$35,000 for a feasibility study to identify the work necessary to continue the use of the Kelley School by the department. The building sat vacant for several years after it was no longer used as a public school during which time the masonry deteriorated, impacting the interior of the structure. A quote was received last year for masonry work that was substantially lower than the current estimate of \$375,000. The new estimate is greater than 30% of the assessed value of the structure, which crosses the threshold for handicapped accessibility. The installation of an elevator and sprinkler system would be necessary. Ms. Egmont estimated an additional \$375,000 for the accessibility improvements. She said that while grants were received for energy efficiency and to make the first floor handicapped accessible, funding is typically available for programs but not buildings. She added that many members of the community have a strong attachment to the school. Ms. Egmont said it would be detrimental to undertake the feasibility study at this time and apply for funding for the masonry work in the next grant cycle. She asked that the CPC review the feasibility study in six months.

Mayor Holaday said the City does not have the funds to undertake the work and a debt exclusion would not be possible. As the building is important to the community, she would like a bond to be issued for the work in the same manner as was issued for the work to City Hall. The bond payment would come from CPA funds. The term of the bond might be the same as the bonds for open space and City Hall, which expire in 2020. This would reduce the cost of the debt service. She said the City has been looking for additional sources of funding and income might be derived from the rental of the second floor.

Paul Healy asked for information of the preservation restriction that was placed on the building and said Ms. Egmont should consult with the Historical Commission about the placement of an elevator on the exterior of the structure. Bob Uhlig pointed out the bond would reduce the amount available to the CPC for other projects. He suggested the project might be phased, as was the work at the Custom House. Mayor Holaday suggested funds from the open space reserve might be used to reduce the debt.

Little River Nature Trail Kiosks

Parker River Clean Water Association

\$8,000

Jerry Mullins said the installation of the sign that was acquired with CPA funds has greatly increased the number of visitors to the Little River Nature Trail. Brochures have been made available in a map box but are only able to convey a small amount of information. Warnings about ticks could be posted at the kiosks, along with information on the animals and native plant species that might be found along the trail.

Newburyport National Register of Historic Places Signage

Newburyport Preservation Trust

\$6,500

Jerry Mullins said the Newburyport Preservation Trust is seeking funding for five signs to identify the National Register District. He said the signage is becoming more urgent because building codes are becoming more stringent. A contributing structure in the National Register

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District would be exempt from the stretch code. The signs would educate the public on the location of and benefits to the National Register District. The DPS has reserved the right to determine the locations of the signs.

Historic Landscape Preservation

Belleville Improvement Society

\$36,630

Dave Leonard, treasurer of Belleville Improvement Society, said one goal of the City's Park and Recreation Plan is the protection of the City's historic landscapes. Some damage still remains in the Atkinson Common from the 2010 storm in which 24 heritage trees were lost. A re-planting schedule must be established but before this might happen, the condition of the existing trees must be addressed. The absence of funding for an annual preventative care program causes conditions to deteriorate, increases costs and creates public safety issues. Some trees are at the end of their life expectancy and should be removed. Other trees must be pruned, fertilized or cabled. Pests that could easily be managed but are ignored cause tree loss, which leads to increased expenses. The scope of work and skill level exceeds that which would be available from the DPS. Beverly MacBurnie said most funding sources do not award grants for maintenance. The City contributes \$3,000 annually for the maintenance of this 22-acre parcel that is actively used throughout the year. Jane Healey asked for a figure for the public-safety component of the project. The applicant will provide a list of priorities.

St. Anna's Chapel Restoration Project

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Capital Campaign Committee

\$25,000

Bronson de Stadtler thanked the committee for its past support. He said the highest priority of the church's capital campaign committee involves the prevention of the infiltration of water into the chapel. Wind off of the river drives rain into the structure near the altar. An engineer has been hired to work with the mason and has recommended the application of a spray-on sealant that is expected to solve the problem. The installation of the windows is almost complete. It is estimated that an additional \$25,000 would be needed for the completion of the exterior work. Mr. de Stadtler said the capital campaign committee has been aggressively raising funds for the work.

Firehouse Center for the Arts' Restroom Restoration

Firehouse Center for the Arts

\$60,000

Bob Connors said the Firehouse Center has recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. He said the number of visitors to the facility has increased and the use of the bathrooms has exceeded that which was predicted. The systems are approaching the end of their lives and a general upgrade of the facilities is necessary. The group is seeking funding for fixtures and accessories. The Firehouse is a City-owned building and the bathrooms must be functional and clean in order to reflect well on the community. The SDAH is seeking financial support from Not Your Average Joe's for the project and a surcharge has been placed on tickets.

4. Minutes

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Mike Dissette moved to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2013 meeting as submitted. Paul Healy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Application Updates

Inn Street Fountain Restoration Project

Andy Port said the request for funding for the Inn Street project has been reduced from \$75,000 to \$65,400 and the project has been renamed. Of this figure \$59,400 would be used for an update to the fountain's pump and filtration system and \$6,000 would be for interpretive signage. An interactive feature is being considered for the fountain control systems in order that it might be made more dynamic. The funding request for fencing for the perimeter of the playground has removed from the application.

Cushing Park Design and Cost Estimates

Andy Port said the Office of Planning and Development is withdrawing its request for funding for a design for Cushing Park. The City Council is considering whether or not to rededicate the area as a park. Councilor Cronin would like it to be rededicated for parking. It is unclear at this time what action the City Council will take.

Brown School Reuse/Feasibility Study

Andy Port said the Office of Planning and Development is withdrawing its request for funding for the Brown School Reuse/Feasibility Study due to the limited availability of funds. It was decided it would be preferable to obtain proposals from private and non-profit developers for the adaptive reuse of the structure through an RFP process.

6. Project Updates

Moseley Woods Entrance Wall Preservation

CPA funds for the entrance wall at Moseley Woods were awarded in 2008. The funds were not used due to plans to reconstruct the road in front of the wall. The funds would still be available to the Friends of Moseley Woods and the repair of the wall is a top priority of the group. Mike Dissette asked that an updated application be provided that includes information about the current conditions, the plans for the rotary and the means by which the wall would be protected from traffic. Bob Uhlig said that the change to the traffic pattern might reduce the threat to the wall.

Masonic Temple Preservation Restriction

Mike Dissette said he had nothing new to report on the issue and he tabled the discussion until the next meeting.

7. Upcoming Meetings

The next regular meeting of the CPC is scheduled for Tuesday, May 28. A special meeting will be held on Monday, May 13 at 7:00 p.m. The June 25 regular meeting will be rescheduled at a later date.

8. Adjournment

Paul Healy moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. Judith Grohe seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.