

Community Preservation Committee
April 23, 2019
Police Station Conference Room
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Jane Healey called a regular meeting of the Community Preservation Committee to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were Dan Koen, Don Little, Paul Healy, Karen Popken, Jane Healey and Ron Ziembra. Mike Dissette, Don Walters and Mark Rosen were absent.

3. General Business

Preservation Restriction Discussion

Andy Port discussed proposed changes for the policy regarding preservation restrictions. The changes have been prompted by a disagreement with the Central Congregation Church, which previously received CPA funds for work on the steeple and was not of the opinion that the preservation restriction would apply to the entire building. Under the revised policy, the Newburyport Historical Commission would be asked to comment on the historical significance of the structure and make a recommendation of the scope of the restriction. No funds would be awarded until the preservation restriction is in place. The current policy allows for the release of a portion of the funds before the restriction has been finalized. The applicant could begin to prepare the restriction when the application is submitted and could include its cost in the grant request. It should be possible to finalize the restriction before City Council acts on the recommendations of the CPC, which typically takes place in July.

Clipper City Rail Trail Phase III

Request for Project Amendment

Andy Port said funding is not being sought this year for the third phase of the Clipper City Rail Trail because the grant money awarded last year has not yet been used. City Council placed a condition of the award for the third phase of the Rail Trail that “all design monies associated with any work shall be done for the city of Newburyport portion and not outside the city.” While a small portion of the trail is physically outside of Newburyport, the trail benefit the city’s residents. Mr. Port asked the committee members to recommend that this decision be reversed. He provided a draft letter to City Council, which not all members had the opportunity to review. The discussion was tabled to the May meeting.

4. FY20 Applications for CPA Funding

Fuller Field Track Renovation Phase 2

Newburyport Parks Department and Commission

\$694,820

Lisë Reid said that in the second phase of the track renovation, a 500-1000 spectator grandstand would be installed. The electrical connections would be completed, concrete walkways would be installed and a gravel driveway with parking spaces, a drop-off area and a turn-around would be added. Restroom facilities are needed and it is being proposed that these be located in a new

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pre-fab building, which would cost less than the renovation of the fieldhouse. The design work would be completed this spring. The total cost of the project is \$998,000 and \$330,000 is already on hand. With an award of \$460,000, all of the planned work could be completed with the exception of the grandstand and the restrooms. The walkways and parking area are the highest priority. The estimate for this work is \$247,000. The \$125,000 awarded last year has not been spent yet because of the high cost of mobilization.

Paul Rosen, of the Friends of Newburyport Track, said the facility currently does not meet the city's needs because it is not yet complete. Mud from the unfinished area surrounding the track will make it necessary to resurface it.

Dan Keon asked about the future maintenance of the track, noting that CPA funds cannot be used for this purpose. Mike McCormick responded that track meets and user fees would provide a revenue stream that could be used to maintain the facility.

**Bartlet Mall Historic Restoration – Walkway Improvements
Newburyport Parks Department and Commission**

\$118,925

Lisë Reid said funding is being sought to improve the 9,500 square feet of dilapidated walkways at the Bartlet Mall. The existing asphalt would be removed and replaced with a porous flexible paving material that has a 12-year lifespan. The DPS would be responsible for the preparation phase of the work to reduce costs. It would be possible to complete the project in phases if it were not to be fully funded because the mobilization costs are not high. The work is part of a larger effort to return the park to its original Charles Elliot design. The scope of the project includes the cleaning the water in the Frog Pond, the re-grading of the steep slopes, the clearing of vegetation from the water's edge, the restoration of the historic planting plan and the renovation of the fountain. The plans also include the return of the Essex County Courthouse to its original Charles Bullfinch design. Both the courthouse and the mall are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Bronson DeStadtler spoke on behalf of the Newburyport Preservation Trust, which fully supports the application.

**Bartlet Mall Historic Restoration – Northwest Corner Improvement
Newburyport Parks Department and Commission**

\$656,600

Lisë Reid described the plans to restore the section of the Bartlet Mall located at the intersection of Auburn Street and High Street. The work involves the completion of a project begun in 1887 by the Mall Improvement Association to create steep slopes to support a raised recreational area, the extension of the promenade along High Street, the renovation of the play area and basketball court and the restoration of the driveway access from Auburn Street to the Frog Pond. The installation of a fully inclusive play area would make up approximately half of the cost of the project. If the project were not to be fully funded, less would be spent on the play equipment. The project budget also includes \$100,000 for safety surfacing for the play area and \$240,000 for a retaining wall, the roadway and the re-grading of the slopes.

Chris Edwards spoke in support of the inclusive playground.

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Cushing House Electrical System
Historical Society of Old Newbury
\$59,430

Susan Edwards, executive director of the Museum of Old Newbury, requested CPA funds for half of the cost of a new electrical system for the Cushing House. The existing wiring is not up to code and threatens the collections in the museum. Some rooms have no electrical outlets, which makes their use difficult. The museum is open free of charge to community members.

Custom House Maritime Museum – Interior Climate Control Systems Upgrade
Newburyport Maritime Society
\$100,000

Greg Colling described the poor conditions at the Custom House. He said that now that the work to keep water out of the building has been completed, focus is shifting to the protection of the collections. A climate control system would eliminate the temperature fluctuations to which the collections are currently subject. An improvement in conditions would allow collections to be borrowed from other institutions. The installation of a climate control system must be coordinated with improvements to the building envelope. A vapor barrier would be added at the lower level and the windows on the Water Street side of the building would be addressed. The Maritime Society has created an endowment for the long-term protection of the building and has committed to providing free admission to Newburyport residents.

The application listed the elements of the project, which would total \$723,450. The CPC members were unclear on the way in which the requested funds would be used. They asked that clarification be provided before deliberations begin at the next meeting. They expressed some concern about funding a project that might not be feasible for a number of years. A grant that was sought from another source was not received.

5. Minutes

Paul Healy moved to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2019, meeting as submitted. Karen Popken seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

6. Quarterly Reports

Quarterly reports have been received for: YWCA Women's Residence; YWCA at Hillside; Rail Trail Phase II; Rail Trail Phase III; Bartlet Mall Swan Fountain; Bartlet Mall Trees; Fuller Field Track; Joppa Park; Master Plan for Lower Atkinson; Central Congregational Steeple; Edible Avenue; NHS Exterior Woodwork; Kelleher Gardens Community Building; Old Hill and Oak Hill Cemetery Restorations and Cushing House Projects.

7. Upcoming Schedule

Grant deliberation are scheduled for Tuesday, May 21 at 7:00 p.m. Paul Healy requested that information be provided on bonding the larger projects.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.