

Community Preservation Committee

April 28, 2015

Police Station Conference Room

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Mike Dissette called a regular meeting of the Community Preservation Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Mike Dissette, Don Little, Judith Grohe, Dan Koen, Paul Healy, Bob Uhlig, Jane Healey and Linda Smiley. Also in attendance was Kate Newhall-Smith.

3. FY 2016 Application Presentations for Community Preservation Funds

Newburyport Housing Rehabilitation Program

Office of Planning & Development, City of Newburyport

\$75,000

Peter Binette said the City is seeking funds to continue the program that helps low to moderate-income residents remain in their homes. The program is especially beneficial to senior citizens. Funds would be used for roofs, windows, entrances and heating systems. Any home in the City would be eligible for the program based on the income of its owner. A recipient of funds would enter into a mortgage agreement under which a 15-year lien would be placed on the home.

Up to \$15,000 may be used for each home. Three projects are currently underway and it is hoped that funds would be expended on seven to ten houses next year. The availability of funds will be advertised in the *Daily News*. Paul Healy commented that because the program is not limited to historic properties, the application would better fit into the affordable housing category.

Meeting Newburyport's Critical Housing Needs: Creating More Affordability at Deeper Levels

Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust

\$150,000

Judy Tyman said the Affordable Housing Trust has done a good job of maintaining affordable units through its down-payment assistance program and multiple-listing service and is now ready to move into a new phase. The constant pressure on the market has reduced the amount of low and moderate-income housing. Since 2010 approximately 350 rental units have been lost. The cost of rental units is high and the amount of turn over is low. The Trust wishes to help create affordable housing by providing developers with funds to finance new affordable units. For example, the developer of a new complex on Merrimac Street was recently given \$50,000 to finance an affordable unit. Funds might also be used to hire an individual to negotiate with larger developers. The Trust wishes to have funds available to work with a developer when an opportunity arises.

Firehouse Center for the Arts

Roof Repair

\$150,000

Beth Falconer said the Firehouse Center for the Arts received \$140,000 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to replace its systems. The grant required a one-to-one match and the Firehouse was able to raise an additional \$174,000. It was then discovered that the flat roof and stair tower were in need of immediate repair. Water infiltration has caused damage to the second-floor lobby. The Firehouse would not be able to use the grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council or the matching funds for this purpose because the work was not a part of the original application. The Firehouse is requesting CPC funds for work on the flat roof, sloped roof, stair tower and ceiling. The City owns the structure but the tenant is responsible for its maintenance. It is estimated that \$1.2 million would be needed for maintenance over the next ten years. As a condition of CPC funding, the City would be required to accept a preservation restriction on the structure. City Councilor Jared Eigerman said the envelope must be sealed in order to protect the building, which is the oldest structure the City owns.

Range Lights Community Sculpture Garden

Newburyport Art Association

\$25,000

Skip Motes discussed the history behind the efforts to create a community sculpture garden. In the late 1990s the Art Association undertook a major renovation. A small structure was annexed to the Art Association at this time and the area behind the buildings was designated as conservation space as a part of a Chapter 91 license. Because its mission includes education and community outreach, the Art Association wishes to use this area as an outdoor sculpture park. The sculpture garden would include 12 sites for public art. The pieces would be changed on an annual basis.

Eleana Bacharach went on to say the project would preserve open space and promote maritime heritage. The Art Association wishes to complete the construction of the garden this year in order that sculpture might be installed next year. The group has raised \$88,000 of the \$120,000 needed for the project. She emphasized that the space would be a community one that would be accessible from the Rail Trail when the second phase of the trail had been completed.

Community Building Rehabilitation Feasibility and Design

Kelleher Park Family Housing Development

\$12,000

Sue Casey, Gail McKinnon, Robert Carrier, Jody Chilpian and Jacob Joseph spoke of the desire of the tenants of Kelleher Park for a community space. The community building would be used for classes and other activities and would include a small kitchen and storage space. The building and the events that would be held there would help unite the tenants. The tenants spoke of their need for a sense of community because they often feel looked down upon by other residents of the city. The building would also create an opportunity to provide additional activities for children. Nat Coughlin said the CPC funds would be used to study the feasibility of using an existing building for the community center.

Site Enhancements to the Waterfront Trust's Riverside Park and the NRA's New Park and West Lot

Newburyport Waterfront Trust and Newburyport Redevelopment Authority
\$150,000

Scott Sutherland, Chair of the Waterfront Trust, and Tom Salemi, Chair of the NRA, discussed the plans of the two groups for improvements to their properties. The NRA intends to re-align the parking in its west lot and use some of the newly created space to develop a small park adjacent to Merrimac Street. The park would include landscaping, benches and picnic tables. Vendors would be invited to use the space as a part of an effort to create more activity in the area.

The Waterfront Trust lot, known as Riverside Park, is being reconfigured in conjunction with the construction of the Ale House. The goal of the project is to make the parking area more attractive while improving traffic flow and promoting safety. The two groups are working together to install new lighting in the two lots.

The total cost of the projects is estimated at \$483,000. The amount that has been committed to date is \$300,875, leaving a shortfall of \$182,125. The City has committed to providing manpower to reduce the cost of the work.

4. General Business

Mike Dissette moved to approve the revised minutes of the March 31, 2015 meeting. Dan Koen seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Bob Uhlig abstaining.

Mike Dissette moved to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2015 meeting. Paul Healy seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Dan Koen abstaining.

The next regular meeting of the CPC is scheduled for May 26. The members discussed holding a special meeting on May 18 to begin deliberations on the grant applications. The amount available to be awarded is approximately \$560,000. In order to retain a cushion of 10 to 15%, the Committee should set a target for the total amount to be awarded at \$500,000.

5. Project Updates

The Belleville Improvement Society provided additional information, including an executive summary of the value of the trees at Atkinson Common, to supplement its application.

The Committee received an email on April 24 from Andy Port, Director of Planning and Development, that provided an update on the Inn Street Fountain application and priority recommendations for Plum Island and an email on April 27 from Kate Newhall-Smith that provided an updated budget, a letter of support for the Affordable Housing Trust application and updates from Lisë Reid on the NHS field and the Moseley Woods wall repair project.

6. Adjournment

Mike Dissette moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 p.m. Paul Healy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.