

Community Preservation Committee

March 27, 2012

City Hall Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

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, Jane Healey, Judith Grohe, Don Little, Dan Bowie, Mary Lou Gagnon and Margaret Welch. Emily Wentworth was also in attendance.

3. Minutes

Paul Healy moved to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2012, meeting as submitted. Judith Grohe seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Presentations

Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust and Housing Rehabilitation Program

Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust and Newburyport Planning Office

\$150,000

Affordable Housing

Judy Tyman, Madeline Nash, Rosemary Coulombe presented the joint application from the Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust and the Housing Rehabilitation Program.

The two groups are requesting \$150,000 to support programs already in existence. Judy Tyman said the Affordable Housing Trust's funds are dwindling because they are being used. The down payment assistance program helps to keep affordable units in the housing inventory, which is important because it is hard to establish new units. The group has been working with a consultant on an affordable housing plan. The CPA funds would be used to help implement the strategies in the plan. Madeline Nash said the Trust must have funds on hand in order to be effective and there is an ongoing need for housing. The Planning Office is seeking \$100,000 to continue the operation of the Housing Rehabilitation Program. The grant program is very competitive and the city has become too affluent to receive much in the way of funding from the State. There is a waiting list of households that have applied for assistance. Madeline Nash said the Affordable Housing Trust supports the program as it helps keep residents in their homes. While the Trust does not oversee the program, its board members offer expertise that helps keep it running efficiently.

World War Memorial Stadium Rehabilitation Project – North Grandstand

Newburyport Planning Office

\$100,000

Historic Preservation

Geordie Vining said the work to rehabilitate the south grandstand was successful, with it looking and functioning much better. The north grandstand and the playing field remain to be done. Planning for the work is in its early stages and a public hearing has been scheduled for April 5.

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The work on the playing field does not meet the CPA criteria for funding. The north grandstand has been closed for a decade and while it is in very poor shape, it is structurally sound. It has not yet been decided if the grandstand should be demolished or preserved. Demolition would allow for a widening of the playing field, but would make the project ineligible for CPA funding under the category of historic preservation. The application would be withdrawn if this course of action were to be taken. The solution would most likely include both demolition and rehabilitation, which the NHC has agreed would constitute historic preservation. The \$150,000 in CPA funds that were previously allocated to the project were used for the south grandstand. An additional allocation of \$100,000 was withdrawn due to a lack of progress and it is being requested that this sum be again awarded. The early estimates for the work on the north grandstand are \$1.5 million.

Clipper City Rail Trail and Harborwalk Phase II

Newburyport Planning Office

\$187,000

Open Space and Recreation

Geordie Vining said the planning for the next phase of the Clipper City Rail Trail is in the preliminary design stage. CPA funds from previous awards will be put towards the survey and initial permitting. The funds currently being requested would make the completion of the design phase possible. A MOA has been signed with the Town of Newbury for the portion of the trail near Parker Street. The trail would pass under High Street, cross Water Street and run along the waterfront until it ties into the boardwalk. A draft release has been obtained from National Grid. There are existing pathways along some of the route, which has three distinct areas; the woodlands, the waterfront and the neighborhood. The economy has changed the priorities of funding sources since the time the first phase of the trail was being planned.

Courtyard Open Space Enhancement Project

Newburyport Art Association

\$50,000

Open Space and Recreation

Elena Bachrach said the request for funding for the first phase of the project has been withdrawn. The Art Association plans to install a courtyard on the land behind its building. The CPC would have required that a restriction be placed on the land as a condition of funding. The emphasis of the application is now on the creation of a sculpture garden. The garden would connect the courtyard with the Rail Trail. The City has obtained a long-term lease from the Coast Guard, which owns the land on which the garden would be located. The Coast Guard also owns a fence that extends along the property boundary with the Art Association. After the fence is relocated, the area would be cleared. The Art Association would enter into a MOA with the City to manage the garden. The Art Association would assist with the design of the landscape and with the selection of the outdoor sculpture for the garden. The budget for the project is \$77,000, which includes the materials and labor to prepare the ground for the garden. Planning for the garden is to take place in the spring and summer, with installation beginning in the fall and continuing into 2013.

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Belleville Congregational Church Restoration Project

Belleville Congregational Church Restoration Group

\$120,500

Dorothy Williamson said the church's restoration group has identified 13 items that need attention. Estimates that range between \$39,000 and \$125,000 have been obtained from five contractors. Five items require immediate funding: 1) weather and squirrels are entering holes in the cove and proper returns, 2) bees must be removed, 3) there are missing panes in a window, 4) scaffolding must be obtained to make repairs and 5) the drainage between meetinghouse and chapel must be corrected. The current grading causes water to flow into the chapel and openings in the meetinghouse will cause the building to deteriorate more rapidly. The congregation, which is comprised only of 100 members, has been raising money by hosting concerts in the parish hall and the meetinghouse. Services are held in the chapel, while the meetinghouse is primarily used for community events. The thrift shop is another way the church serves the community. A preservation restriction was placed on the structure in 2011.

5. Other Business

The next meeting of the Community Preservation Committee will take place on Monday, April 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the police station conference room.

6. Adjournment

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