

Community Preservation Committee

April 24, 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, Bob Uhlig, Mary Lou Gagnon, Dan Bowie and Margaret Welch. Emily Wentworth was also in attendance.

3. Minutes

Paul Healy moved to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2012 meeting as submitted. Mary Lou Gagnon seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Dan Bowie abstaining.

4. Request from the LHDSC to Redirect Funds

The Local Historic District Study Committee has requested that \$9,760 of its 2007 grant be shifted from use for consultants' fees to legal and mailing expenses. Mike Dissette moved to approve the request. Judith Grohe seconded the motion. The funds were awarded to help establish a local historic district. Margaret Welch said \$4,000 of the redirected funds would be used for mailing expenses and \$5,760 would be paid to Kopelman and Page. She said the further use of the funds for consultants would not be beneficial. The funds were to be used for professional services and now the study committee wishes to obtain a different type of professional service. Dan Bowie said it would be helpful for the draft ordinance to be reviewed before it is sent to the City Council. Paul Healy questioned the use of the funds, saying the ordinance would be reviewed anyway after it had been sent to the City Council. Bob Uhlig said the funds used in this way would be in keeping with the original purpose of helping to establish a local historic district. The motion passed with eight members (Dissette, Healy, Healey, Grohe, Little, Uhlig, Bowie and Welch) voting in favor.

5. Deliberation on 2012 Applications for CPA Funds

Mike Dissette said the amount requested by the applicants totals \$1,401,474, while the estimated amount of available funds is \$762,000. From this \$346,007 must be deducted for the bond payments for open space and City Hall and for administrative expenses, leaving \$416,000. He recommended that no more than \$405,000 be awarded in the event that the local surcharge is less than expected. There currently is a cushion of \$30,000. Jane Healey pointed out that the larger the cushion the less is available for the applicants. Margaret Welch spoke in favor of having funds on hand in case of an emergency. The conservation of timbers at Bartlet Wharf and the storm damage at Atkinson Common were two examples of CPA funds being used in an emergency.

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Mike Dissette said the usual procedure is to first determine how many members would support some level of funding for each application. Applications would be removed from consideration if fewer than five members would be willing to support it at some level. The applications that received fewer than five votes were the Rail Trail Interpretive Panels, the Little River Nature Trail Interpretive Panels, the World War Memorial Stadium Rehabilitation Project, the Newburyport Art Association Courtyard Open Space Enhancement Project, the Newburyport High School Entrance Enhancement and the Inn Street Fountain Renovation.

Committee members first discussed the use of funds for wayside signage. It was agreed that Joppa Park could use immediate attention while the Rail Trail is already successful and additional signage might not be necessary at this time. Jane Healey questioned the accuracy of the quote for the Little River Nature Trail signage and Mary Lou Gagnon commented that the signs might be obtained locally for a lower cost. Paul Healy said it might be more desirable to fund one project fully rather than partially supporting all three signage applications.

Members suggested that money could be saved by planting the fewer trees on Green Street, which would also lower labor costs, or by planting smaller trees. Margaret Welch said that while she supports the idea of a tree nursery, this would not be eligible for CPA funds.

Jane Healey said the Rail Trail is a community asset and the success of the first phase has impacted many residents. She also commented that the Belleville Church is a large structure that is difficult for a small congregation to maintain. She asked if it would be possible that the property might change hands. Mike Dissette said any new owners would be subject to the preservation restriction, which is a perpetual one.

Bob Uhlig said the funds that have been awarded for the Custom House to date have been a good investment and the structure serves as a welcome center for the city. Margaret Welch said the committee has been generous in its awards and this should be the last application submitted for the Custom House.

The joint application from the Affordable Housing Trust and the Housing Rehabilitation Program will be separated into two allocations. Judith Grohe and Don Little both spoke in favor of the application. Dan Bowie said he thinks the down payment assistance program is a very important one. There is currently \$342,000 in the housing reserves.

Don Little said the community supported the CPA largely because of its usefulness in protecting open space. Paul Healy said there is \$700,000 in the reserves, which is beneficial in leveraging other funds, and he would support an award of \$50,000.

Bob Uhlig moved to recommend to City Council the following allocation totaling \$404,000:

Joppa Park Interpretive Panels	\$11,000
Rail Trail Interpretive Panels	\$0
Little River Nature Trail Interpretive Panels	\$0
City Trees - Green Street and Nursery Project	\$20,000

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Newburyport High School Entrance Enhancement	\$0
World War Memorial Stadium Rehabilitation Project	\$0
Clipper City Rail Trail and Harborwalk Phase II	\$100,000
Courtyard Open Space Enhancement Project	\$0
Open Space Reserve Fund	\$50,000
Powder House Restoration Project	\$8,000
Belleville Congregational Church Restoration Project	\$30,000
Custom House 2012 Building Preservation Project	\$60,000
Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust	\$40,000
Housing Rehabilitation Program	\$85,000
Inn Street Fountain Renovation	\$0

Paul Healy seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Paul Healy reiterated that the \$20,000 awarded to the Street Tree Committee is only for the tree planting on Green Street and none is to be used for the tree nursery.

Don Little commented that all applications were well done even though some did not receive any support for funding. Mike Dissette said the applications not funded should be resubmitted another year.

Mike Dissette moved to approve a debt payment of \$132,819 for the open space bond and \$201,188 for the City Hall bond. Paul Healy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mike Dissette moved to approve an allocation of \$12,000 for administrative expenses. Jane Healey seconded the motion. The motion passed with eight members (Dissette, Healy, Healey, Grohe, Gagnon, Uhlig, Bowie and Welch) voting in favor.

Mike Dissette said the House unanimously passed Senate Bill 90. The amendment to the CPA would act as a mechanism to stabilize the amount of matching funds. If passed by the Senate the bill would also allow for more flexibility in the rehabilitation of existing recreational facilities by allowing awards to be made to projects that were not created with CPA funds.

6. Adjournment

Paul Healy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Judith Grohe seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The next meeting of the Community Preservation Committee will take place on Tuesday, May 22 at 7:00 p.m.